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## **University Teacher Education and the Pop-Up Art School**

### **Christine Jarvis and Sarah Williamson**

#### **Genesis**

Johnson (2010, p.26) argues that most ideas ‘do not happen in a flash’ but rather form as a result of the ‘adjacent possible’, a term coined to describe the notion that ideas are only ‘built out of a collection of existing parts’ at a certain time. The Pop-Up Art Schools (PUAS) at the University of Huddersfield, the focus of this chapter, resulted from an eclectic collection of temporary and alternative cultural, social and retail events at a particular time. Pop-up shops began opening in unexpected places; pop-up restaurants and bars offered new experiences in unusual locations and art galleries inhabited disused shops. These pop-ups seemed fresh and exciting, and were portrayed by the media as creative ‘go now or miss it’ opportunities. There seemed to be a *zeitgeist*, something ‘in the air’. There was clearly an attraction to the fleeting and ephemeral, combined with a desire to experience something unusual and memorable. Many of the pop-ups seemed to offer the chance to form an instant community through shared ‘real-life’ experiences and connection with others. They seemed to provide an antidote to the impersonal, the corporate and the slick. They seemed to have more soul.

Reading about a pop-up art gallery was the inspiration behind Pop Up Art Schools (PUAS). It coincided with listening to a radio programme entitled ‘For One Night Only’ featuring seminal shows such as the 1969 ‘come back performance’ of Elvis. We began by ‘googling’ the term Pop-Up Art School and...nothing! No results returned. Although one-off art events and arts festivals were commonplace, it seemed as though no one had organised something called a Pop-Up Art School, so we decided to harness the attraction and the appeal of the pop-up concept by organising an instant, a pop-up, Art School.

The aim of the University of Huddersfield's Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) is to train students to be art and design teachers, as they are called in the United Kingdom - in the further and adult education sector. The 'pop-up' presented an opportunity for students to work collaboratively to plan, design and organise a large-scale informal community learning event. The trainee-teachers were also studying creativity theories and could now experience collaborative creativity.

The course tutor, Sarah Williamson, had become increasingly interested in the potential of the arts to reach out through collaboration and shared participatory experience. The PUAS provided the opportunity to explore this with trainee-teachers and to model the risk-taking and challenge to oneself and others that can lead to transformative and critical learning (Clover 2007).

Christine Jarvis is Sarah's colleague, and has overall responsibility for the University School where teacher-training takes place. She has a long-standing interest in the impact of the arts in education; there seemed to be many connections between the PUAS and her research and reading in this area. Her specific role in this project has been the analysis of the feedback from participants and the examination of the relevance of the literature on the arts and the professions and art in the community to the PUAS.

Three Schools were held, each in a different community setting. This chapter describes these and the way they enabled the School of Education to engage with the wider public, with a music festival, an art gallery and a community school. It sets out the University's position with respect to the arts in broad terms and tries to situate the Pop-Up Art Schools within the literature relating to arts and professional education and the arts and community education. Finally, we analyse the feedback from the art-schools and reflect on the impact they had on the professional training of teachers in the University.

### **Three events; three communities**

The first Pop-Up Art School was held on University premises. Inspired by a lecture on sustainability in education, the trainee-teachers focused on recycling, using found, discarded and unwanted materials. A 'campus call' put out for unwanted paper, fabric, buttons, beads, ribbon and wool, yielded a great response. This was the first indication of a strong desire to be part of something creative on the part of the wider University community. Many people were looking forward to being involved and being part of the event.

The University's largest function room was booked. Transforming a corporate space into an instantly welcoming and appealing creative environment was a major challenge. Temporary 'walls', created by hanging a variety of things such as exhibition posters, drawings, photographs and some sculptural objects from washing lines hung across the perimeter and across the room, were simple and surprisingly effective. On one length of washing line an instant exhibition of 'paper dresses' made from road maps, wallpaper, atlas pages and paper doilies, commissioned from students studying fashion design at a local college, caught the eye.

At the event each trainee teacher set up a large table as an activity base like a stall at a fair.

Participants could wander around, join in, or just watch. Activities included making 'junk jewellery' from bottle tops and crisp packets, fashioning delicate accessories from newspaper and buttons and using origami techniques to make gift boxes from unwanted wallpaper.

Shredded paper was used for decorative weaving, and art postcards made from magazines.

'Newspaper couture' (pleating pages from newspaper and old telephone directories to make paper dresses and ballgowns) was very popular, as were the opportunities to practise drawing

techniques and construct collaborative pieces of artwork. Learning to knit with 'Auntie Barbara'

was an unexpected success, seeming to reveal a desire to learn a traditional skill once handed down through generations. Guerilla knitting and yarn-storming activities linked to the growing popularity of using knitting and yarn (rather than paint) as a form of graffiti or street art, and to groups such as London's Knit the City and the Canadian-based protest group 'The Revolutionary Knitters' (Robertson, 2007).

A programme of 'pick and mix' mini-lectures was devised for a specially created classroom area. These included talks from the trainee-teachers who gave insights into their careers as arts professionals, for example in television set design. Some talks were more fine-art based - discussing performance and installation, and one talk invited the audience to contribute to a growing patchwork piece of work which captured stories of 'first love'.

Refreshments were served in vintage china cups and saucers that formed a decorative display in their own right. Visitors were encouraged to select their cup and saucer, promoting a visual sensibility. The china had been collected from charity shops and carboot sales to re-use in keeping with the sustainable ethos of the event. It was noticeable that while the 'tearoom' provided a sociable area where people could have a break and relax, it also provided a 'safe' area where people could just watch the art school around them.

French music from an 'Age of Couture' exhibition at the Victoria & Albert museum in London added to the vintage atmosphere. The day closed with a live performance from a jazz funk band whose style and improvisation added to the creative ambience. The event was summarised by trainee teacher Ellie who said 'there's been a great aura about the place seeing people get creative'.

The second PUAS was held in conjunction with the internationally acclaimed Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival (HCMF) and Huddersfield Art Gallery. The festival featured work by the avant-garde composer John Cage and coincided with the hosting of a prestigious national touring exhibition of his artwork, 'Every Day is a Good Day', at the art gallery. The PUAS 'popped up' to run alongside a performance of Cage's music being held in the gallery itself. The timing of the event also coincided with renewed media interest in Cage and his controversial piece of music entitled 4'33 (four minutes, thirty-three seconds of silence).

At the event, the ensemble 'Apartment House' performed Cage's 'Atlas Eclipticalis' and 'Winter Music'. These pieces, described as 'illuminating space with constellations of sound' (HCMF, p.34) were performed and amplified in the gallery space using various instruments including two grand pianos, cello, harp and voice. The music performance was non-seated which promoted accessibility and the opportunity to experience both the music and the art school. Participants could wander freely around the gallery spaces, and many of the art activities involved making responses to the exhibition and music.

Cage commonly explored text and mark-making in his art and many of his compositions were inspired by numerical combinations and notions of 'chance'. These provided a theme and starting point for the PUAS activities. For example, participants created a 10metre floor painting, which involved painting or collaging a particular word selected from a 1920s encyclopaedic 'Book of Knowledge'. The page, line and word were selected through techniques of chance, with the results eclectic and intriguing. A 'memory quilt' of chance events was collaboratively assembled, and for this people were asked to remember and write down an event or occurrence in their lives which had happened by chance. These memories were written onto randomly found pieces of paper such as bus tickets, receipts and shopping lists, then decoratively stitched onto

fabric and then quilted together. Still life drawing was dictated by the roll of a dice to determine the media to be used, distance and viewpoint. Postcards and bags were made using printing techniques inspired by Cage, and a 'John Cage Video Booth' was set up to make a collaboratively constructed piece of video poetry from randomly selected words. Simple concertina journals with lino-printed covers were made together with hand-crafted bookmarks to capture responses to the music and art on display. One activity also asked participants to respond in the form of a Haiku (a three line Japanese poem) and this became a film installation when the poem was typed using a vintage typewriter, filmed and projected.

Over two hundred participants came to the event, including students studying contemporary music at high school and university level, art students, senior citizens, a supported women's group, members of the public, supporters of HCMF, John Cage enthusiasts and trainee-teachers studying to teach in different sectors (different age groups). It was fascinating to see the successful fusion and overlap of these people in a shared cultural and learning experience.

Indeed, the atmosphere was seen as positively vibrant: in the words of one member of gallery staff, the gallery had 'come alive'. Participants were encouraged to write feedback on Pop-Up Art School postcards and to 'peg' their completed postcards onto washing lines hung in the gallery entrance.

Following the success of the previous PUAS, Sarah wanted to see if the University could use this to work with other communities, both adults and children. A primary school head-teacher inspired by the University PUAS, asked if we would be willing to 'pop up' at her school. In collaboration with the school, a day of original and exciting art activities were planned with the aim of inspiring teachers, parents and children to be creative, in particular through the use of recycled, re-used and discarded materials. The trainee-teachers worked with 120 children aged

between 7 and 11 and their teachers, and then with 50 parents and carers who came into the school for an afternoon of family learning.

### **Art and the University of Huddersfield**

The origin of the PUAS within a teacher-training course in the University of Huddersfield is important to us, because of the challenges involved in introducing the arts into teacher-training, even in a University that values the arts highly. Huddersfield is an industrial town in the North of England. It is home to a world-famous choral society and to the Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival and the arts are integral to the life of the University. There is a strong focus on the creative industries in its portfolio. Its School of Art, Design and Architecture develops artists, architects and designers working in a wide range of media and works closely with local arts organisations and businesses, as well as with prestigious international organisations such as Saatchi and Saatchi. For example, students recently held textile workshops for local young people and ran pop-up art shops in local towns. It has great strengths in textiles and fashion design, in keeping with the history of the area. Huddersfield was an important centre for the textile industry in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, and many of its buildings are imaginatively converted textile mills; the University is one of only six to be invited into membership of the worshipful company of woolmen, one of England's ancient craftsmen's guilds. Fashion students from the University worked on the Oscar winning film, 'The King's Speech.' The University has a formal partnership with the Yorkshire Sculpture Park, which is home to a superb collection by internationally renowned sculptors; Huddersfield's research students based there use its national arts education archive, the Park's staff use the University library, University staff have exhibited at the park and students make regular visits to draw and for inspiration and work as guides at exhibitions. The School of Music, Humanities and Media

also develops arts practitioners: writers, actors, directors, multimedia specialists and musicians.

It provides concerts and performances on the University's town centre campus, but uses neighbourhood venues too, so that it is fully integrated within the community. Its Professor Richard Steinitz introduced the Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival in 1978. The University hosts this festival which emphasizes innovation and pushing musical boundaries and has welcomed virtually every major living composer since its inception. The University has a formal agreement with the Royal Armouries Museum, which enables students to study the design of weapons and jewellery from an extensive historical period (the museum holds the crown jewels). The University's chancellor, Sir Patrick Stewart, theatre, television and film actor, is very involved in University life- for example, he gives master-classes to drama students. In essence the relationship between the University and the local arts community is symbiotic. The University benefits the creative life of the local community by acting as a focus for activity, hosting international events and drawing in major artists, as well as training people to work in the creative industries; the local community provides opportunities for student placements, advises on curriculum content, and engages staff and students in projects and research.

But, while the arts have an important role within the University and the region, finding space for creativity in professional training of teachers is often challenging. We consider this to be related to the nature of nationally specified teacher-training standards. Government specified teacher-training requirements are highly prescriptive. The trainee teachers involved in this project were preparing to teach in the lifelong learning sector; standards for teaching in that sector require the students to evidence thirty-seven separate pieces of knowledge and understanding, and thirty-seven skills in professional practice. (<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk>). Inevitably, most of their time is spent developing portfolios with evidence (from mentors, lesson plans,

teaching observations) that they have met these standards. They also have to undertake extensive teaching practice in colleges over a 36 week period, so time for open-ended, creative thinking is fairly limited. For these reasons, trainee-teachers can feel isolated from the subjects that led them to wish to teach in the first place and rarely have the opportunity to participate in wider aspects of University life. One of the positive side-effects of the PUAS was that it involved trainee-teachers with the wider University community through participation in the Contemporary Music Festival. Participation of this kind is rare because of the demanding and prescriptive nature of the curriculum.

### **Arts and professional education**

The PUAS provided a rare opportunity for teacher-educators to do something different. They enabled them to stretch the thinking of their trainee-teachers, by giving them the chance to think about the educational potential of the arts for working in the wider community.

The first PUAS was used to educate two groups of professionals simultaneously; the trainee art teachers themselves, and other trainee-teachers, working with different age groups and subjects who participated in the day. There are good and well-theorised examples of professional education where the arts are used to enhance professional practice. Many come from outside the UK, particularly with respect to adult education. Manigaulte, for example, uses 'various art activities – drawing, making collages, and using clay', whilst working with student interns learning about community health education, to improve their reflective practice by supporting the process of 'surfacing our underlying thinking' (Manigaulte, Yorks & Kasl, 2006, p. 29). Kinsella (2008, p. 48) describes using literary arts in the education of health professionals as a transformative process. She argues this enables them to 'reawaken attention to the lived

experience of those with whom we work' by engaging them with texts that present them with the experience of care from the perspective of those who are vulnerable. Gelo's (2008) work demonstrates how the visual arts can be used to develop empathy in medical students. At the PUAS the arts were used to show trainee-teachers, who were not art specialists or intending to teach arts, that they could be highly creative and that the arts could readily be used by those who were not art specialists to promote all kinds of learning. It helped them understand instantaneously and experientially how they could integrate these methods into their professional practice.

The trainee-teachers who specialised in art and design were also influenced as professionals, but in their case it had a different dimension. They experienced arts education's wider remit. There is an extensive literature on community arts that analyses a wide range of practice and comes from diverse political and theoretical perspectives and in this section we reflect on the relationship between the PUAS and this literature. Many of these writers have noted the capacity that participation in the creative arts offers to people to construct and express the world for themselves and to transform their perception of themselves. This democratising process has strong roots in adult and community education. For example, Clover (2006), demonstrates the empowering impact of a photography project in which women from disadvantaged communities were able to express their realities through their camera work; Sandlin (2007) discusses how adults take part in creative protests outside formal educational institutions, through the process of 'culture jamming', a form of cultural resistance in which activists create alternative forms of popular culture which subvert consumerism. Further, Muterspaw and Fenwick (2007), discuss multiple ways in which educators have used music, particularly community choirs, to inspire and energise communities and Tett (2011) has outlined the dramatic potential of arts work in prisons.

Other kinds of programmes reach out in order to bring more people in to an existing, more elite community. For example, Rademaker (2007) describes the role of an arts advocacy group that produces an extensive programme of reach-out activities in schools and communities, in order to encourage wider consumption of art in that region.

### Situating PUAS

If we try to situate the PUAS in the context of these kinds of work, it seems that its ephemeral, eclectic and serendipitous character is also reflected in its theoretical orientation. It is not a mechanism for teaching people about the elite arts; but it does start to overcome some of the barriers people may have felt about art, and introduces them directly to practising artists. The location of the second school as part of the Contemporary Music Festival meant it brought people closer to some elite performances, as well as offering cross-fertilisation between different artistic communities. Nor can the activities be construed as community activism or conscientisation, in the sense of focusing on community issues, injustice or restorative action. The trainees do not start by focusing on 'generative themes' (Freire, 1972) of concern to specific groups and communities; nor do they develop the kinds of sustained relationships with participants that could lead to further work, nor do participants themselves operate as any kind of cohesive community, with the possible exception of some aspects of the primary school. Rather the PUAS is a kind of sampler for the trainee-teachers of the possibilities for further work, including more sustained community activities. There are many aspects of the curriculum in schools and colleges in England that, albeit not intentionally, militate against encouraging and exploiting this more general and democratic approach to creativity. Schools and colleges are judged by grades that students achieve in public examinations, which form a central part of league tables and inspections by Ofsted (the Office for Standards in Education). In recent years,

schools have of necessity focused more heavily on teaching to the examination and ensuring as many children as possible achieve required grades. This leaves teachers with less time for developing children's wider interests, experimental work and broader social purpose. The intense focus, especially in colleges and universities on employability and vocationalism has also meant that the development of industry-ready skills and an orientation towards a consumer rather than a community market is likely. This has had a direct impact on the way that the University is able to train its art and design teachers. The PUAS did indeed develop some very practical organizational, marketing and administrative skills in our trainees, that enhanced their employability as teachers, but it also reinforced the potential that art has to reach out and have a powerful impact on the lives of many people for whom art will never be a career.

An interesting comparison can be made with The University of Lapland's programme as part of its work to 'familiarise art educators with the strategy of place-specific art, community art and environmental art' (Jokela, 2007, p. 239). It supports arts educators to develop the ability to work in communities to carry out winter arts projects, through its 'Winter Art Education Project', which also involved individuals in temporary art work. The Winter Project included specific training in snow and ice making techniques, and has a much more specific focus (on the cultural heritage of winter, snow and ice) than the more eclectic PUAS. What it does have in common with it, is the desire to democratise art-making within communities rather than within elite groups and to evaluate the impact of *process* rather than to prioritise aesthetic judgements about products.

The PUAS also created empathic moments for trainee teachers by creating a setting in which they came face-to-face with those who did not self-identify as artists; with those who in many cases had been excluded from arts by poor experiences of schooling, or by internalizing beliefs

about art that made them question their own worthiness to participate. The trainee teachers running the School developed a sharp understanding of the potential for participation and creative expression so many people keep relatively hidden.

### **Pleasure and possibilities**

Feedback from the Pop-Up Art Schools was captured using creative processes in keeping with the events. Responses mirrored the instantaneous nature of the event, and captured immediate feelings. They have the value of being relatively unmediated and uninfluenced by any researcher, or by a desire to please a specific teacher. The disadvantage is that we cannot know how much more participants might have been able to say if they had been questioned in more depth or subject to follow-up to see whether the art school had changed their behaviour or thinking.

For the first event, feedback was collected on recycled wallpaper cut into squares and formed into a 'patchwork quilt'. This grew during the day, forming a piece of artwork in its own right from people's personal responses. The quilt format was in keeping with the ethos of creative collaboration, and captured both individual and collective experience.

The PUAS held in conjunction with the international music festival and a local art gallery collected feedback on specially designed postcards, pegged onto a washing line in the gallery entrance. This created a visually attractive display and playfully suggested the idea of a postcard being sent from the event.

Feedback from all the Art Schools also suggested that an appreciated sense of creative community had been created, although temporary, through a shared creative experience. One postcard stated how the event 'reached out' to people and brought all ages together.

When we read and analysed the feedback, three themes emerged: The most dominant was a strong, enthusiastic assertion of sheer pleasure, often combined with gratitude towards the organizers and an awareness of the therapeutic value of participation. This sense of delight was evident in almost every piece of feedback across all participants: “Amazing event”; ‘really enjoyed myself today’; ‘wouldn’t have missed it for anything. Fascinating experience, all the senses involved.” In some cases this was explained more fully: ‘Loved the paper dresses’; ‘enjoyed making the flower bracelet’, ‘ I didn’t realize it was so easy to create a piece of art work from everyday items;’ ‘would love more time to play’, showing the satisfaction people got from the way the PUAS tapped into suppressed artistic needs. It would seem that participants valued equally the dimensions of ‘art as process’ and ‘art as product’, described by Butterwick and Dawson (2006,p. 286) as ‘the act of making’ and ‘the result of work’ in that they were thrilled by the things they made as well as loving taking part. The conclusion we drew was that the PUAS can demonstrate very quickly that everyone can take intense pleasure in arts practice and that teachers can be confident that everyone has a creative aspect to their character.

The second most prominent theme was about the quality of the ideas and their applicability for people’s professional practice. Phrases such as ‘very inspirational’; ‘Excellent ideas for us to use in our classrooms’ ;’ The idea is soooooo (in original) exciting’; ‘ leave brimming with ideas’; ‘fantastic ideas for primary teaching’ confirmed that professional educators do not always know how arts can be readily adapted by non-specialists as tools for learning. They saw applications for specific contexts that had nothing to do with art teaching. ‘Brilliant literacy and numeracy ideas.’ One participant wrote:

Dear daughters and sons of the future of teaching. I had an inspirational couple of hours today and dearly hope you will spread these ideas like viruses in your own practice. It's time for change and Art is the way to make it happen.

The third theme was that of 'creativity' more generally. Participants repeated this word, and also stressed the value of the creative work itself and a creative environment: 'We had forgotten how to express ourselves via art or doing something. Very inspiring.' 'place looks lovely, great ambience'; 'the dresses looked wicked'; 'love the paper dresses, want one'. Cutting across all three themes, some responses suggested that the experience was prompting deeper thinking about the nature of art; 'thought provoking'; 'everyone should have a chance to do it'. 'A great afternoon's creativity for moving around thoughts...I have been 'stuck.' Thank you.' There were also comments about the nature of the organization and the attitude of the trainees running the session, that indicated the open, caring and uncritical approach that underpins the PUAS was important; 'the teachers were really friendly and helpful'; 'very friendly and approachable staff', 'had a go at everything!'; 'the organization is second to none.' The openness and accessibility to all ages and backgrounds was acknowledged: 'Something that reaches out to all people, let's have more ways of bringing people together.'

### **Trainee benefits**

The experience of designing, planning, marketing and running the Pop-Up Art Schools benefited the trainee-teachers tremendously. The art schools gave the trainees the chance to see at first hand the benefits of community reach-out work. They developed the confidence to plan and deliver a large-scale arts event, working within constraints of limited budgets, resources and facilities. One trainee reflected that it had been useful to be placed in a situation that required

creativity in 'adapting and improvising within available space'. The trainees also noticed how working within constraints actually generated creative ideas and solutions, linking their experience to theory that suggests that 'too much freedom' can inhibit creativity (Stokes, 2006, p.5).

Trainees study the subject of creativity in order to become creative teachers who can teach creatively but also teach *for* creativity. Working collaboratively on the Pop-Up Art Schools gave the opportunity to reflect on the extent to which they were experiencing aspects of different creativity theories as individuals and as a group. Interesting discussions took place where theory 'came to life' and the trainees could make connections between theory and practice, such as the notion of 'unconscious incubation' as a stage in the creative process (Robinson, 2010, p. 29) and moments of 'flow' (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996, p. 110).

Taking part in the events increased the trainees' 'cultural capital'. In addition to working alongside gallery professionals, festival organisers and professional musicians at the Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival, trainees studied the art, music and creative working methods of John Cage and were introduced to the world of international, classical contemporary music. The benefit of this and of continuing to increase the cultural capital of themselves as arts practitioners was highlighted by one trainee who stated that 'as somebody who grew up without culture, or even religion, I was never exposed to real culture until I was an adult – it is still difficult for me to actively seek it as a result'. Art can be seen as an elitist and exclusive club populated by a 'professional field of experts and elites, who carefully police the borders of their practise' (Gauntlett, 2011, p. 218). Trainees realised how their practice had played a part in starting to build cultural capital for many of the participants at the Pop-Up Art Schools, by

breaking down some barriers of an exclusive field, promoting accessibility and a 'way in' to the arts.

## **Conclusion**

Williamson (1998, p.136) found that for many adults 'creativity has been thoroughly tamed and disenchanted'. This was echoed in comments made by many in the lead up to the event. It seemed they had enjoyed art, design and craft at school and then lost their connection to, and participation in, the subject. They were looking forward to reconnecting with remembered pleasure and enjoyment, 'recapturing the creative sense of self and being acknowledged as creative beings' (Clover, 2008, p.92). The feedback suggests that the PUAS provided an opportunity for recapturing this creative sense of self, and a re-connection and re-enchantment with the creative arts.

This particular use of the arts in the University enabled Sarah to introduce trainees to their wider role as adult educators. It gave them an insight into the untapped creative potential of groups and communities who would not normally enrol on or participate in arts classes or art schools. It also helped them understand the kinds of activities that enable those who do not self-identify as artists overcome their self-consciousness and liberate that creative potential. They also learned how to organise a large-scale event for public consumption. The trainee-teachers were able to compare and contrast the success of pedagogical approaches and art activities across different age groups, sectors and locations. They responded to the challenge of designing inclusive art and craft activities for differing age groups, levels of ability and experience and gained real insight from doing this.

Wix and John-Steiner (2008, p. 225) suggest that 'higher education students emerge from experiences of facilitating and participating in creative collaborations richer for having practised a variety of ways of knowing and being' and indeed trainees expressed elation from the positive experience and success of the Pop-Up Art Schools, reflected in the following comment: 'I came away from the experience feeling that I had really achieved something, and I felt very fulfilled'.

Our reflections on the relationship between these pop-up events and the wider literature on the arts and professional education and arts and community engagement brought home to us the limitations as well as the value of the PUAS. The buzz and excitement and the awareness of individual and collective creative and expressive potential were powerful but momentary. They do not have the strong roots that community arts workers develop through close, sensitive and developmental engagement with groups. Nor do they have obvious shoots and branches reaching into the future for the participants. Follow-up work is done with the teachers organizing the events, to consolidate their learning and build strategies for the future. For example, they reflected on the status of craft in society and considered strategies for minimizing perceived gender-related barriers to some activities. However, there is no follow up work with participants. The experience demonstrated the huge potential that well-organised one-off arts events can have for stimulating creativity and promoting a desire for creativity. In order to take advantage of this as a trigger for sustained change a logical next step would be linking these events to a wider context, offering participants the opportunity for appropriate follow-through. This would strengthen existing links between the University and a range of community arts groups who might offer that kind of support. For now we recall the intensity of the experience and continue to reflect on the potential it offers.

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