

Made Visible:

East Midlands Rural Visual Arts Review

East Midlands County Arts Officers' Group

July 2007

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Section one: Report Introduction

1.1 Aims of the review

To bring together, for the first time, a region-wide appraisal to act as an advocacy document detailing important grass-roots work in the East Midlands' region and make recommendations for the development of a rural and community touring/exhibition network, via:

Section Two: an overview of the national context for visual arts touring in rural contexts and exemplars of national visual arts rural touring activity

Section Three: a picture of visual arts activity in rural contexts across the region (including circulation activities)

Section Four: evidence of the value of rural visual arts activity

Section Five: conclusions to inform the recommendations

Section Six: recommendations for inter-regional collaborative working

Impact of the advocacy document

- Promote greater dialogue between regional companies, artists, promoters and venues, as part of wider audience development work
- Support regional and non-regional artists and companies in providing information regarding opportunities for artists to create work for a specific network of venues/spaces
- Provide information which will aid assessment of applications to ACE East Midlands and other funding bodies for activity in county and district areas

1.2 Research Methodology

The approach to undertaking this review was driven by the need to evidence the value of visual arts activity in rural situations.

The methodology was centred on the principle that an assessment of how value is, and can be created, perceived and evaluated is developed from the multiple perspectives of individuals with a range of relationships with projects, organisations and networks.

The review methodology is therefore primarily based on a Soft Systems Methodology (SSM) as developed by Peter Checkland, a learning-centred approach to action research, committed to incorporating multiple perspectives on any given situation.

In order to produce a 'picture' of visual arts activity across the region, an audit was also circulated to arts officers and key projects across the East Midlands.

1.3 Research Process

Stage 1: Situational analysis

- a. Mapping of national activity to develop a national context via a literature review contributing to definitions of 'visual arts', 'rural' and 'touring' and a desk-based review of national projects to inform the selection of three national exemplars **(Section Two)**.
- b. Mapping of activity and partnerships to develop a regional 'rich' picture via: initial introductions by County Officers; strategic meetings; and the circulation of an audit and SWOT analysis to sub-regional officers and 10 key regional case studies and their stakeholders **(Section Three and Appendix 1)**.

Stage 2: Multiple perspectives

- c. Build a profile of a range of individuals' understanding of the value of rural and community arts activity via a series of dynamic conversations with individuals representing a range of perspectives on 10 regional case studies – including project directors, audience members, artists, participants and other stakeholders (**Appendix 2**).

Stage 3: Comparing the multiple perspectives

- d. Compare each of the case study analysis to direct the evidence in support of the value of the activity (**Section Four**).

Stage 4: Conclusions and recommendations

- e. Compare the regional picture and value analyses with the national context and project exemplars to direct conclusions (**Section Five**) and recommendations (**Section Six**), including cross-regional collaboration.

1.4 Introduction to the Review Document

As described in Fig: 01 (on the following page), the sections of this review document follow the review process. Section One (this section) **introduces the research** and the document. Section Two gives an overview of the analysis of the **'National Situation'** in terms of 'Touring', 'Visual Arts' and 'Rural' contexts (via a literature review and selection of three UK project exemplars). Section Three gives an overview of the analysis of the **'Regional Situation'** (via an analysis of the County 'Rich Pictures' in Appendix 1). Section Four outlines **the value of visual arts activity** within rural contexts in the East Midlands (via an analysis of the ten project case studies in Appendix 2). As a **set of conclusions**, Section Five reflects on the 'National Situation', 'Regional Situation' and the value of visual arts activity (in Sections Two, Three and Four), to inform the **recommendations for regional collaborative working** in Section Six.

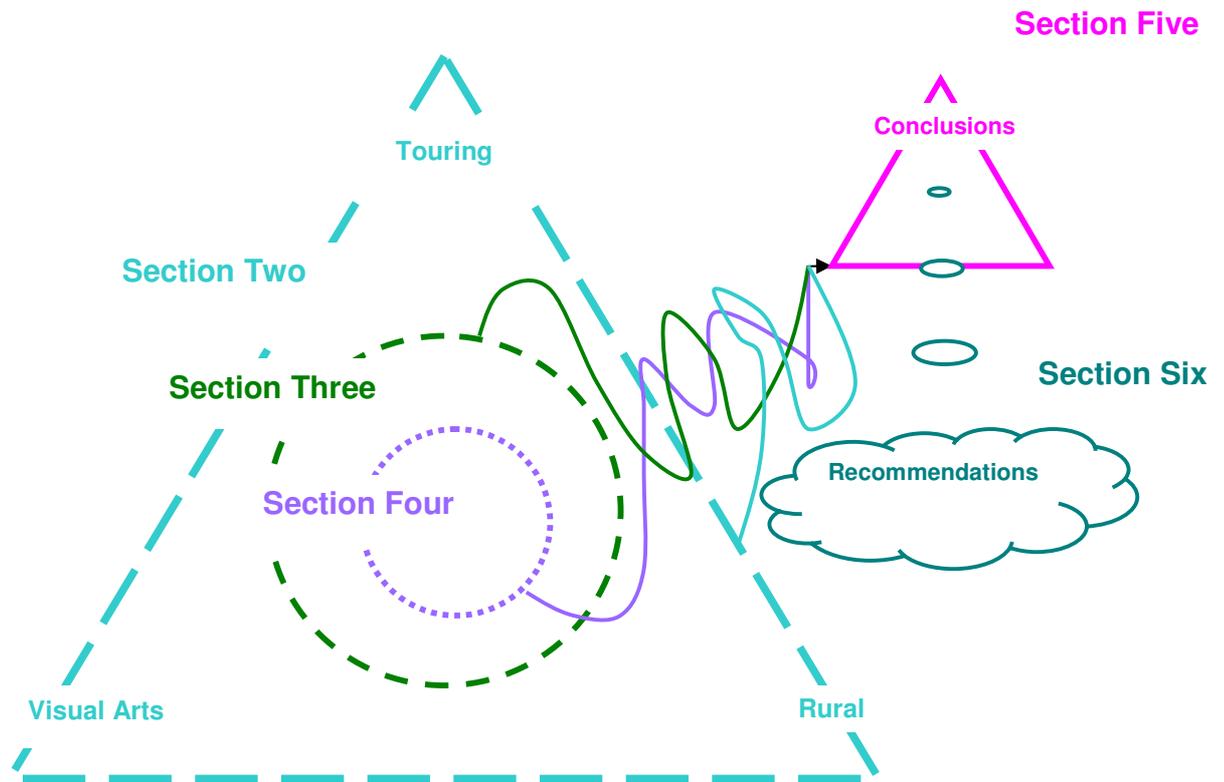


Fig 01: Introduction to the review document

1.5 Limitations of the Research

- 20 days commissioned to undertake the research.
- The broad scope for the review in terms of evidencing value as well as providing a regional picture.
- A limited audit to inform the 'Regional Situation' (**Section Three**)
- The regional picture and County pictures (**Appendix 1**) can only be seen as an overall personality of the activity of the five Counties and East Midlands, rather than a detailed picture.
- A perspective on Beacon from an audience member was not achieved.
- Limited existing research around visual arts touring in rural contexts.

1.6 Researchers and Commissioners

This review has been undertaken by curator-consultants Jason & Julie (Jason E Bowman and Julie Crawshaw) at the invitation of the five County Councils of the East Midlands (Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire and Nottinghamshire) with support from Arts Council England East Midlands.

1.7 Consultees

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Section Two: National Situation

2.1 Introduction to Section Two

This section seeks to identify and exemplify the key factors affecting the notion of touring in relation to definitions and characteristics of the visual arts sector nationally (particularly within rural contexts).

The section has been developed via undertaking a comprehensive literature review and identifying three UK project exemplars representing different notions of touring.

This literature review has focused on strategies, policies and research at a national (UK) level, resulting in a consideration of how **ideas, people** and **product** circulate within the visual arts sector and how **'touring'** can be understood as **'circulation'**.

2.2 The Behaviours of Circulation

The following interpretations of 'Visual Arts', 'Rural' and 'Touring' seek to represent key issues addressed at strategy, policy and sector levels from a strong evidence base of literature and case studies including future-forecasting by key think-tanks, agencies and representatives of the visual arts sector.

It has been important to establish definitions in terms of strategy and policy cycles but also to recognise that these definitions can frequently be informed or indeed challenged by how visual arts professionals operate.

Artistic practices respond to new opportunities in the sector as ways to secure their future. The globalisation of culture has provided a proliferation of Biennials and Triennials in sites across Europe, Asia, the Americas and the Middle East. Economic and cultural shifts in China and India and the diversification of citizenship in the West have influenced how the visual arts sector operates, whilst the European Union continues to expand, and the UK population continues to diversify.

Artists are more nomadic than ever. They undertake research, develop projects and exhibit internationally across diverse cultural contexts. They travel for meetings, conferences and seminars and to look at the work of their peers.

Artists and their works are transported, presented and circulated via galleries, museums, residency programmes and curatorial initiatives across the world. Visual arts promoters, producers and curators have also become more nomadic and have developed new national and international networks for developing and sharing ideas, skills and resources. The information highway has provided opportunities for share-networks, virtual performances, publishing of artworks, archives of collections, discourses and the broadcasting of moving image, live work and audio.

Artists also develop new forms of partnership, participation, co-production and collaboration which allow them to negotiate and assert their positions within society in crossovers between the public and commercial sectors including their involvement in third-sector activities.

Artists also continue to expand their commitment to the developmental role of art in communities, and specific locales and configure their practices towards key twenty-first century issues within the twenty-first century including culture-led regeneration, sustainability, ethical production, the protection of the environment and rurality. Practitioners continue to examine notions of the local and to define themselves as cultural developers by originating projects which are dedicated to 'place-making' and siting their practices within the 'glocal' (global-local).

Collaboration and collective working has continued to develop with curators and artists creating and responding to new ways of sharing ethos, ideologies, concerns and information both as hardware and via software. These constellations exist at local, regional, national and international levels with networks able to co-create opportunities for their members across sites, nations and cultures. The market in terms of private and public collections has responded at a global level and the new visibility of art fairs within the cultural calendar has developed opportunities for dialogue, socialising, collaboration, co-production and trading.

Others continue to explore and develop debates regarding practice as a formation of individualism that also contribute to debates regarding the personalisation of cultural consumption. By creating internal dialogues that see them assert the notion of practice as one of self-determined learning, artists are also able to develop multiple identities as producers, distributors and consumers of their own actions.

2.3 Definition of the Visual Arts

The Sector

The visual arts is now an expanded field and whilst it still upholds the importance of established media such as drawing and painting, sculpture, print-making and photography it now also encompasses moving image work, new media and live art. This expanded definition responds to how artistic practices understand themselves and operate.

Arts Council England (ACE)'s *Visual Arts Strategy*¹ no longer provides an extensive list of definitions in terms of medium, but rather recognises an ethos that relates to the notion of practice as one of risk-taking. It identifies the practitioner as being central to a decision-making process that will continue to expand the visual arts sector in terms of ideas, circulation and product.

The strategy also states that the visual artist has a capacity to physically operate within a series of diverse sites, contexts, environments and publics, such as in heritage sites, with rural communities and within selective networks. The politics of the environment move closer into the landscape of artistic concern, and new ethical issues confront what decisions artists make. The strategy also states that artists are key to the development

¹ Following a major review of all its policies in 2004 the Arts Council England published *Turning Point* as a ten-year strategy which consciously offers a clear indicator of the five priorities for the Visual Arts until 2116:

- audiences, participation and education
- support for artists
- innovation and risk
- diversity and leadership
- places, spaces and partnerships

of social processes that can influence the sustainability of communities. Consequently new developments in commissioning, curating, publishing and the distribution of art works occur.

ACE has also stated that it will continue to negotiate with DCMS (Department of Culture Media and Sport) to see the visual artist incorporated into their definition of the creative industries as there are key differences in the definitions of each agency. ACE's Visual Arts Strategy retains a focus on the individual practitioner, and wishes to see the 'visual artist' (not the visual arts) listed within DCMS's definitions of the visual arts². This can be seen to indicate the value ACE is attributing to the practitioner as an originator of ideas, services and products which can contribute to cultural and economic development.

The Audience

The advent of the digital age is seen to have altered consumer expectations. And the consumer in the digital age is anticipated to demand new relationships to creativity and creative experiences.

Citizens are now becoming more assertive in questioning the relationships between the 'professional' and 'amateur', by continuing to discover new ways to reveal and command attention for their creative endeavours by using resources such as My Space and You Tube.

Within the ethos of the 'experience economy', the strategy also states that ACE seeks to improve the conditions for artists and customers, by encouraging them to develop closer relationships through events such as open studios, the development of new shared social workspaces and the continued development of participatory working.

² Currently, Visual Arts sits within the DCMS Creative Industries framework under Art and Antiques owing to DCMS' focus on trading as a calibration, and their consideration of the financial value attributed to the 'visual design component' within their definition of the Visual Arts.

2.4 Definitions of Rural

Governmental Definition at a National Level

Owing to the fact that social and employment measures were no longer clear ways to define the urban and rural, a governmental review of definitions of the Urban and Rural took place in 2002. The review made recommendations that new classifications be established that focus on population density and settlements. The consortia of The Countryside Agency, the Department of Environment, Farming and Fisheries and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), ODPM, the Office for National Statistics and the Welsh Assembly published its findings as the *Rural and Urban Area Classification* in 2004.

The new classification system is primarily a statistical tool that profiles land use exclusively in terms of residential use. Key to the classification is the notion of 'sparsity'. Urban and rural areas are now able to be defined as 'sparse' (a low population density) and 'less sparse' (with a higher population density).

Governmental Definitions at Local Authority and Unitary Authorities Levels

The new classification did not allow for a clear analysis of classification of English Local Authority District and Unitary Authority level. It was not clear how the interdependencies between the urban and rural within Local Authority portfolios were represented or how a District would be defined. Therefore, a complementary approach to classification, *Classification of Local Authority Districts and Unitary Authorities* was launched by DEFRA in July 2005,

The main aim of this classification is to identify levels (total population) and types (distribution in different forms of settlement) of rurality and to allow for clear identification at District level. The classification provides a six-fold grouping of Districts which also relate to settlement hierarchy at a national level.

1	Major Urban	districts with 100 000 people or 50 % in an urban area with a population of 750 000
2	Large Urban	districts with either 50 000 people or 50% of their population in one of 17 urban areas with a population between 250 000 and 750 000
3	Other Urban:	districts with fewer than 37 000 people or less than 26% in rural settlements and large market towns
4	Significant Rural	more than 37 000 people or more than 26% of their population in rural settlements and large market towns
5	Rural 50	districts with at least 50 % of their population in rural settlements and large market towns
6	Rural 80	districts with at least 80% of their population in rural settlements and larger market towns

Table 01: DEFRA Classification of Local Authority District and Unitary Authorities (2005).

Rural Behaviours

Whilst DEFRA's *Rural and Urban Classification (2004)* and *Classification of Local Authority Districts and Unitary Authorities in England (2005)* provide the government perspective on the means to represent statistical data, it does not provide the means to understand the characteristics of rural cultural identities, or other issues that impact on rural contexts. The definition of rurality is therefore a complex and contested area.

The rural is a place for cultural life that is equal in quality to that of the metropolitan experience. It has a strong role to play in the flow between the urban and rural, whilst also offering a series of opportunities for the rural to sustain its heritage, whilst developing its future and negotiating key issues.

The rural is co-populated by those whose identity heritage is strongly linked to traditional notions of the countryside such as the landed gentry, Gypsies and travelers, to new generations of rural-dwelling-urban-working residents, to retired people, weekend home owners and eco-tourists.

Running through the rural is a tourist trail of stately homes, sculpture parks, cultural festivals, galleries, spa hotels and the country pub, and configurations of dwellings from hamlets to market towns and into the city.

There is a movement of diversification in the rural that relates to new land uses, as agricultural and fishing industries are restructured and farming diversification takes place. Many rural services are in danger of closing such as post offices, shops, libraries, village halls, pubs and schools, all of which can be at the heart of small communities.

The patterns of rural life are also changed by those moving to the countryside. Over 100 000 people relocate to the countryside each year. This shift in population is primarily affected by internal migration.

Migration to the rural produces change, and as citizens move to the rural, their identities, experiences, values, consumer patterns and businesses make new demands and provide new services. Whilst the rural is often characterised by a loss of its traditional industries, it is important to recognise that new businesses can flourish there.

Internal migration can also contribute to the physical, social, and economic regeneration of rural environments including the re-vitalisation of market towns. Arts and culture-led regeneration is now recognised as a key force in regenerative processes and sustainability, and this also occurs within rural regeneration.

Rural Behaviours and the Arts

In recent years a series of key pieces of research have focused on the relationship between rural contexts and the arts including work by Littoral, François Matarasso, The National Rural Touring Forum and the Centre for Cultural Policy Research at the University of Glasgow.

In November 2005 Arts Council England published, *Arts in Rural England: Why the Arts are at the Heart of Rural Life*. The primary purpose of this document was to provide evidence of the value of the arts to rural life, and to represent the importance of the work being undertaken in those contexts. It states that agencies for rural development and

governmental departments were overlooking the potential benefits of the arts in rural contexts. It also clearly acknowledged that ACE itself had potentially marginalised the development of rural arts within its own portfolio.

The countryside has always provided inspiration for artists, both in terms of its landscape and citizens. And whilst that landscape and demographic changes, it still remains a stimulus for artists. Artists continue to live and work in rural areas, and as micro-businesses, contribute to its economy.

The rural has become a key area for cultural discourse and artists are born there, leave there, move there and stay there. They can develop strong relationships with rural contexts and with rural issues and the rural can offer them a sense of place and a site for practice. The arts in rural contexts can reflect upon the notion of change within the countryside and contribute to the process of change itself.

During and after the foot and mouth disease crisis of 2001, the arts played a significant role in supporting farming communities, and developing new relationships and partnerships between the farming and arts sectors. Farms are now able to contribute to the tourist economy alongside local museums, galleries, sculpture parks and stately homes and gardens as gallery destinations, studio providers and residential centres.

Arts in rural contexts are frequently seen to be dependent on multiple-use sites for distribution, but entrepreneurial and innovative ways of thinking have brokered new relationships between art, artists, audiences and sites. Significant contributions to discourses such as site-specificity have been made by art in rural contexts including new partnerships with the heritage industry and land-owners. These types of partnerships create distinct opportunities for artists and audiences, and profile the creativity of both in providing experiences beyond the traditional formation of the gallery and museum.

Many rural environments are also culturally enriched by festivals. These range from festivals which relate to the heritage of specific places, the farming calendar or pagan culture, to those which celebrate the new diversity of citizens within rural contexts. Festivals have a key role in bringing communities together with a shared focus but also create formats for cultural tourism.

A great deal of existing research has focused on the use of community-oriented, multiple-use spaces within rural contexts such as the village hall which continues to provide a focus for communities. However, there can also be an assumption that galleries dedicated to contemporary art do not exist in rural environments, which is not the case. Galleries, both within the public and commercial sectors do exist within rural contexts, and the practitioners who have established these also have significant roles to play in the development of culture within rural contexts.

2.5 Definitions of Distribution

Distribution as National Policy

ACE's *Distribution Policy* was published in November 2006 and replaces its *National Touring Strategy*. This policy responds to key shifts in how the 'circulation' of ideas and products now occurs within the visual arts sector and the relationship to new forms of consumerism.

The consumer is now seen to be concerned with notions of interactivity and co-production and is conscious of their capacity to be not only consumers, but creators, commentators and co-producers. The overarching dynamic is that the consumer is now concerned with their capacity to personalize their experience of culture through actions such as making, remaking and remixing the original content and their initial experience. Artists are also providing new modes of experience within the production of their works, projects and practices which support participation and co-production.

This policy clearly identifies that ACE is dedicated to ensuring highest value in their attribution of funds by declaring that they will continue to support the distribution of art within localised formations such as art galleries, arts centres and site-sensitive formats of presentation.

However, for aspects of the visual arts that are not concerned with reproduction, multiplicity or online platforms this raises significant questions regarding the 'authenticity'

of the art object and the traditional act of viewing artworks within dedicated settings such as the white cube gallery space or the museum.

It also has an impact on the ways in which arts organisations are being encouraged to re-examine their relationships with their users. The policy indicates the imperative to become more customer focused and to develop initiatives that increase public value. This may require organisations to become innovative in their strategies with working with audiences in order to create greater buy-in and advocate the notion of art as a service.

Whereas previous models and strategies focused on exhibition exchange the distribution policy has two key areas relating to touring, and outlines ACE's priorities for distribution from 2007 until 2011.

The ACE Distribution Policy has two key notions relating to touring:

1. Physical Distribution: e.g. touring exhibitions
2. Digital Distribution: e.g. new and digital technologies

Physical Distribution

In terms of physical touring, the policy clearly states that distribution has been a central service of ACE throughout its history.

ACE's loan collection is the largest collection of modern and contemporary British Art in the world which is managed by the Hayward Gallery on their behalf.

The Hayward states that its current concerns in relation to touring are to develop new concepts for distribution of the collection, and new partnerships with individuals and organisations to create both large and small-scale exhibition formats for a range of sites.

However, the focus of these initiatives still relates to the display of artworks and requires the appropriate physical resources to do so, which remains a challenge within rural contexts and their dependency on multiple-use sites.

Digital Distribution

In terms of digital distribution the policy claims that the transferring of works from one medium to another can create opportunities for broader reach in terms of distribution, but primarily from a broadcasting ethos, for example through the pod-casting of talks and concerts or downloading digital artworks.

The policy makes it clear that artists, promoters and organisations will be required to expand the ways in which it supports new forms of cultural consumption that are in line with the 'always-on' behaviours of those who grew up digital including the demand for personalisation and more far-reaching and long-term access.

2.6 Key Findings

Rural behaviours are in flux and respond to key factors including:

- New definitions of the rural as settlements as opposed to land use
- Migration that includes city and town dwellers moving to the countryside to live and/or work
- Diversification in economy including farming diversification after foot and mouth and initiatives to support sustainability in market town economies
- The potential for the creative industries to develop economic and social impact within rural settings
- Tourism opportunities which respond to heritage and contemporary culture
- That 'rurality' is in itself capable of being a catalyst for new cultural, philosophical and ideological inquiries

Visual arts behaviours are in flux and respond to key factors including:

- Formations of practice which include site-sensitive and contextual practice that do not result in 'white cube' exhibitions
- Advancement in collaborative working, partnerships and co-production at individual, project and organizational levels
- The proliferation of international networks for production and representation including biennials, triennials, residency centres and artist-led projects and initiatives
- Advancement in new technologies and communication mean that consumer behaviours and expectations have changed
- Producing organisations are encouraged to create greater levels of access and more far-reaching distribution using new technologies

In response to these factors 'Touring' behaviours can now be considered to be included under a broader definition of 'Circulation' which relates to how:

- **People** circulate in order to share ideas, experiences, skills and knowledge and develop new groupings for exchange that support production, presentation and distribution.
- **Ideas** are created collectively through forms of exchange such as collaboration, co-production and participation.
- **Products** are authored, co-produced, displayed and exchanged by individuals as well as circuits and networks.

2.7 UK Project Exemplars

The following projects have been identified as distinct models for the circulation of ideas, people and/or product and configurations thereof.

a. Cove Park:

An inter-disciplinary residency centre in rural Argyll and Bute in Scotland which supports practitioners to develop research and new works at local, national and international levels.

b. The Touring Exhibitions Group:

A professional membership-driven organisation that supports exchange of skills, experience and knowledge to foster co-production and trading of existing and new exhibitions.

c. The Travelling Gallery:

A peripatetic, custom-built mobile gallery with a long history of touring contemporary visual arts to rural and urban settings in Scotland, with an exemplary education programme.

Each exemplar:

- has demonstrated a significant commitment to understanding the key factors which affect the distribution of visual arts within rural contexts
- developed inspirational models in their aspirations to support visual arts practitioners and audiences
- supports the development of the visual arts in rural contexts by incubating circuits for the production, presentation and distribution of visual arts activities.

Project:	Cove Park	Travelling Gallery	T.E.G. *
Contact:	Alexia Holt	Alison Chisholm	
Title:	Director	Curator	
Address:	Cove Park	Travelling Gallery	
	Peaton Hill	City Art Centre	
	Cove	2 Market Street	
	Argyll and Bute	Edinburgh	
	Scotland	Scotland	
	G84 0PE	EH1 1DE	
E-mail:	information@covepark.org	travgal@edinburgh.gov.uk	
Website:	www.covepark.org	www.travellinggallery.com	www.teg.org.uk
Telephone:	0044(0)1436850123	0044(0)1315293930	

- * The Touring Exhibitions Group is a membership organisation which operates with an Executive Committee with support from freelance staff and volunteers. Therefore please visit their website to locate an appropriate contact person.

A: Cove Park - Ideas, People, Product



Cove Park is an international arts residency centre based in Scotland which supports artists in all art forms to develop their practices through self-directed residencies within a unique rural location. Cove Park has become an exemplary residential centre in a rural location which has provided opportunities for over 500 artists to date to engage with its residency programme. It is now an established centre for incubating ideas and products which are then realised and distributed across the arts sector globally. Artists who have incubated ideas at Cove Park include the novelist Margaret Atwood and the visual artist Simon Starling.

Cove Park was founded as a charity in 1999 through the benefaction of its founders Eileen and Peter Jacobs. The Jacobs provided the 50 acre site which overlooks Loch Long on the Rosneath peninsula in the west of Scotland, which is an area of Outstanding Natural Beauty close to Scotland's national park. The centre maintains a

commitment to environmental concerns which are represented in its architecture and land management.

Cove Park focuses on the opportunity to provide practices with a unique setting in which to have the freedom (financially and temporally), to develop research and ideas or to create new works. Its annual programme supports collaboration, exchange, networking and dialogue between individuals and across art forms.

It is very much a hands-off approach, providing practitioners with the necessary time and space to develop their practices independently and outside any limitations except those of the available studio and workspace resources. However recent programmes have also included mentoring programmes with representatives of the National Theatre and Royal Opera House as leaders. Each artist is provided with two forms of accommodation, one for working and one residential. The site currently contains nine studios of varying size, and limited equipment, which is allocated depending on the practitioner's needs. It also has a central resource which has a seminar room, computer room and broadband access. Cove Park has two forms of residential accommodation, with the majority being in converted freight containers. Accommodation is also available for private and corporate hire at highly reasonable rates.

Cove Park has been highly successful in developing partnerships with other agencies which has resulted in several models of financial support for artists' residencies including programmes financed by the Jerwood Foundation, The Scottish Arts Council and the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation. It has also developed a strong partnership with its District Council which has funded a dedicated residency programme for artists living and working close to the site.

B: The Travelling Gallery - Product, Ideas, People



The Travelling Gallery was originally established by the Scottish Arts Council (SAC) and has been a significant model for the distribution and display of art works across Scotland, including in rural contexts, for almost 30 years. In 1996 the SAC devolved the Travelling Gallery to the auspices of The City of Edinburgh Council which has resulted in the Travelling Gallery now being based at the City Art Centre in Edinburgh. It is staffed by a full-time curator and assistant, a part-time education officer and two drivers who also provide guided services to the exhibitions.

The Travelling Gallery operates across the whole of Scotland and provides access to its exhibitions in both urban and rural settings with a focus on provision for communities whose access to contemporary art is delineated. The Gallery tours two exhibitions per year for about 16 weeks at a time, and usually visits a different venue each day including schools, high streets, community centres, shopping centres, art centres, hospitals and colleges.

Details of future tours are distributed to Local Authorities and other groups/relevant organisations twice each year. The gallery operates via subsidised hire with a minimum booking period of one week for Local Authorities, to whom potential future hosts are invited to express an interest. It also accepts hires from schools consortia, and

individual one-day hires are possible should the touring schedule allow. This partnership working has developed a high profile and respect for these services within urban and remote areas of Scotland.

The programme supports the work of artists in Scotland, nationally (UK) and internationally, and exhibitions are configured both as solo and group representations. It has developed relationships with artists of national and international repute, and is recognised for the quality of its commitment both to the contemporary visual arts sector and audiences. It also has a commitment to developing occasional projects that reflect the concerns and interests of minority communities.

In April 2007 The Travelling Gallery launched a new custom-built vehicle which cost £2850, 000. An architect-designed interior has included: increased access facilities, including: pavement-level entrance and ramp, a hearing loop system, sophisticated new audio/visual and IT equipment, air conditioning, an onboard generator, solar panels, increased security and increased storage. Another advantage to this custom-built vehicle is that the gallery space is bigger, allowing for larger school groups to visit and therefore increasing the number of people who will have access to the exhibitions on a daily basis. The exterior design was commissioned from Glasgow-based artist Mandy McIntosh.

The Travelling Gallery's programme complements curricular development by developing thematic exhibitions when appropriate, but also through an award-winning education programme that provides interpretation to the exhibitions via workshops by visiting artists, live guides, education packs, and reference material, and by developing long-term relationships with those organisations who host the gallery regarding their needs. The Travelling Gallery receives £180 000 per annum as foundation funding from the SAC.

C: The Touring Exhibitions Group – People, Product, Ideas



The Touring Exhibitions Group was founded in 1985 as a professional membership body dedicated to developing exchanges of exhibitions in order to support audience development within all subject areas – art, craft, humanities, natural history, and science, and with organisations of all sizes and types. Its membership is extensive and represents museums, galleries, libraries, archives and science centres.

The Touring Exhibition Group is concerned with all aspects of organising and exchanging exhibitions. It aims to campaign for greater provision for originating and touring exhibitions, to encourage wider use of touring exhibitions, and to initiate measures leading to an improvement in the status and standards of touring exhibitions.

It does this through a series of activities including:

- An annual event for programmers
- A brochure published twice a year promoting exhibitions that are available for hire which are also profiled on-line
- Its website provides extensive search mechanisms for collaborations, partnerships, locating exhibition spaces and promoting seminars relevant to the sector

- a number of on-line resources and publications to assist exhibition organisers and programmers including an on-line Handbook of Good Practice in Touring which outlines best practice in exhibition exchange.

Whilst it's external focus is on developing exchanges for exhibitions, it also has a strong membership culture, which is at the heart of its success. It has developed a strong network for sharing skills, knowledge, ideas and resources. Central to its working methods are that it provides a key locus for professionals who aim to increase partnership working, not only to exchange exhibitions but also develop concepts that support partnerships at national and regional levels including in the independent sector.

From developing these working partnerships its members are able to also exchange models of practice and develop ways for co-learning and sharing of experiences, and allow for piloting new ways of working that can simultaneously support staff and audience development. Collectively, the membership is also able to share experiences about the key challenges and opportunities that affect the distribution of exhibitions. This results in the potential for a more strategic level of development to advance the sector and respond to the needs of artists, organisations and consumers.

In 2007 TEG published the results of a two-year long National Research Project. The report covers wide-ranging issues and findings concerning exhibition touring and programming and contains recommendations for the future development of the touring sector. The research project was funded by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and more than 250 organisations contributed to surveys and consultations, aimed at mapping touring activity across the UK.

Section three: Regional Situation

3.1 Introduction to Section Three

This section seeks to give an overview of visual arts activity across the East Midlands in terms of: production, presentation and circulation. And an overview of the rural context in which the activity is taking place.

This regional overview has been developed via the analysis of the County 'Rich Pictures' (**Appendix 1**), and a literature review of regional visual arts, distribution and rural strategies. The County 'Rich Pictures' were developed in response: to the collation of information provided at County level (Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire, Leicestershire and Rutland and Northamptonshire) via introductions by the East Midlands County Arts Officers' Group, audits distributed to local arts officers throughout the region and the ten case studies, and additional desk-based research which examined key organisations with region-wide responsibilities, and examples of previous and current initiatives.

The audit collected information regarding the 'assets' supporting visual arts activity in each County, in terms of: social, human, physical and environmental capital. This information was interpreted at County level as a series of diagrammatic 'pictures' of each of the five counties (**Appendix 1**).

These 'pictures' presented an overview of each County in terms of 'assets' that support:

- The *production* of visual arts activity (e.g. human and social capital)
- The *presentation* of visual arts activity (e.g. physical and environmental), and
- The *circulation* of visual arts activity (e.g. social and environmental)

3.2 Overview of Visual Arts Activity Across the East Midlands

a. Support for Production

Studio Provision

Studios are shared between individual home-based studios and small complexes including those held within ducal estates such as Rufford and Welbeck in Nottinghamshire. Larger studio complexes remain within the region's four cities of Derby, Nottingham, Leicester and Lincoln. However outside of the cities there is a strong culture of open studios and each County (except Nottinghamshire) has a county-wide open studios programme.

Training Provision

Each county has universities which provide training for artists and include: De Montfort and Loughborough Universities (Leicestershire and Rutland), Nottingham Trent University, the University of Nottingham, the University of Derby, the University of Lincoln and the University of Northampton.

The East Midlands overview reveals that at county level there is provision for business development support for the creative industries overall, with differing models and delivery mechanisms. However discrete programmes for the visual arts sectors are primarily limited; support operates within the framework of creative industries. There are several organisations with regional responsibility for training including Arts Training Central (ATC), Creative Launchpad and Cultivate.

ATC has been the regional training and support service for the arts and creative industries in the East Midlands since 1983. It provides a range of facilities, advisory services, and training programmes in support of the professional development of artists, performers, and other creative practitioners.

Cultivate is the region's organisational and audience development agency for the cultural sector and focuses on support for not-for-profit organisations, but also acts as a bridge

within the commercial and public sectors to network, share experiences and support co-learning. It provides training and also information sharing via its website, which includes a series of mechanisms to support networking at practitioner and organisational levels. Creative Launchpad also provides business support and training in Nottingham, Derby and Derbyshire.

Participatory Programmes

The region has a clear commitment to participatory working in the arts across all art forms with particularly strong programmes in the visual arts in rural Derbyshire and Leicestershire.

b. Support for Presentation

Gallery Programmes

The region offers building-based provision for audiences and practitioners in the visual arts sector both in urban and rural contexts.

The current provision of dedicated physical capital resources for visual arts is currently dependent on small to medium-scale initiatives which have developed significant contributions, including those case-studied in this review (**Appendix 2**).

These projects have primarily been originated at grass-roots level by individuals or via collective action, which can be seen to be a strength of the sector at county and regional levels. For example Fermynwoods is the only space dedicated to contemporary visual art in the whole of Northamptonshire, and Bend in the River is the only gallery entirely dedicated to contemporary art in Lincolnshire. Lincolnshire also hosts Beacon Arts which commissions contemporary artists to develop site-sensitive works for heritage and historic sites across rural Lincolnshire.

Throughout each county there are small-scale commercial galleries creating opportunities for artists and developing market spaces for the sale of art and these are often located in relation to patterns of tourism.

The majority of provision of physical capital in terms of dedicated exhibition space within the region remains in its cities. The 'Capitalise on the East Midlands' programme of which ACE is a major partner has developed eight capital initiatives of which two, the Centre for Contemporary Art Nottingham (CCAN) and Quad are dedicated to the visual arts sector. They are:

- **Quad**: a centre for contemporary visual arts and media

- **Broadway**: redeveloped facilities for this independent cinema and creative industries in Nottingham

- **The New Art Exchange**: an art centre for African, African Caribbean and South Asian arts in Nottingham

- **Centre for Contemporary Art Nottingham**: a new centre for the visual arts with large exhibition spaces

- **Peepul Centre**: a multiple functioning community centre with cultural diversity at its heart in Leicester

- **Theatre Royal & Derngate**: the renovation of two theatres to combine them with the addition of a creativity centre in Northampton

- **Leicester Performing Arts Centre**: a new home for theatre and performing arts

- **First Movement/LEVEL Centre**: an arts project for adults with severe and profound learning disabilities including studio provision for creatives in Derbyshire.

The advent of these facilities indicates the commitment to cultural development within the region, but is nevertheless focused on its major cities.

Museum Programmes

There are more than 213 museums in the East Midlands (including 52 in Derbyshire, 39 in Leicestershire, 52 in Lincolnshire, 32 in Nottinghamshire, 35 in Northamptonshire and 3 in Rutland) caring for artefacts that are of local, national and international importance. The museums range from small, volunteer-run organisations, often depicting life in the past, to major tourist attractions.

The museum and libraries sectors continue to provide opportunities for the development of visual arts exhibitions, but these are often developed with limited resources. The Hinckley Library Gallery in Leicestershire has recently closed, and the Melton Library Gallery supports a diverse range of work with a focus on artists living in the county.

In May 2006 Museummaker was launched as a partnership between ACE East Midlands; Museums, Libraries, and Archives East Midlands and Renaissance East Midlands. It offered the opportunity for six of the region's museums to develop links between artists/designer-makers and museums in order to increase visitor numbers, add new dimensions to existing collections, and increase revenue streams for museum shops and designer-makers. The focus of this project was on designer-makers, rather than on visual artists.

Public Art

Public Art is a burgeoning field within the East Midlands, and the regeneration schemes for Corby in Northamptonshire are to be enhanced by public art programmes. For over seven years Open Spaces Open Places has been developing a programme of site-sensitive work in Northants and Lincolnshire has the Lincolnshire Public Art Network. In Derbyshire artists such as Charles Monkhouse and Sally Lemsford have initiated art in the public realm projects which compliment the Chesterfield Public Art Trail, Ripley Timelines and the commissioning of works in relation to The Derwent Valley World Heritage Site. Nottinghamshire County Council also supports the commissioning of public art within rural contexts.

Rural Platforms

In terms of land area, about 90% of the East Midlands is classed as 'rural'. This rural landscape is very diverse in character. There are over 1400 Scheduled Ancient Monuments in rural areas and 116 registered historic parks and gardens.

These have provided inspiration for artists and also provided ways for cultural organisations such as Beacon to develop partnerships with historic site-owners in order to realise site-sensitive commissions.

The environmental capital has also provided the circumstances for other networks to develop such as the Arts in the Peak and Art on the Map membership organisations which seek to support the potential for practitioner-led cultural development, and to contribute to cultural tourism. At county levels the landscape has provided key resources for celebratory and community festivals. It has also provided the means for art trails and sculpture parks.

Rural activities have been authored at a practitioner-level and work in tandem with other strategic initiatives or with those facilities provided by the ducal estates. Practitioners have become drivers for the development and sustainability of beacon projects in the region, and have been supported in their endeavours by a range of organizations, including English Heritage, the Peak District National Park Authority, ACE, DEFRA, Arts and Business, the National Trust, The Forestry Commission, the East Midlands Development Agency (EMDA) and via support from their county councils. Chatsworth House also has an outdoor sculpture programme which has recently included a partnership with Sotheby's.

Culture East Midlands has developed the 'Culture and Rural Development in the East Midlands' project which has sought to put culture at the heart of rural development in the region. It is concerned with culture in the broadest sense and includes the arts, heritage & museums, libraries, film & media, sport and other cultural facets. The main focus of this project is a web presence (www.ruralculture-em.org) that profiles cultural organisations, projects and events across the region.

Culture East Midlands has also developed partnerships with initiatives such as the East Midlands Rural Affairs Forum (EMRAF), which saw a conference on farm diversification and culture take place in March 2007 that sought to profile the ways in which cultural enterprise is playing an important role in the changing rural economy and resulted from an initial survey of farm diversification in the region.

c. Support for circulation

Loan Collections

At county level there are several loan collections but with highly limited resources to increase their collections and without appropriately staffed and secured venues they are unable to develop appropriate forms of exchange and loan in terms of high value works. Two regional spaces (Charnwood Museum and Hinckley Library) have previously engaged in the Hayward Gallery's touring programme which circulates the Arts Council England's collection of modern and contemporary British art.

Arts Officers'/Strategic Networks

The East Midlands is also served by Culture East Midlands, which was established by Government in 1999, as one of eight Regional Cultural Consortia and is funded by the DCMS. Its role is to promote the value and importance of culture in the region by bringing together the organisations which have a role in the region's cultural life.

Culture East Midlands has been responsible for the development of the region's cultural strategy *The Place of Choice* which was launched in July 2006. The strategy embraces the full cultural spectrum in order to support the role of culture wealth creation, social inclusion, education and regeneration in the East Midlands by championing the case for culture. Culture East Midlands also seeks to support cultural development by undertaking initiatives which evidence its value.

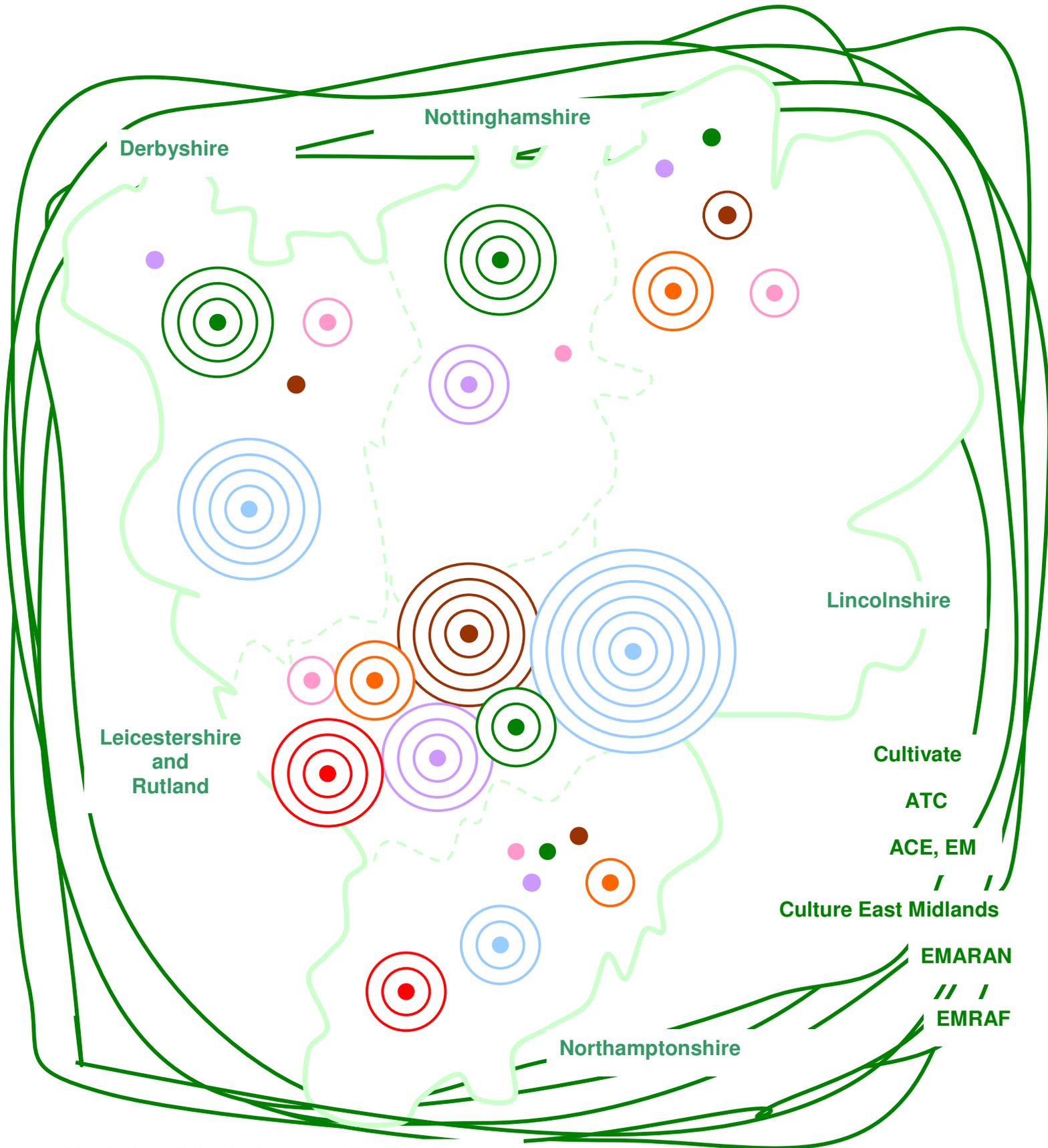


Fig 02: East Midlands 'Circulation Rich Picture'

Key 02: East Midlands 'Circulation Rich Picture'

- Artists' Networks
- Arts Officers'/Strategic Networks
- Producing Networks
- Open Studios
- Touring Networks
- Festivals
- Collective websites

Fig 02 illustrates the visual arts 'circulation' behaviours of the East Midlands via an analysis of the five county 'Rich Pictures' (**Appendix 1**). The networks and group activities are colour-coded as above.

- Primarily, the behaviours to support the 'circulation' of ideas, products and people are contained at county level, with the exception of a number of regional strategic (officer) networks: Culture East Midlands, EMRAF, EMARAN and ACE EM as well as Cultivate and Arts Training Central (ATC).

- There are professional networks for arts development officers and other arts organizations across each county which support partnership working, strategic development and skills and knowledge sharing including:

Derbyshire Arts Partnership
Derbyshire Arts Development Group
Leicestershire County Council Arts Team,
Lincolnshire Arts Development Officer's Group
Northants Arts Development Team.
Nottinghamshire County Council Arts Team

- Within the individual counties of Derbyshire and Leicestershire and Rutland, festivals are a very popular formation for the ‘circulation’ of people and products across the East Midlands, with some festival activity also being undertaken in Northamptonshire. The region could be seen to be ‘festival-centric’.
- Each county hosts a County-wide open studios event and some open studios activity at local levels.
- Overall there are higher numbers of what can be described as ‘touring networks’ (including Loan Schemes) in Leicestershire, with evidence of ‘touring networks’ in all other counties, part from Nottinghamshire.
- There are low levels of what can be described as ‘producing networks’.
- There are no curatorial networks at all.
- There are a few formalised artists’ networks in Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire and Leicestershire and Rutland.

Artists’ Networks

Networks for practitioners are primarily localised such as Corby Zone in Northamptonshire, Hinckley Gallery Artists Network in Leicestershire, and Arts in the Peak in Derbyshire and Art on the Map in Lincolnshire. The open studio programmes within each county could also be seen as active artists’ networks. However, there is currently highly limited support for any formal artists’ networks in Nottinghamshire. At regional level networks are primarily on-line based such as those incubated via Cultivate which has been established by ACE East Midlands. Currently there are no formal networks for curators within the region although there have recently been a series of visual arts forum meetings which may lead to a more formalised system.

Festivals

Festivals continue to be a mainstay of the cultural sector in the East Midlands (especially in Derbyshire and Leicestershire and Rutland). The region could be seen to be festival-centric. Currently the 'Lincolnshire Creative Solutions' Initiative is supporting the incubation of festivals within the county. Derbyshire and Leicestershire have the highest range of festivals within the region. Wirksworth Festival in Derbyshire is as a vehicle for culture-led regeneration at a grass-roots level.

The East Midlands' festivals range from those with community and faith focuses to food and drink to those which celebrate art and heritage, or are targeted to the needs of specific audiences such as children and young people.

In 2004 Christopher Maughan and Franco Bianchini from De Montfort University, Leicester published their report, *The Economic and Social Impact of Cultural Festivals in the East Midlands Of England* which focused on eleven diverse models of festival within the region. This report evidenced this sector as generating substantial wealth and employment, enhancing local image and identity by developing and sustaining audiences and creating tourism opportunities.

In 2007 the East Midlands Arts in Rural Areas Network (EMARAN) was established via a grant of £5000 from ACE East Midlands. This network has been borne out of a recognition that the growth of arts activity in rural areas has different characteristics than that which occurs in urban areas, and requires different kinds of support structures. EMARAN intends to meet twice yearly and to compile a 'reader' of organisational contact details in its first year and to become a sub-group of EMRAF (East Midlands Rural Affairs Forum) in order to consult about, and influence, rural development policy making.

In 2003 nine organisations in the region were selected by ACE East Midlands to receive business support via the EMPACT project (East Midlands Project Advocating Cultural Tourism) to support their capacity for developing cultural tourism in particular those affected by the Foot and Mouth epidemic. This project had a focus on the ACE East Midlands' belief that the arts can enhance the tourism product, and make a real difference in transforming lives and rural communities. Two of the case studies in this

review were involved in this programme: Art on the Map – Lincolnshire and Fermynwoods Contemporary Art – Northamptonshire (**Appendix 2**).

Curatorial Networks

Currently there are no formal curatorial networks at a regional level.

Producing Networks

Currently, there are no formal producing networks at a regional level, although there are some at a more local level, within each County, such as Peak District Products.

Touring Networks

Currently there are no formal touring networks for the Visual Arts in the region. In June 2007 Cultivate announced that it was seeking to develop a regional touring network but this again focuses on live work in music, theatre and dance. However, there are a range of networks in all Counties, other than Nottinghamshire, focused on the circulation of 'products', such as via loan schemes (eg Artworks in Leicestershire and Rutland).

3.3 Rural context

Scale of the Region

The East Midlands region is the third largest in England, covering 12% of its landmass. It has a population of 4.2 million (7% of England's population). The region has retained a strong rural character owing to its varied landscape and the positioning of its cities and towns. Derbyshire's moorland Peak District casts its shadow over the central farmlands in Northamptonshire and Nottinghamshire which lead through the flat fenlands of Lincolnshire to the North Sea coast.

It is made up of the six historic counties of Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire and Rutland and combines a unique constellation of landscape and urban centres with the main clusters of population occurring in the cities

of Derby, Leicester and Nottingham, as well as the smaller city of Lincoln, and the county town of Northampton.

Rural Population

Its rural areas are home to 37% of its population which is 17% above the English average and its population increase by 2020 is estimated at a further 7% which will primarily locate itself in smaller towns via migration away from the cities and from the region's peripheries. This shift in population is primarily affected by internal migration owing to a growing trend of urban to rural shift. Between 2000 and 2004 85% of the population growth of rural districts in the East Midlands was due to internal migration. The East Midlands has the highest level of rural-dwelling commuters to urban workplaces in the whole of England at 26.8%. In the East Midlands the rural population is more highly educated (in terms of qualifications) than the urban. An average of 12% of the adult rural population has no qualifications compared to 18.8% of the urban against the national average of 15%.

Rural Population Growth and Population Decrease

Between the years of 1995 and 2005 the rural population of the East Midlands grew by 8.7 % and the highest level of increase was in its most rural areas which saw an increase of 12.6%, in comparison with its most urban areas which saw a growth of 0.7%. Its overall population is decreasing in terms of children and those between the ages of 25-44, and its rural areas are also becoming populated by retired people.

Environmental Assets

Overall the region is host to almost 30,000 Listed Buildings, more than 1,000 Conservation Areas and 3% per cent of its landscape is an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, 5% per cent of the total land area is Green Belt. Only 2% of the land-mass of the East Midlands is defined as open countryside and registered common land. Sited on its rural landscape there are over 1400 Scheduled Ancient Monuments and 116 registered historic parks and gardens. Derbyshire has more stately homes than any other county in England.

Rural Business

Between 1994 and 2005 the service industries in rural East Midlands increased by 20%. In the East Midlands in 2005 there were 80,030 VAT registered business in rural districts in comparison with 45,145 in urban districts. In the rural East Midlands the largest proportion of VAT registered businesses relates to real estate, renting and business services. The second largest is retail, wholesale, repairs with farming, fishing and forestry third. The latter is the highest decreasing business sector in the East Midlands followed by wholesale, retail and repairs.

Access

Only 35% of the residents of the rural East are within 4km of a library, only 37% within 4km of a supermarket, 59% within 4 km of a primary school and only 17% within 4km of a bank or building society in comparison with urban dwellers of whom 70% are within a short distance of key services.

However, there is a growth of cultural support, as indicated by the fact that in 2003/4 572 performances took place in 313 villages.

In the East Midlands as a whole, 93% of residencies could receive broadband in 2004 but in villages and hamlets fewer than three quarters of homes could receive a similar service. Internet access in the East Midlands was the second lowest in the UK in 2004 but by 2006 the East Midlands was the fourth highest region in terms of national broadband access. However access is increasing at only half of the national average of 7% annually, with broadband access at 16% in the rural East Midlands against the national average of 40%.

Rural definitions of the East Midlands

Other Urban:	Chesterfield Derby UA Ashfield Mansfield Corby Northampton Lincoln
Large Urban:	Erewash Broxtowe Nottingham UA Gelding Blaby Oadby and Wigston Leicester UA
Rural 80:	Derbyshire Dales Melton North Kesteven West Lindsey East Lindsey South Holland Rutland UA Harborough Daventry South Northamptonshire Rutland UA
Rural 50:	High Peak North East Derbyshire Bassetlaw Newark and Sherwood Rushcliffe North West Leicestershire South Kesteven East Northamptonshire
Significant Rural:	Amber Valley South Derbyshire Hinckley and Bosworth Charnwood Bolsover Wellingborough Kettering Boston South Kesteven

3.4 Key findings

Strengths:

- Strategic funding partnerships
- Officers' networks at county and regional level
- Commitment of Arts Council England, East Midlands
- The East Midlands' Rural Charter
- Open studio programmes at county levels
- Individual practitioners who initiate and sustain development
- Business development and support for the creative industries
- Festivals culture
- Museums/heritage culture

Weaknesses:

- Lack of formalised networks for visual arts practitioners at county and regional levels
- Limited dedicated visual arts spaces in rural contexts across the region
- The focusing of capital resources in cities and towns
- Limited public transport infrastructure in rural areas
- Limited access to home-based broadband in rural contexts across the region
- Lack of independent curatorial networks, training and support
- Limited dedicated professional development training for visual arts practitioners
- Dependency on individuals, rather than organizations, to sustain rural visual arts activities without adequate support
- Over-reliance on festivals as a means of presentation
- Lack of any dedicated touring networks for the visual arts (outside of loan schemes)
- Lack of support for presentation by visual artists as opposed to craft workers and designer-makers

Opportunities:

- Heritage sites, ancient monuments and historic parks and gardens
- Multiple-use sites within rural contexts
- Predicted increase in rural population (primarily due to internal migration within the East Midlands)
- Establishment of East Midlands Arts in Rural Areas Network
- Intellectual discourse regarding rurality
- Strategic partnerships for continued rural cultural development
- Individual practitioners as cultural developers
- Future impact of CCAN and Quad on audiences across the region
- Diversity of approaches to visual arts practice
- Audiences that have been developed through performance-oriented touring schemes in rural contexts

Threats:

- Decrease in Arts Council England's lottery grant schemes owing to the Olympics and in general decrease in lottery funds
- Concentration of resources on Growth Zones and the Three Cities project
- Individuals are no longer able to find adequate support to sustain their development and to initiate projects
- Local Authority elections may alter strategy and policy
- Potential cuts in arts funding at county and regional levels
- CCAN and Quad could be seen as the prioritised visual arts providers

Section Four: Perspectives on Value

4.1 Introduction to Section Four

This section represents an analysis of a range of ten visual arts projects represented as case studies in **Appendix 2**, in order to determine:

- the **value** of visual arts activities in rural locations across the East Midlands
- the **key characteristics and behaviours** that define the activities themselves

		Project Description	County
A	Arts In The Peak	Artist membership organisation	Derbyshire
B	Art On The Map	Artist run open studios event (membership organisation)	Lincolnshire
C	Artworks	Collection loan scheme	Leicestershire
D	Beacon	Site-sensitive projects	Lincolnshire
E	Bend In The River	Gallery exhibiting and selling work	Lincolnshire
F	Corby Zone	Artist group	Northamptonshire
G	DOT	Artist group	Leicestershire
H	Fermynwoods	Not for profit gallery	Northamptonshire
I	Sally Lemsford	Artist	Derbyshire
J	Southwell Art Space	Gallery and studios	Nottinghamshire

Table 01: Case studies as included in Appendix 2

In order to determine the value of each project, opinions were gathered from the multiple perspectives of project directors via ‘dynamic’ conversation with a range of individuals with a distinct relationship with each project - either as **artists, audience members** or **stakeholders**.

4.2 Analysis of the Case Studies

A. Arts In The Peak

is a membership organisation co-ordinated by **David Gilbert** in order to provide information, networking, training and advocacy for practitioners in the Peak District, and to ensure that the creative sector is placed centrally within the development of strategies for the Peak District. David sees Arts In The Peak as being a ‘transformation of the representation of the importance of artistic practice’. It develops strategic partnerships to inform policy and create visibility regarding the cultural and economic ‘value’ of practitioners and micro-businesses in order to contribute to the economic and cultural ecology of the Peak District by supporting practitioners based in or near to the Peak District.

B. Art On The Map

is another membership organisation with one part time co-ordinator, **Mandy Baker**, who is supported by a steering group. Its primary focus is cultural development via an open studios programme, which Mandy believes to be important as it makes the process of working artists ‘visible to the community’. It develops relationships between artists and subsequently with consumers that contribute to the visibility of practitioners, developing intimacy with the working processes of practitioners. It contributes to the economic and cultural development of Lincolnshire, by developing strategies for sale and to support the visibility of practitioners across the County.

C. Artworks

is a unique loan collection of over 900 original works. The co-ordinator, **Lisa Webb** believes that the scheme can ‘demonstrate what can be achieved through art’. One of the artists included in the scheme, PJ Crook is motivated by ‘Lisa’s enthusiasm’. Artworks develops relationships between art works and communities in order to support curricular and learning activities. It contributes aesthetically to environments in ways which enhance the intellectual lives of its stake-holders and partners, in order to

contribute to the cultural and intellectual ecology of Leicestershire. It supports audiences to employ artworks and stimulate debate regarding society and the role of art and artist.

D. Beacon

originates peripatetic exhibitions in historic and heritage sites. The project is directed by **John Plowman** and **Nicola Streeten**. John believes the project can give visibility to 'issues regarding rurality'. Beacon develops relationships between artists, audiences and the owners/guardians of historic and heritage sites, in order to enrich the intellectual lives of each. It uncovers the value of Lincolnshire's rural landscape and its physical assets, in order to contribute to the cultural and intellectual ecology of Lincolnshire. It supports audiences and artists to examine the contemporary potential of landscape and physical historic assets in terms of contemporary 'rurality'.

E. Bend In The River

is a commercial gallery based on a hybridic public-private model, directed by **Hilary** and **Marcus Hammond**. Hilary believes that the project 'distributes the possibilities of Gainsborough' and Gainsborough farmer, Jane Tomlinson, believes that the gallery has 'put Gainsborough on the map as a model for the future'. It develops relationships between art, the citizens of Gainsborough and artists and collectors, in order to demonstrate the potential for regenerative and restorative development via an intellectual process within the town. It contributes to the cultural and regenerative ecology of Gainsborough by providing access to intellectual and artistic processes and products, whilst physically restoring buildings for community and business development.

F. Corby Zone

is a project run by four artists: **Emma Boulton**, **James Steventon**, **Paula Boulton** and **Marian Anderson**. As artists, they have set up the project in order to be able to 'stay in Corby' and 'create (sic) a viable future'. Its social process develops relationships between artists and communities in order to support the cultural and physical regeneration of Corby. It stimulates partnerships between artists and strategic agencies in order to contribute towards the cultural and regenerartive ecology of Corby. It

develops participatory projects that stimulate artists and communities to understand and actively contribute to the future potential and identity of the town.

G. DOT

is also a project run by a small group of artists, all who have recently graduated - **Sally Rose Dibben, Ed Orton and Harriet Davies** – of similar intention to Corby Zone, to create ‘a scene’ in order to continue living and working in Leicester. Kathy Fawcett of The City Gallery, believes that they have already changed the climate of opinion and demonstrated the benefit of ‘avant garde’ activity. DOT develops relationships between artists, audiences and organisations in order to stimulate and develop the cultural and intellectual ecology of Leicestershire and Rutland. It creates a platform for artists to assert the potential for intellectual vigour, by developing projects which strategically demonstrate the working methods of contemporary practitioners.

H. Fermynwoods Contemporary Art

was set up in 1988 by artist **Rosalind Stoddart** and architect **Patrick Duerden**. Rosalind is driven by a belief in the expanded roles of artists and art and to ‘share what she believes in’. Its social process develops relationships between artists, audiences and organisations in order to create intellectual and experiential access to the potential for art and artists and to contribute to the cultural development of Northamptonshire. It contributes to the cultural and intellectual ecology of Northamptonshire by creating a platform for contemporary art to become integral to the identity of its contemporary rurality whilst instigating off-site projects that support community development.

I. Sally Lemsford

is a fine art performance-based artist based in Derbyshire who has curated and initiated a number of collaborative projects. Central to her practice is the desire to include those whom she believes would not usually be engaged to be ‘changed’ by experience.

Sally’s practice develops relationships between artists and audiences in order to provide a critical platform for co-learning, to encourage inclusion, and to reveal the potential of

creatively-driven self-determination. It contributes to the cultural and intellectual ecology of Derbyshire by providing unexpected ways for audiences and artists to coalesce by interacting in ways which support each other's learning.

J. Southwell Artspace

is a gallery with studio provision and an education programme. It was originated by **Richard Davey**, the organisation's chair and previously Canon of Southwell Minster (and now Chaplain of Nottingham Trent University). Central to Richard's vision is the belief in the challenging and nurturing role of artists and visual art practice, which enables the community 'to see things they wouldn't usually see'. It develops relationships between artists and audiences in order to support community cohesion and to platform the role of the artist as a social patron for community development. It contributes to the cultural and intellectual life of Nottinghamshire by providing ways for artists and communities to interact and support the cultural and social development of both, exhibiting contemporary art that is of equal worth to both.

4.3 Value of the Activity

Strategic value

The strategic value of the visual arts projects in the East Midlands, as evidenced by the ten case studies (Appendix 2), can be seen at a strategic level as 'place-making', including:

- The physical and ideological regeneration of place
- The redefining of, and attribution of value toward, the rural
- Intellectual stimulation

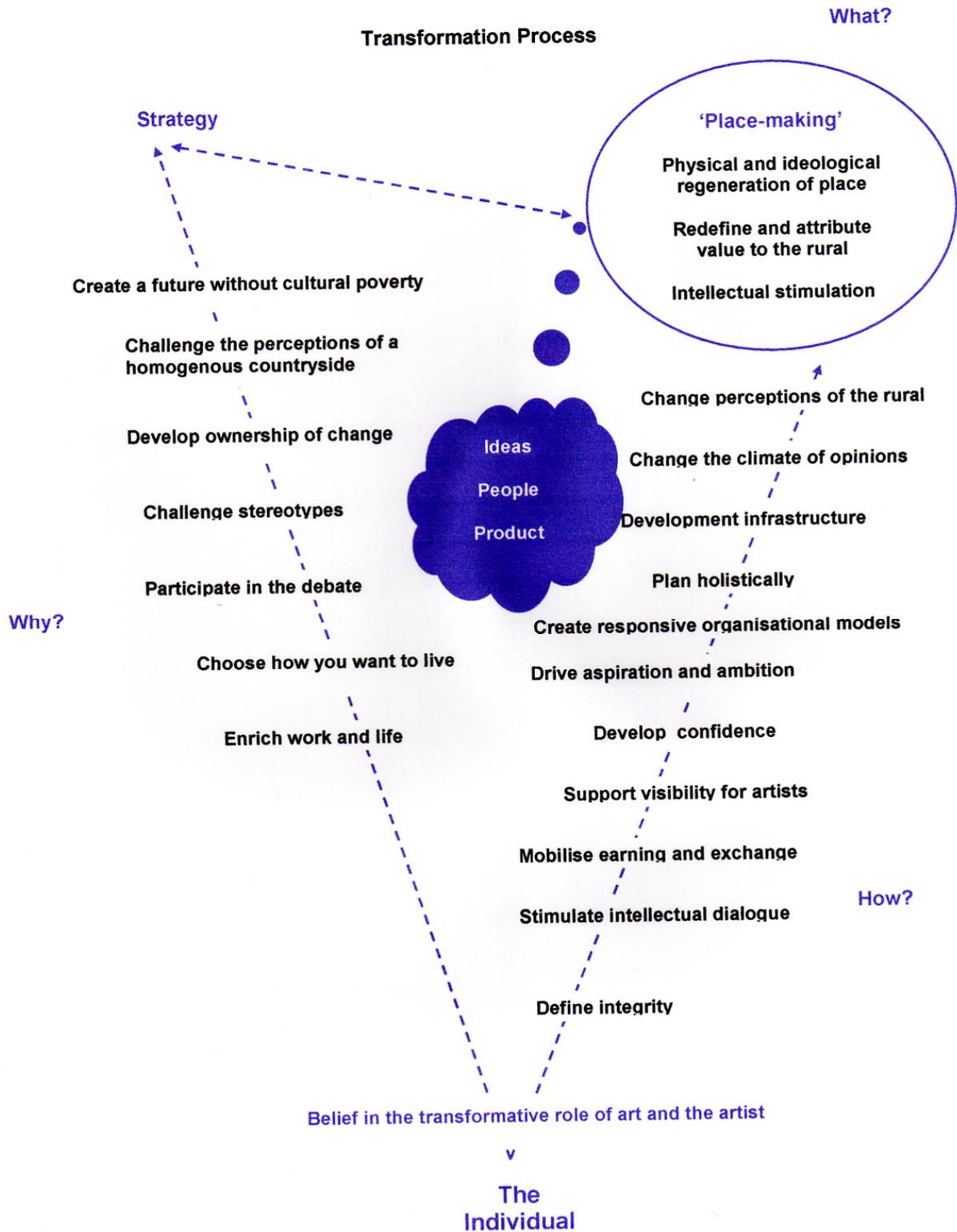


Fig 03: 'Transformation Process'

Key 03: Transformation Process

Fig 03 illustrates an analysis of the ten case studies (**Appendix 2**), to show how each individual contributing to the development of a visual arts project (project director, artist, audience member and other stakeholders) ultimately contributes to 'place-making' – the physical and ideological regeneration of place, the redefinition and attribution of value to the rural and the development of intellectual stimulation.

The illustration demonstrates how each individual's personal motivation (**Why they contribute to the development of visual arts projects**) eg. 'challenge the perceptions of an homogenous countryside' and 'develop ownership of change', combined with their strategies for acting out their motivations (**How they contribute**) eg. 'changing perceptions of the rural' and 'change the climate of opinions' contribute to the 'place-making' transformation process.

Value of the transformation process

The processes for achieving this valuable strategic transformation of 'place' can also be understood to hold discrete values via:

- Defining of integrity
- Stimulating dialogue
- Mobilising individual and collective economies of exchange
- Supporting the visibility of artists
- Developing confidence in individuals and the collective community
- Driving ambition
- Creating new organisational models
- Planning holistically
- Developing infrastructure
- Informing the climate of opinions
- Changing perceptions of the rural

4.4 Key Design Characteristics

In order to support the transformation process, the ten case studies demonstrate some shared characteristics in terms of their organisational design:

- a. each project is directed by an individual artist or cultural worker (or small collective of individuals)
- b. each individual is driven by the fundamental belief in the transformative role of art and the artist
- c. each project can be understood as a service that supports a level of exchange between artists and members of the local/indigenous community
- d. each project is either context-specific or context-sensitive and intellectually-led

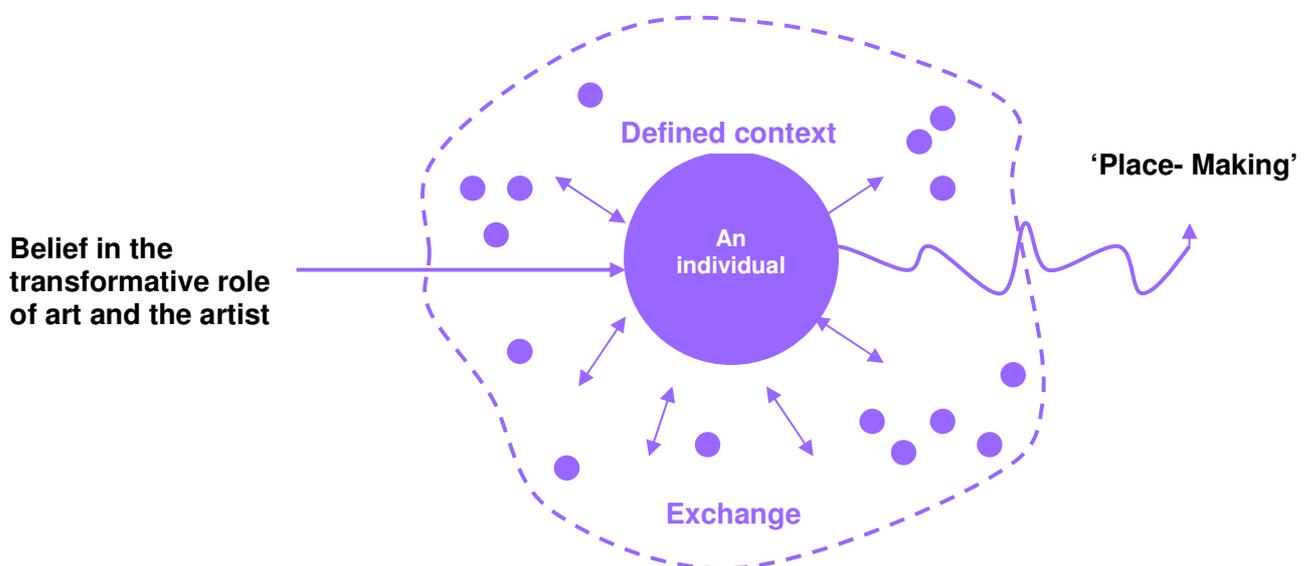


Fig 04: Design Characteristics

Key 04: Design Characteristics

Fig 04 has been developed through an analysis of the characteristics that are shared by the ten case studies (Appendix 2). Those characteristics are that individuals are the direct drivers of projects, and what collectively drives them is the belief in the transformative role of art and the artist. Each project is designed in response to a specific context as a service to support exchange between artists and members of the local community to influence change - 'place-making' – in a variety of ways.

Section Five: Conclusions

5.1 Introduction to Section Five

This section draws conclusions from the three main sections of the report: **National Situation** (Section Two), **Regional Situation** (Section Three) and **Perspectives on value** (Section Four), in order to inform the **Recommendations** (Section Six).

5.2 The National Context

- Visual arts practice is continuously expanding its methods and models of production, presentation and distribution and continues to respond to new advents in technology and new discourses with increased international awareness and working patterns.
- The cultural consumer is now influenced by the digital age, and their expectations are now to invigorate culture by co-producing, with a predicated demand for more far-reaching distribution of cultural products and higher levels of access.
- Rural arts can be understood as a specific cultural discourse which is able to contribute simultaneously to cultural and rural development.
- The dynamics of 'touring' can be understood in terms of how ideas, people and product 'circulate' to develop circuits, networks and situations for collaboration and the sharing of skills, experiences and knowledge. These create new circuits for the production and presentation of visual arts activities.

5.2 The Regional Context

- Physically the East Midlands is a defined landmass which includes significant levels of rural settlements with a current shift towards and predicted increase in rural living.
- The East Midlands is host to significant numbers of heritage sites, ancient monuments and historic parks and gardens.
- There are strong partnerships in the East Midlands which support cultural development at a strategic level, and initiate vehicles for the development of the creative industries including the visual arts sector.
- There are significant partnerships at County and Regional levels in terms of arts and cultural development which provide ways of collective working for strategic aims.
- Rural development is understood to be central to the sustainability and development of the economic and cultural identity of the East Midlands with an increasing recognition of the benefits of arts activities to these processes.
- Visual arts practitioners are significant contributors to the cultural ecology of the East Midlands by initiating, developing and sustaining projects of national significance through skill, ambition and vision.
- there is no visual arts initiative at regional level
- The East Midlands' cultural identity is significantly related to festival-oriented activities, and dedicated physical resources for the visual arts retains stronger levels of provision within its key cities.
- It also has a strong culture of open studios events but currently no open studio programme at county level.

- Dedicated spaces for the presentation of visual arts exhibition in rural contexts in the East Midlands retains a dependency on the entrepreneurship of individual and small collectives of practitioners which operate in tandem with diverse models of visual arts practice.
- Currently there are limited formalised networks and training programmes at a Regional level that support sharing of experience, skills and knowledge between visual arts practitioners including curators in ways that have authored collaborations for the circulation of people, product and ideas within rural contexts.
- There are no dedicated rural touring networks in the region for the visual arts sector, but a significant history and presence of rural touring for theatre, dance and music within multiple-use sites.
- ACE's financial commitment to the London Olympics in 2012 will have direct impact on grants for cultural projects within the region, but the high levels of strategic partnerships that exist in the Region may be able to support activities through other funding mechanisms.

5.3 Perspectives on value

The collective strategic value of the artist and visual arts projects in the East Midlands can be seen as 'place-making', demonstrated as:

- The physical and ideological regeneration of place
- The redefining and the attribution of value to the rural
- Support for intellectual stimulation

The processes by which visual arts activities in rural contexts operate in the East Midlands can be seen to:

- Define integrity within the visual arts sector

- Stimulate dialogue regarding practice, process and product
- Mobilise individual and collective economies of exchange
- Support the visibility of artists
- Develop confidence in individuals and the collective community
- Drive ambitions for people and place
- Create new organisational models
- Author holistic planning
- Develop cultural and local infrastructure
- Change the climate of opinions and challenge assumptions
- Alter the perceptions of the rural
- Assert the potential of art and artists

The characteristics by which visual arts activities in rural contexts operate in the East Midlands are:

- Each project is directed by an individual artist or cultural worker (or small collective of individuals)
- Each individual is driven by the fundamental belief in the transformative role of art and the artist
- Each project can be understood as a service that supports a level of exchange between artists and members of the local/indigenous community
- Each project is either context-specific or context-sensitive and intellectually-led
- Each project develops partnerships at strategic and audience levels

Section Six: Recommendations for Collaborative Working

6.1 Introduction to Section Six

These recommendations for collaborative working have been developed through reflecting on the **Regional Situation** (Section Three) and **Perspectives on Value** (Section Four) in relation to the **National Situation** (Section Two).

6.2 Recommendations

1. To use the findings of this review as a catalyst to support the co development of a region-wide visual arts ‘circulation network’ between regional practitioners and projects.

2. For the ‘circulation network’ to co develop regional context-specific projects in recognition of the skill, ambition and vision of individual practitioners and projects throughout the East Midlands (some of which are detailed as case studies in Appendix 2 of this review).

3. For the co development process to respond to the findings of this review:

3.1 capitalise on regional strengths and opportunities:

- The existing strong county and region-wide officer networks and partnerships.
- Rural agendas and the rurality of the East Midlands (in terms of funding agendas).
- Strong open studios networks.
- Strong festivals profile.
- The demonstrable transformative value of art and artists in terms of contributing to ‘place-making’
- The CCAN and Quad developments.

3.1 overcome potential weaknesses and threats:

- Limited practitioner (artist and curator) networks.
- Limited visual arts specific rural exhibition spaces.
- Decrease in ACE funding.

3.2 To design the 'circulation' network in response to the shared characteristics of the case study projects:

- Projects are directed by individuals.
- Individuals are driven by the belief in the transformative role of art and artists
- Projects are context-specific or context-sensitive.
- Broker exchange between artists and members of the local community.

3.3 To design the 'circulation' network in response to national trends:

- Recognise the importance of co-production (between project directors, artists and audiences) and new trends in consumer agendas.
- Recognise the distinct roles of (and opportunities and barriers presented by) physical and digital distribution methodologies.

4. For the 'circulation network' to be initially formed via a series of six facilitated two-day events to convene the individuals (project directors, artists and audience members) interviewed as perspectives to develop the case studies in this report, along with other key regional projects (some of which are included in the County Rich Pictures), in order to develop regional context-specific projects.

5. For a two-day event to take place in each of the five Counties followed by a regional 'conclusion' event to launch the 'circulation network' and the outline projects.

6.3 Suggested future event design

For each of the five County-specific two-day events to:

- Include a range of participants: project directors, artists and audience members – from across the County.
- Include a presentation from a national exemplar case study eg. Cove Park, The Travelling Gallery, the Touring Exhibition Group (included as national exemplars in this report).
- Include a presentation around the findings of this report and the basis for the recommendations to support the development of a 'circulation network'.
- Include a series of designed 'workshops' (designed and facilitated by a proficient change agent) in order to share ideas around the various perspectives on:

The purpose of a regional project (**Why** work collaboratively?)
The ongoing process of developing regional projects (**How** work collectively?)
The formation of the projects (**What** the collaborative projects should be?)

For the final 'conclusion event' to

- Include a range of participants from the previous five (representing all five Counties from a range of perspectives) as well as funders and key regional representatives of consortia and other key stakeholders.
- Summarise the outcomes from the previous five events: Why?, How? and What?
- Co develop the project ideas (What?) via facilitated workshops designed by a proficient change agent.