

## Creative Case NORTH Explorations

### Supporting Information

This information has been compiled to accompany the **Creative Case NORTH** Explorations Brief and includes:

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## About Creative Case NORTH

**Creative Case NORTH** is the third phase of sector-led activity exploring the Creative Case for Diversity within a North Area context.

Initial activity took place in Yorkshire, North West and North East in **2012-13**, encompassing events ranging from artist provocations, workshops and open space discussions, to presentation of innovative artistic work, and strategic research and development. Reflections were of a positive journey, from initial feelings of nervousness, fear and even frustration ('are we still talking about this?'), to one of excitement and hope that momentum was being created and could be maintained. There was a common feeling that a 'tipping point' may have been reached that involved a shift in ownership of the issues and opportunities of the Creative Case – from an Arts Council-led agenda, to one more owned by the sector.

**Creative Case NORTH 2013-14** was programmed and managed by a North Area sector-led Consortium. The programme facilitated continued exploration of the Creative Case, with a focus on partnership models between creators and facilitators of artistic, cultural and participatory practice, and the range of spaces in which they make and share work with the public.

Events brought together National Portfolio Organisations (NPO), Major Partner Museums (MPM), arts organisations, freelance artists, and a range of strategic partners to share exemplars of best practice in partnership working, and mutually explore one another's practice through shared enquiry. **Creative Case NORTH** Residencies seeded 4 partnerships, demonstrating tangible exploration of the Creative Case and laying down foundations for future collaboration and longer term plans.

Delegate feedback indicated a growing desire and willingness within the arts and cultural sector to action change around the Creative Case for Diversity, with delegates pledging actions themed around conversations, partnerships, programming and commissioning.

## **Creative Case NORTH 2014-15**

The current programme of activity has developed from the ambition amongst **Creative Case NORTH** Consortium Partners to capitalise on the energy and momentum that investment to date has enabled, and continue developing the growing sense of community around the Creative Case for Diversity within the North Area.

The core programme of activity is:

**Creative Case NORTH Dialogues:** November 2014 – February 2015

Financial honorariums facilitating practical peer to peer sessions relating to National Portfolio Organisation and Major Partner Museum 2015-18 Business Planning activity, encouraging dynamic sharing of knowledge, building of confidence, and explorations of potential partnerships.

**Creative Case NORTH Explorations (Residencies):** February – March 2015

6 partnerships pairings, providing time and space to undertake mutual exploration and shared enquiry of partnership practice within the context of the Creative Case for Diversity, bringing together partners across art form/museum, spectrum of scale, and level of experience.

**Creative Case NORTH Gatherings:** March 2015

2 North Area events to share learning from Creative Case NORTH Dialogues and Explorations, and explore ambitions for next steps in the North Area through a Long Table discussion.

**Creative Case NORTH Partners:** ARC Stockton, Artlink, BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, Contact Theatre, GemArts, STAY, ZENDEH.

## An Introduction to the Creative Case for Diversity

The Creative Case is the Arts Council's approach to diversity and equality, setting out how diversity and equality can enrich the arts for artists, audiences and our wider society. Through the Creative Case the Arts Council is inviting the arts sector to engage with a new and different approach to diversity and equality in the arts.

By diversity we mean the multitude of ethnicities, faiths and socio-economic classes that make up modern England. This concept of diversity includes disabled people, older people and people of all sexual orientations. The geography of diversity spans England's regions, from the most rural to the inner city.

Our national diversity offers new opportunities for collaboration, from creative partnerships to sources of revenue. This arts-driven concept of diversity as opportunity represents a shift in perspective, from regarding diversity as a prescriptive aspect of equality legislation to understanding its creative potential and the ways in which it can promote long-term organisational resilience.

In moving away from a 'deficit' and 'problematizing' approach to diversity, the Arts Council wishes to encourage those they fund and partner to be responsible for creating the conditions on the ground for further equality in the arts. Diversity is an integral part of the artistic process, an important element in the dynamic that drives art forward, innovates it and brings it closer to a profound dialogue with contemporary society.

The Creative Case recognises that art placed in the margins through structural barriers and antiquated and exclusive approaches has to be brought to the centre of our culture and valued accordingly. The three interlocking progressions of Creative Case are:

### **Equality**

There has to be a continued drive for equality to remove barriers in the arts world, releasing and realising potential and helping to transform the arts so that they truly reflect the reality of the diverse country that we have become but still do not fully recognise.

### **Recognition**

There has to be a new conversation that attempts through various means to re-situate diverse artists, both historically and theoretically, at the centre of British art – whether that is the performing arts, the visual arts, combined arts, music, literature or film.

### **A new vision**

We need a new framework for viewing diversity, one that takes it out of a negative or 'deficit' model and places it in an artistic context. Diversity becomes not an optional extra but part of the fabric of our discussions and decisions about how we encourage an energetic, relevant, fearless and challenging artistic culture in England and the wider world.

For full information published by Arts Council England around the Creative Case for Diversity visit: <http://disabilityarts.creativecase.org.uk/>

## 2013-14 Creative Case NORTH Residencies

The 2013-14 **Creative Case NORTH** Residencies provided a new approach to commissioning, enabling exploration of partnership practice the context of the Creative Case for Diversity. The programme brought together creative practitioners and organisations/venues with the following aims:

- To support the development of new partnerships between creators and facilitators of artistic, cultural and participatory practice, and venues, spaces or organisations which engage the public in arts and cultural activity;
- To support the development of new partnerships across art forms, spectrums of scale, and levels of experience;
- To stimulate and support joint exploration of partnership working within the context of the Creative Case;
- To encourage a creative approach to exploring partnership models;
- To provide residency partners with an opportunity to take risks and experiment with a new idea, or exploration of process, without implications;
- To share the processes, findings and outcomes of the residencies with the wider arts and cultural sector, and public.

Four partnership pairings spent seven days together over the period 28 April – 14 May 2014, exploring partnership practice within the context of the Creative Case, coming together for a shared evaluation discussion on 15 May 2014.

### Nature & Characteristics of the 2013-14 Creative Case NORTH Residencies

Partnership working and diversity were approached from different perspectives and with different aims, some seeking to inform **strategy and vision**, and others focusing on specific **art forms or artistic approaches**, common to all was **exploration and investigation**, the **testing of ideas**, and **visioning and modelling change**.

The residencies were characterised by **mutual support and exchange**, and an **openness of dialogue**, enabled by the **agenda free** nature of the brief; the partners felt accountable only to each other, providing **time and space** for mutual exploration:

*“This opportunity provided us with a space to collaborate and to explore what we wanted because there weren’t any other agendas.”*

- Anna Disley, New Writing North.

This fostered candid relationships between partners, resulting in **open and frank**, no-holds barred conversations, and the ‘open-ended’ nature of the brief enabled **fluid conversations** and explorations, whose direction were informed by a cycle of questioning:

*“Frank, candid, meaningful, quality conversation from the off”*

- Louie Ingham, The Dukes

*“What’s not to like about that kind of proposal, and make it up as we go along, because you’ll respond, you come up with a question, you answer, then you take the next step because if you’re into this process saying, “Right, we’re sitting here but we want to get over there. Okay, let’s just go and walk over there”.”*

- Aidan Moesby, Visual Artist

The grounding for these exchanges was an **equality of relationship**, with partners coming together from different scales and perspectives to embark on **mutual journeys**:

*“What I liked about our relationship is there was no ‘poor cousin’ in it. I really enjoyed that actually. We both started on the same page, we were both level...”*

- Garfield Allen, STUN

*“It’s a flat collaboration, there’s no hierarchy within it, we both stand together.”*

- Aidan Moesby, Visual Artist

## Impact of the 2013-14 Creative Case NORTH Residencies

For all partners the residencies represent the start of a relationship that will not be limited to the residency timeframe. Within the residencies there have developed new relationships, which have been short tracked through **accelerated conversations, laying foundations for future collaboration and long term plans**:

*“For us it is very much the start of something and we have got other plans in place to follow on already, some of them hazier than others, but yes, I think the message is to keep the momentum up really.”*

- Tamsin Drury, hÅb

*“Every now and again something really important happens and it feels like one of those moments.”*

- Lisa Matthews

All partners have plans to continue the dialogue that was instigated and utilise them as a catalyst for further **development and action**, ranging from business planning, programming, engaging with additional artists and piloting new projects.

## 2013-14 Creative Case NORTH Residency Partners

### **Passing Places – Aidan Moesby and Visual Arts Rural Communities**

Aidan Moesby (Artist) and Janet Ross (VARC) explored the potential of a new partnership with real possibilities to make a positive difference to the practice of both partners. Through critical dialogue and reflection of current practices they discussed the possibilities of realising tangible outcomes around their commitment to increasing accessibility to quality meaningful creative opportunities for diverse artists within a rural context.

Aidan and Janet have continued to meet following their residency, and have developed plans for an accessible and sustainable residency model for diverse artists, particularly disabled artists. The residencies will focus on artistic quality and experience, and enable artists to create art without agenda. They are currently exploring opportunities to develop capacity and resources in order to deliver this model.

Tumblr: <http://passing-places.tumblr.com/>

Twitter: @Textartist / @PassingPlaces1 / @varc\_arts

### **Divergency Mcr – STUN and hÅb**

An exploration into diversifying the northern artist base for live art and contemporary performance through database research, and bringing together a group of diverse artists for a meal, an artform tools + strategies workshop and a group go-see visit. Led by Garfield Allen from STUN (Sustained Theatre Up North), a membership organisation dedicated to the development of UK Black and Asian Creatives, and Tamsin Drury from hÅb, a live art and contemporary performance development organisation, the partnership came together with a joint goal of encouraging new ways of telling more diverse stories for new audiences.

Both conversation and action have continued since the Creative Case NORTH residency, including the rescheduled Selina Thompson workshop and a DIY11\* residency “Call and Response” by Harold Offeh, which brought together a diverse group of artists for three days to explore their practice. Divergency has just been successful in raising GftA funds to continue the work initiated by the Creative Case North Residency. Funding enables an emerging producer to work with and extend the Divergency group and to organise more meals, discussions, workshops, micro-commissions and performances over the next twelve months.

\* in association with Live Art Development Agency

Blog: <http://divergencymcr.posthaven.com>

Twitter: @stunlive / @hazardmcr / @warnmcr

## **REDACT – New Writing North and Lisa Matthews**

Redact was a partnership between Anna Disley at New Writing North and Lisa Matthews, a poet with dyslexia. Lisa spent the residency experimenting with SpLD assistive software to create new poetry, develop workshoping techniques that she then used in a creative workshop with 6 non-dyslexic poets. Her unique insight resulted in new approaches to writing poetry and new poems, which are presented on a project website alongside participant's reflections - [www.wordstobirds.info](http://www.wordstobirds.info).

Lis and New Writing North are currently seeking funding to develop the dyslexia and poetry work, and have been discussing other projects Lisa has been developing, including a major project inspired by biologist Rachel Carson. Lisa, together with fine artist and digital developer Melanie Ashby (who designed the "wordstobirds website"), will undertake 4 seasonal residencies on the Northumberland coast applying Carson's rigorous scientific techniques to collecting materials for poetry and visual arts. There will be a range of outcomes including an event at Durham Book Festival, which New Writing North programme.

Twitter: @NewWritingNorth

## **Spice and Space – The Dukes and The Love And Etiquette Foundation**

Exploring the recipe for diversity and partnership: by immersing themselves in each other's worlds, and making connections between their artists, collaborators, and those who work in their organisations, The Dukes and The Love & Etiquette Foundation explored innovative approaches to new partnership working. Led by Louie Ingham (The Dukes) and Rizwan Iqbal (The Love & Etiquette Foundation) they asked: 'What are the best foundations to build this partnership with diversity and diverse practice at its centre?' and 'What are the big ideas and how would they best work in Lancashire?'

Twitter: @thedukestheatre / @LOVETIQUETTE