

Institution: Newcastle University		
Unit of Assessment: 32 Art and Design		
Title of case study: Engaging New Audiences: Art in Non-Gallery Settings		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: April 2012 – December 2020		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Neil Bromwich	Senior Lecturer in Fine Art	01 August 2008 – present
Irene Brown	Senior Lecturer in Fine Art	01 September 2007 – present
Andrew Burton	Professor of Fine Art	01 October 1986 – present
Judith King	Senior Research Associate	12 January 2017 – present
Wolfgang Weileder	Professor of Contemporary Sculpture	01 October 2000 – present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2014-2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>Temporary installations of contemporary art in heritage and community-oriented spaces had impact in three linked areas: audience engagement; professional development for arts practitioners; and organisational policies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audiences: Introducing contemporary art to individuals who previously did not engage; changing perceptions about barriers to accessing contemporary art; providing new experiences of art appreciation for existing audiences. • Professional development: Opportunities created for artists to develop their practice and explore new contexts for their work; organisation staff/volunteers gained experience and career development; tangible impacts included job creation and artist residencies. • Organisations: Policies and strategies adapted to make better use of staff and volunteers in interpretation and audience development; new funding opportunities and new ways of engaging communities created. <p>These areas are connected. After seeing positive impacts at audience and practitioner levels, organisations were motivated to change their approaches to capitalise on these.</p>		
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>The relationship between audiences and contemporary art is complex but nurturing. Cultural organisations are increasingly seeing that developing this relationship can engage existing audiences and encourage new ones. Research in the unit has explored how situating artworks in non-gallery settings (such as heritage, rural and domestic contexts) affects the way audiences and other stakeholders use, receive or consume contemporary art. The projects below combine academic and creative practice, and co-production as their research base. Collaborating with heritage, industry, community and education partners, each project affected audiences, artists, organisations and their staff/volunteers.</p> <p>Art Lending Library (ALL) (2014-2018, Bromwich). A touring sculpture/performance installation enabling members of the public to borrow original artworks for their homes or workplaces. By embracing the public lending libraries' philosophy of being accessible and free, ALL developed and subverted existing models of art lending (e.g. MIT and Harvard Universities lending art to students or Leeds Picture Library using a subscription model). The project developed through partnership working and through a series of funded opportunities. Following a successful pilot study in April 2012, the project received ACE funding in 2013. This led to five partner venues in areas with low arts involvement (according to ACE's Active Lives Survey 2015-2017) co-funding ALL to explore its benefits and generating the impacts described here.</p> <p>Mapping Contemporary Art in the Heritage Experience (MCAHE) (2017-2020, Burton, King) critically examined the role and practice of temporary art commissioning at heritage venues. Addressing a research gap (recognised by Arts Council England and Heritage Organisations) around stakeholder perspectives, MCAHE drew upon and expanded a database of art in</p>		

heritage projects established by partner organisation, Arts&Heritage. The project commissioned six contemporary art installations at four properties to generate data around the experiences of Heritage Organisations, their staff and volunteers, artists, visitors and local schools. This data informed commissioning practices, to help organisations find new ways of creatively interpreting their assets and make best use of their resources. UKRI project: <https://bit.ly/3a6A2Gc>.

Gallery of Wonder on Tour (GoWoT) (2014-2015, Brown, King) explored the notion of using 'wonder' as a strategy for engaging new audiences in rural areas. Drawing on the legacy of New Genre Public Art (Lacey 1994) and incorporating historical research on travelling curiosity shows, the project exhibited new artworks in a mobile gallery structure at six rural Northumberland venues that had never previously engaged with contemporary art. Rural venues were identified as having low participation in the arts (ACE, 'Rural Evidence and Data Review', 2014) and the 'sideshow' ethos was a natural fit for agricultural fairs and shows.

The Jetty Project (2013-2015, Weileder). An interdisciplinary project that explored how the term 'sustainability' can be interpreted and imagined according to local urban contexts and histories. Based at Dunston Staiths, an industrial heritage site in Gateshead, the Jetty artworks served as a catalyst for debate among communities of interest including artists, historians, urban professionals (architects, construction companies, policymakers) and local residents. These collaborative relationships gave rise to a rich set of perspectives that underpinned many of the Jetty outputs (see section three and UKRI project web pages: <https://bit.ly/3qaCmli>).

3. References to the research

Jetty – Connelly A., Guy S., Ingold T., Miles M., Niero L., Tawa M., **Weileder W.** and Wilde M. (2015). *Catalyst: Art, Sustainability & Place in the work of Wolfgang Weileder*. Bielefeld, Germany: Kerber Verlag. Focuses on the Jetty project and its legacy. Available on request. <https://eprints.ncl.ac.uk/222617>.

Jetty – Connelly A., Guy S., Wainwright E., **Weileder W.** and Wilde, M. (2016). Catalyst: reimagining sustainability with and through fine art. *Ecology and Society*, 21(4). <http://dx.doi.org/10.5751/ES-08717-210421>.

MCAHE – **Burton, A.** (2020). Mapping contemporary art in the heritage experience: Mary Eleanor Bowes and *The Orangery Urns* in: Cass N., Park G. and Powell A., eds. (2020). *Contemporary Art in Heritage Spaces*. Routledge. Available on request.

MCAHE – Project website: <https://research.ncl.ac.uk/mcahe/>. Funded by the AHRC, UKRI GtR <https://gtr.ukri.org/projects?ref=AH%2FN007557%2F1>

ALL – Documentary video: <https://vimeo.com/142686605>. Produced 2015 and screened in the Northern Gallery for Contemporary Art as part of the ALL exhibition June 2015.

GoWoT – Mieves, C. and **Brown, I.**, eds. (2017). *Wonder in Contemporary Artistic Practice*. Taylor & Francis. Available on request.

Quality of research statement. Evidence of peer review: Written outputs were published by venerable academic or art publishers, or in academic journals. AHRC funding was received for MCAHE (project reference: AH/N007557/1) and Jetty (AH/K006932/1). The ALL tour received competitive Arts Council England Strategic Touring funding in 2013 and was selected to exhibit at the De Montfort University gallery, constituting academic peer review.

4. Details of the impact

For organisations, initiating new encounters with art engaged new audiences, especially marginalised, under-engaged and/or diverse audiences leading to increased cultural participation. Impacts for individuals centred on increased accessibility for those with limited opportunities to engage with art, as well as professional development for artists themselves. In turn, organisations have responsively shaped their policies and practices around using contemporary art to maximise audience engagement and development. Organisations have the motivation, scope and influence to make more significant and sustained differences in the cultural landscape. While these projects addressed common themes, each was positioned differently, so the range of impacts was diverse. We have indicated the main types of impact for each project.

Art Lending Library (ALL) (sculpture/performance allowing public borrowing of artworks)

Audience, artist and organisational impacts. Through achieving multiple impacts among individual audience members, artists and other stakeholders, ALL revealed new approaches that convinced arts organisations to change their strategies and commissioning practices.

ALL gave people opportunities to experience original contemporary artworks in their own homes, changing the way audiences engaged: *“Sometimes when I go into galleries, I think: God, I don’t belong in here. But having that come to your home, it makes you think, you know, that art is for everybody”* (IMP1). The domestic context enhanced understanding and experiences: *“having it in your home [means] you have longer to appreciate it”* (IMP1), while the new approach that ALL encouraged between curators and stakeholders led to increased accessibility. For example, an audio work borrowed by a family enabled a visually impaired father to join in the art experience with his children, where *“the excitement was shared by the whole family”* (IMP3). One school borrowed several works: *“Lots of the teachers realised it enthused the children... they could take [an artwork] back to the classroom; they could study it close-up...”* The borrowed works also prompted *“lots of discussion”* among school office staff, kitchen staff and parents. *“We opened [the room where the works were exhibited] up after school and if anyone had any questions, they could talk to [the pupils] about what it was about. We did have quite a few families coming through”*. The school used its experience with ALL as evidence for a successful Artsmark application (IMP1). ALL’s curatorial strategy of including local artists alongside ‘big names’ gave emerging artists new confidence. For one artist, ALL was their first opportunity to show new experimental sculpture, which led to them being *“invited to participate in two events because of... having participated at The Art Lending Library”* (IMP2). An artist-borrower in Peterborough was directly inspired by ALL to reconsider how she used her home as a space for art and took up a ‘remote residency’ with local arts organisation, ‘Metal’. *“The residency was focused on how I not only produce work but also install and show it within the home”* (IMP2).

Arts organisations well understood the impacts on individuals. Early funding came from Creative Scotland, followed by an ACE Strategic Touring Fund grant. After noticing the stakeholder impacts, five local arts organisations commissioned ALL between 2014 and 2017, contributing their own programming funds. Moreover, each organisation adapted their commissioning strategy and practices in response to hosting the project. East Durham Trust engaged community feedback to ensure more appropriate commissioning: *“The learning experience of what we did with this particular project has proven to be extremely valuable... How the message is carried to the public was key for us”* (IMP3). The cultural organisation ‘Metal’ was inspired to curate new participatory at-home projects: *“What we really took from [ALL] was allowing people to just enjoy artwork in their own homes and interact with it in whatever way, shape or form”*. A subsequent Metal project encouraged borrowers to *“have those conversations [about art] in their own home... Purely off the back of the Art Lending Library... It allows us to have a bigger conversation across the city”* (IMP3).

MCAHE (we focus here on two MCAHE commissions: ‘The Orangery Urns’ at National Trust Gibside, and ‘Conference for the Birds’ at National Trust Cherryburn)

Audience, staff/volunteer and organisational impacts. All the commissioned artworks installed at heritage venues as part of MCAHE had impacts on audiences, as well as heritage volunteers and staff, leading to organisational change. At National Trust Gibside, Burton’s commissioned artwork, ‘The Orangery Urns’, gave volunteers *“a real sense of pride”* and *“created a sharp sense of stakeholdership among individuals and buy-in from the wider volunteer team for Gibside’s future projects... Introducing creative interpretation to the gardens has energised volunteer creativity in other ways... The group felt confident to embrace creative ways of telling Gibside’s story on the back of the artwork”* (IMP4). Engaging volunteers earlier and throughout the commissioning process was transformative: *“The process of commissioning, installing and talking about the artworks has challenged the Gibside team and our ways of thinking”* (IMP4). One manager said, *“Being involved right from the beginning, developing the brief and selecting the artist has made me advocate for artists’ work being presented in our place of work”* (IMP5). These impacts led directly to ‘Volunteer Voices’, a further AHRC-funded collaboration between the National Trust and Newcastle University, with support in kind worth

GBP5,000 from NT. *"MCAHE has been transformative in the way it has changed the experience of staff involved in contemporary art projects... We are keen to find ways of extending this learning and practice, not just across our places but also across out people... Creating an opportunity for exchange where artists hear from volunteers and volunteers hear from artists is an inspirational approach and will impact on how we engage with art in the future"* (IMP4).

Artworks reached new audiences who might not normally have engaged: *"For Gibside, one of the objectives of involvement with MCAHE was diversification of our visitor makeup... Between May and October 2018 we welcomed 10,007 Young Independent visitors (17.05% of our visitors) compared to 7081 visits in 2017 (10.19% of our visitors)".* Achieving these goals changed organisational thinking around how to work with contemporary artists and to *"welcome creatives to Gibside for future projects. We have more confidence in the process"* (IMP4).



Images L: Artist with schoolchildren, 'Conference for the Birds' workshop. **R:** Artist's picnic.

A key element in 'Conference for the Birds' at Cherryburn was community engagement. The Heritage Organisation saw the commissioned artwork as a vital way of engaging with its local community through school workshops. *"We particularly valued working with the MCAHE team to co-design the MCAHE school workshops, developing a new model for our education programme, which we have adopted. Having the artist working first in the classroom, then bringing the same children and their parents to our site for the art picnic, engaging children and their parents together with the art is truly innovative and [has led] to a new intergenerational relationship between our property and our local stakeholders"* (IMP4).

Gallery of Wonder on Tour (contemporary art exhibition at country / agricultural shows)

Audience and organisational impacts. Artworks that engage at individual levels are key resources for audience development. By exhibiting at festivals or events that do not normally have an art presence, GoWoT engaged rural audiences who may have fewer opportunities to encounter contemporary art. In this aim, it was highly successful: *"Art generally enriches people's lives and to bring it to a place where it might be unexpected is a real eye-opener." ... "I think it's very important for this type of community to see this type of art because it's something totally different." ... "It's important to make this kind of art a bit more accessible." ... "What's the point of art if ordinary people can't engage with it?" ... "The project has proved that people are interested, in this environment, to come and look at art, so that means that there's a great potential here for more art to come to these kinds of events"* (IMP6). The fair organisers all noted this overwhelmingly positive audience response, recognising that there was an appetite for contemporary art among their communities *"...particularly the way it had enthralled such a range of their visitors. They wanted the Gallery of Wonder back the following year"* (IMP7).

This success led to a range of positive impacts for organisations. Arts&Heritage, who supported GoWoT, noted *"it was a ground-breaking project... [GoWoT] was transformative in two ways... we developed a new strand in our curatorial strategy, working directly with rural communities, co-commissioning with community groups. This led us to create a new post dedicated to developing contemporary art projects exploring cultural heritage in rural communities. Our work with you on Gallery of Wonder on Tour was key to generating this new position in the creative economy and the role is now embedded in our organisation. Secondly... The success of this project led us to further work with Leeds and Newcastle universities... This relationship is now*

firmly established, and two members of Arts & Heritage now work regularly with the University, broadening their professional experience and bringing our knowledge and expertise into the academic domain and to students” (IMP7).

In achieving Arts Council England’s “strategic objective of encouraging art in outdoor and unusual sites”, GoWoT demonstrated that rural communities can be engaged and do value contemporary art. An ACE Senior Manager noted the audience impact: “*The project stands in my mind as an exemplar of effective contemporary arts engagement in rural communities... Barriers to audiences, such as cost... or perception... were effortlessly dispensed with. The very nature of The Gallery of Wonder was taking art to where people live and work and congregate. It was free, fun and thought-provoking in a context that was familiar, but which allowed for the surprising and unexpected*”. The impact on organisations was also significant: “*it influenced how those committees plan their shows and what they are comfortable with planning for their audiences in the future... making even incremental change is significant. Paradoxically such change helps keep tradition alive... Its impact will undoubtedly be felt for years to come*” (IMP8).

Jetty (artworks and public events at Dunston Staiths, exploring ‘sustainability’)

Organisational impacts. Through a series of community events, Jetty created a sustained impact for Tyne and Wear Building Preservation Trust, the organisation in charge of restoring and preserving Dunston Staiths. TWBPT noted, “*The collaboration with the Jetty project has had an enormous impact in raising the profile and public awareness of this important heritage site attracting new and unexpected audiences*” (IMP9). The collaboration inspired TWBPT to “*rethink how we... can use the cultural sector and more importantly the arts to not only develop but to sustain important heritage sites*”. This opened up new opportunities and “*enabled the Trust to secure a large Heritage Lottery Fund application for £418,000 to begin our restoration... and to start to develop a public programme of events around this important site*”. Complementing the structural restoration and continuing the successful groundwork laid by Jetty, the grant will fund “*interpretation of the site’s rich history, telling the story of the staiths*” as well as extensive engagement with schools and local community groups, and improving public access (IMP10). TWBPT emphasise that “*Without the Jetty research project... it would have not been possible to secure this funding*” (IMP9).

These projects share a common theme of situating contemporary artworks in non-gallery locations, including industrial heritage sites, traditional heritage properties, agricultural fairs, communities and private homes. The impacts for individuals were significant, especially for those who do not often encounter contemporary art or who have limited access. Partner organisations that witnessed these benefits were inspired to change their approaches, strategies and policies around engaging with contemporary art, creating further opportunities for audiences to engage with and enjoy art.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

- IMP1 ALL Borrower interviews (audio)
- IMP2 ALL Artist correspondence (emails)
- IMP3 ALL Culture organisation interviews (audio)
- IMP4 MCAHE Correspondence from National Trust senior managers (email & letter)
- IMP5 MCAHE Interview with heritage organisation manager (quoted in final report)
- IMP6 GoWoT Video produced by Arts&Heritage: <https://player.vimeo.com/video/147475671>
- IMP7 GoWoT Letter of support from Arts&Heritage
- IMP8 GoWoT Essay by ACE Senior Relationship Manager
- IMP9 Jetty Letter from Trust Manager, TWBPT (10 March 2015)
- IMP10 Jetty HLF website: <https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/news/new-future-dunston-staiths>

All sources of evidence are available on request.