

At Home with Art

Evaluation Report

Are we going to do it again, that's all I want to know (Andrew)

Introduction

For most young people at risk, opportunities where confidence can be boosted and aspirations raised are few and far between. This project succeeded in giving a small group a very special experience, changing the way they looked at art, at galleries and also themselves.

Aims

The key aim of this project is to promote social inclusion, through the involvement of young people excluded from formal education, in the exhibitions programme at Orleans House Gallery.

Objectives

- To arrange an artist in residence at the Pupil Referral Centre.
- To work with the *At Home with Art* exhibition as a spring board for ideas.
- To create sculpted pieces to be installed as part of *At Home with Art* when it tours to Orleans in September 2000.
- To provide the young people with an opportunity to work with a practising artist at their centre and to design, create and install their own work as part of a Nationally recognised touring exhibition.
- To provide a link between Orleans House Gallery and the Pupil Referral Service in Hounslow which can develop over the next 3 years as a parallel to the relationship which has been nurtured in Richmond with the Strathmore Centre.

Process

Planning

The project was devised jointly with the Pupil Referral Service during Winter Term 1999. Devised as a response to interest expressed in our previous work with young people at risk by the headteacher, this project complemented the aims of the referral service to *maximise the potential of individual pupils and their opportunities for success*. This service caters for up to 60 young people aged 11-16 who have been permanently excluded from a mainstream school.

Following an initial introduction to the group of year 11 students aged 15-16, we organised a visit to see the touring show *At Home with Art* while it was on display at Tate Britain in February 2000. This was the intended starting point and focus for the project.

Centre co-ordinator Joan Wren, and artist Paul Callaghan both felt that subsequent planning meetings during March/April 2000 helped to clarify aims,

objectives, roles and responsibilities. Project goals were also continually redefined before sessions in order that the needs of the participants were met effectively. It may have been useful to have involved staff from other subject areas in the planning to encourage cross-curricula elements.

The pupils were encouraged to participate in the planning process as much as possible and were involved in the preparation needed for the publicity material and private view. The artist felt that outcomes might have been different had the pupils been more involved in planning during the early stages of the project. For the benefit of those who had missed the Tate visit we did organise an initial briefing session referring to the pieces made by the *At Home with Art* sculptors. Images of these works as well as other sculptural and design references were also used by artist Paul Callaghan in the initial workshops.

Visits

We visited *At Home with Art* during its showing at Tate Britain on the 9th February 2000. For most of the pupils this was the first or one of very few visits to a large museum or art gallery. Due to recruitment patterns at the centre, and the time gap, the pupils who came along to see the exhibition were different to those that ended up working on the project.

At the beginning of the project (May/June) a group of pupils visited Orleans House Gallery to see the space in which they would be exhibiting later in the year. Paul had set an exercise involving disposable cameras and pupils took the opportunity to take photographs of domestic objects/furniture and interesting features around the building during this visit.

In June, mid way through the workshops we planned a visit to the Design Museum with the group and Paul Callaghan. This was a very useful opportunity for me to get to know the group better and helpful to Paul in developing ideas for the practical work.

Artist Workshops

Taking place throughout June/July 2000, the workshops led by Paul Callaghan took place in the art room at the Pupil Referral Unit. I attended many of the initial sessions to support Paul and to establish a connection with the young people. The sessions developed through drawing from slides of household objects, through photography until the pupils were ready to commit their unique designs to paper.

Once the participants were satisfied with their designs and they had considered the practicalities involved, the group began to work in a variety of materials to create a prototype. Paul and the group worked well together, and reflecting on the project Gemma commented *we wouldn't have been able to do the project without Paul*, Andrew added *He had all the tools*. Joan Wren was very satisfied with the quality of Paul's input, *Paul provided valuable demonstrations in a range of media during workshop sessions and offered the technical and practical support necessary for the students to realise their design intentions*. From Paul's point of view, the school was very accommodating and staff were supportive during workshops. The group

responded to being offered the chance to use tools and materials associated with 'professional' practice.

The Exhibition: 23 September – 3 December 2000

Chris, Gemma, Andrew H, Andrew G and Veronique were all involved in the installation of the exhibition during the week beginning 18 September. This involved writing introductory text, selecting, laying out and hanging pieces as well as organising final touches such as the wallpaper, and candles to create the atmosphere of a real interior.

The opening of the exhibition was celebrated by a special private view for the young people, their friends and family on Friday 22 September 6-9pm. The 'core' group took ownership over the organisation of this event, helping to purchase refreshments, laying out and pouring drinks for guests. Chris Hazel spoke for the whole group when he contributed to the official launch of the show by giving a speech.

The young people were very pleased that friends and family attended the private view, parents commented on how they would now visit in the future knowing that that the gallery was free and accessible, and their pride in their children's work was evident. The headteacher was struck by the attendance of parents commenting on how they rarely attend similar occasions at the centre.

Throughout the exhibition over 3,700 people visited the gallery, in addition *Household Designs* was used as inspiration for a range of education sessions/activities including a *containers* session for several school visits, as well as after school club and holiday activity work. Several children also engaged with the work while completing the gallery activity pack.

The responses to *Household Designs* by the general public were very positive. Viewed in conjunction with the *At Home with Art* touring exhibition the project display compared favourably. This comparison is reflected by many comments in the visitor's book, for instance *Children's efforts V.G - the top artists v. Poor, children's work very innovative* and *Congratulations to Hounslow Pupil Referral Group - for the rest most disappointing*. Even young children visiting the gallery, who do not have an immediate bias against contemporary art were drawn to the works upstairs and in particular to the lamps which were displayed at a low accessible level.

The Video Project - At Home with Design

During the course of the exhibition, Chris Hazel decided he would like to make a video documentary about the project. The video which was produced as part of his media studies course was created with the help of staff at West Thames College as well as with fellow students from the PRS.

This professional looking documentary includes interviews with myself and my colleague Catherine Cartwright, close ups of the two exhibitions and commentary by Chris. Having eloquently described the ideas and concepts behind the *At Home with Art* exhibition and the project, Chris concludes the video by commenting on how his involvement boosted self-confidence as well

as his confidence in art. Once again Chris shows just how comfortable he is with speaking to an audience as he looks straight at the camera.

Financial Summary

The total expenditure for this project was £2,522.83. This represents an overspend of approximately £167 which was covered by Orleans House Gallery admin and exhibitions budgets.

Evaluation methods

Group discussions/one to one interviews
Taped interviews
Video Documentary created by Chris Hazel
Photography

Feedback

The responses to the project were very positive. The most important points are reflected in measures for success, unexpected outcomes and the swot analysis. The feedback in full can be found in the appendices.

Measures of success

- Number of pupils completing pieces for the exhibition
- Number of pupils actively involved in the installation of the exhibition - five out of a possible ten
- Number of pupils and their families who attended the private view
- Response to the project during feedback
- Visitor figures and responses to the exhibition
- Use of the exhibition for school visits and related activities

Overview: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clarity of aims and objectives from the outset• Good relationships between project facilitators and students• Excellent input from the artist• Visits broadened project• Flexibility of project to adapt to individual needs of the students• Extent to which pupils felt welcome and at ease at the gallery	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Timing of the Tate exhibition• Summer break between project conclusion and exhibition installation• Limited consultation with the young people and the artist during planning

Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chance to develop partnership projects in the future • To disseminate information about this project to colleagues within the sectors as an example of good practice • To use this good experience and lessons learned for future work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gap due to half term at a crucial stage in the project • Difficulty of engaging all the participants fully in the project

Unexpected outcomes & indicators of success

For the participants:

- Pupils were pleased to receive positive feedback from other students at the centre, staff, friends and parents.
- Pupils were proud of their achievements and surprised by the number of people attending the private view.
- Extent to which Chris Hazel and other pupils capitalised upon the benefit of the project by initiating and creating the video documentary.
- Extent to which pupils are now considering art in a work related context.
- Created a shift in their choices for the future, with art taking a more prominent place than previously.

For the Pupil Referral Service:

- Extension of resources and tools available for pupils as a direct result of the project.
- Encouragement for work of this kind with other partners.

For the Gallery:

- Successful model for future projects.
- Warm response to the exhibition by the general public.
- Interesting topic for school visits as well as after school and holiday activities.

For the Artist:

- Extent to which issues addressed during the project can inform future work with young people.

Lessons learned

This project had very clear aims and objectives, as a result the process was easier to manage than previous projects while the outcomes in terms of pupil responses were very similar. As this was my second large project with a group of excluded young people I did feel the benefit of my previous experience. I was able to manage the project in such a way that I provided input at all the crucial stages. I was able to devise new strategies for documenting and evaluating the project. The taped interviews with the core group went well, it would have been interesting to have completed the same sort of interview with

those who were less engaged. The best piece of evaluation came about entirely unexpectedly in the form of Chris Hazel's video documentary.

Sustainability

Given that such good relationships were established, it is important for us all to keep in touch now the project has reached its conclusion. As organisations, PRS and Orleans House Gallery will continue to work in partnership in the future building upon the successes of this first project. This contact will take the form of invitations to events and exhibitions, or visits to other museums and galleries, as well as ideas for full-scale projects. It is important that visits to the centre occur from time to time, and I hope to attend the forthcoming end of year award celebrations at PRS.

As far as individuals involved in the project are concerned, my hope is that sustainability will take the form of further work experience in the gallery and informal support as a referee/mentor.

Conclusions

I feel very proud of this project and of everyone involved. The project has widened the horizons of the PRS and given key staff the confidence to embark on other projects of this kind in the future. Working with an out of Borough referral service has given the gallery an opportunity to build upon past experience, and develop practice in terms of working with young people at risk. For the participants this has provided an opportunity for self-expression, self-confidence and a chance to prove themselves capable of achievement. In a society where many young people lose out and feel let down by the system, this was a win win situation.

Appendices

Budget

Evaluation reports - Young People, Joan Wren, Paul Callaghan

Press releases & cuttings

Photographs of the workshops and exhibition

Visitor feedback & Activity Pack templates