

Support – a facilitated peer group network of artists working in such situations would be beneficial to the success of projects. Organisations receiving the input of artists also need support, particularly when this is breaking new ground.

In conclusion, the findings of this evaluation can be summarised in two maxims:

Engagement of an artist from an early stage in a development project, in good circumstances, brings about a positive change of mindset and working practice among the other professionals involved.

When artists are working in a development milieu and expected to contribute their professional expertise and creativity, they should be engaged on the same terms as the other professionals involved.

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All those professionals whose normal practice before PROJECT's intervention did not include working with artists subsequently experienced a fairly fundamental change in mindset and working practice as a result of their involvement.

There is wide appreciation among the other professionals that the engagement of artists has raised the quality and value in the project and, it is believed, in the built environment that ultimately ensues.

Conclusions

The evaluation of PROJECT asked four questions.

1. Did the people involved change their mindsets and/or working practices?

Yes, the majority of participants experienced a change in both mindset and working practice, artists somewhat less so than other professionals. All those professionals whose normal practice before PROJECT's intervention did not include working with artists, subsequently experienced a fairly fundamental change in mindset and working practice as a result of their involvement.

2. Has there been any impact on long term practice of the project players?

The majority of those who underwent a change in their working practice described it as fairly long-term. Already, in some cases, those involved are taking forward further projects in which artists are engaged at an early stage, building on their experience with PROJECT.

3. Has the involvement of artists made any demonstrable difference to projects?

There is wide appreciation among the other professionals that the engagement of artists has raised the quality and value in the project and, it is believed, in the built environment that ultimately ensues. The range of allowable discourse between developers, architects, planners and clients has been beneficially extended by artists' intervention. The engagement of communities of residents and potential users has been facilitated by artists' work.

4. Under what conditions does artist input have a positive effect and when does it not?

To achieve a good experience and a successful outcome, some conditions have to be met.

Clarity – it works best when the artist and the other professionals involved are clear about what the artist's role is and what they are expected to do.

Timely appointment – if the artist is to contribute effectively to planning and developing a project, they have to be in place early.

Management – capacity has to be made available in a project to ensure that the artist's involvement is managed and supported.

Remuneration – if artists are expected to contribute in like manner to other professionals they should be accordingly properly paid.

PROJECT Evaluation Report

Summary

All those professionals whose normal practice before PROJECT's intervention did not include working with artists, subsequently experienced a fairly fundamental change in mindset and working practice as a result of their involvement.

PROJECT - *engaging artists in the built environment* was a national funding scheme jointly supported by the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) and Arts & Business (A&B). Public Art South West (PASW) worked in partnership with CABE and A&B to develop the scheme and was responsible for its management and delivery. PROJECT ran as a two-year pilot scheme from April 2004 to March 2006.

This independent evaluation was planned as an integral part of the programme. It has been overseen by a Steering Group made up of representatives of the agencies involved.

The purpose of PROJECT was to engage artists, public agencies and the private sector in a range of projects that will have a positive impact on places. PROJECT provided financial assistance to pay artists' fees in order to support collaboration between artists on one hand and design, planning and construction professionals on the other.

Comedia was commissioned to make an independent evaluation of the project, focusing on the extent to which the mindset and working practice of those involved changed as a consequence. Data was gathered on a 'before and after' basis from 36 participants in 12 projects. Several personal journals of participants and detailed case studies were included in the evaluation.

Initial expectations were high, all participants expecting a more or less positive effect of the project. Most respondents expected the project they were embarking on to be different from others they had been involved in. The artist's contribution was anticipated on all sides to be capable of bringing about an enhanced identity, distinctiveness or design awareness to projects which otherwise would lack character, or be purely functional.

The majority of participants, over 80% felt that their mindset would, or might, be changed as a result of the project. In the event, 60% considered that there had been such a change, rather more among other professionals than artists. Artists expected less change of mindset and experienced less, while other professionals expected more and experienced more change.

About 60% had anticipated a change in their working practice, but in the event 80% felt that their working practice had been affected by the experience. Most respondents reporting change in working practice described it as fairly fundamental and fairly long term. Artists expected less change of working practice than did other professionals, but experienced more.

**PROJECT
engaging
artists
in the
built
environment**

EVALUATION REPORT SUMMARY



May 2006

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PROJECT - *engaging artists in the built environment* was funded by CABE and A&B