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# In Momentum: The Navigation, Narration, and Negotiation of Continuing Professional Development by Mid-Career Artists in South West England

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University of Plymouth

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**STORE**

IN MOMENTUM: THE NAVIGATION,  
NARRATION, AND NEGOTIATION OF  
CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT BY MID-CAREER  
ARTISTS IN SOUTH WEST ENGLAND

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PhD

2010

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**In Momentum: The Navigation, Narration, and Negotiation of  
Continuing Professional Development by Mid-Career Artists in  
South West England**

by

**Karen Mary Smith**

A thesis submitted to the University of Plymouth  
in partial fulfilment for the degree of

**Doctor of Philosophy**

School of Humanities & Performing Arts  
Faculty of Arts

**April 2010**

**Karen Mary Smith**

## **In Momentum: The Navigation, Narration, and Negotiation of Continuing Professional Development by Mid-Career Artists in South West England**

This thesis explores the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) of mid-career artists in England and the South West of England in particular during 2000 to 2010. It identifies what their needs are and asks what CPD means to them; how they navigate their careers through their practice; how they articulate their needs; and how they negotiate to fulfil those needs. It examines to what extent the providers' thinking about, and provision of, CPD in the region is aligned with the needs of the artists themselves. The individual narratives of artists are represented at the centre of this research. The research was developed in collaboration with University of Plymouth and the CPD agency, ArtsMatrix Ltd.

Research methods used to collect data included extended dialogues with the artists Alyson Hallett, Mariele Neudecker, Helen Poyner and Phil Smith, via a series of walking interviews, using walking as an ethnographic research tool. By walking I engaged with a literal momentum of movement paralleling the physical and theoretical momentums of the artists' practices. Policy and literature reviews; group interviews; artist interviews; desk-based research; observation and attendance at artist-led seminars and practice groups were also used. The research contrasts two CPD Schemes: The Contemporary Craft Fellowship Scheme, and The Artist as Cultural Agent: DIY. The thesis includes a policy and provision review of CPD literature in the UK and South West of England over the past ten years; a mapping of South West CPD provision for artists; and the identification and application of relevant theoretical and critical approaches to place, space, language and momentum in order to consider CPD provision in relation to the articulation, situation and concept of a career.

This thesis argues that the language of CPD can constrain as much as enable artists' development; that the terms "mid-career" and "South West" are open to contestation and can affect provider conceptualisations of artists in the region; and that artists need professional development throughout their careers but may not name it as such. I advocate for policy and provision to understand artists' need to be supported "throughout" their practices rather than at certain points in a career, and advocate walking as both a research method and as one of a number of facilitative practices for those who provide CPD with or for experienced artists. I also advocate for artist-led CPD initiatives and an administrative support agency for artists.

## Table of Contents

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<b>Acknowledgements</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>Author's Declaration</b> .....	<b>15</b>
Conference / seminar papers presented.....	15
Workshop facilitations and presentations .....	16
Conferences, seminars and training attended at University of Plymouth.....	16
Conferences, seminars and training attended at other institutions .....	17
Publications .....	18
<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>21</b>
The originating background: Collaborative Doctorate .....	23
What activities might Continuing Professional Development (CPD) cover? .....	26
The aims of this thesis.....	27
The arts funding system in England .....	29
The boundaries of the South West.....	30
My own cumulative experiences: CPD, a personal reflection .....	31
The creative industries .....	36
The cultural sector within the creative industries.....	38
Understanding the term "artist" .....	42
Understanding the term "mid-career" .....	44
<b>Chapter One: CPD Policy and Practice</b> .....	<b>53</b>
Originating context of CPD.....	55
Understandings of CPD .....	57
Evolving CPD networks.....	59
Creative People Network .....	59

HEFCE, and other artist and organisation-led CPD networks and activities .....	61
CPD: Originating context in the South West .....	66
Reflective Practitioner and First Stop Shop .....	67
National initiatives 2007-2009 .....	72
Creative Britain, a creative economy strategy for the UK .....	72
Creative Britain and the South West.....	75
Leitch Review.....	76
Sector Skills Councils .....	77
Creative and Cultural Skills (CCS) and a National Skills Academy .....	78
Creative Blueprint.....	79
Creative Choices .....	80
NESTA, Demos, and “Mission, Models, Money” .....	81
Higher Education and ACE .....	83
McMaster Report .....	83
The Arts Debate.....	88
People, Places and Spaces.....	89
From policy to language to CPD organisation in the South West.....	90
National CPD provision .....	91
Cultural Leadership.....	92
CPD provision in the South West.....	94
Conclusion.....	101
<b>Chapter Two: Methodologies and Methods for Researching Artists .....</b>	<b>105</b>
My research methods .....	107
Ethical research protocol.....	113
Research about artists in South West England.....	117
My prior research methodologies for South West CPD schemes .....	120
The research process: evolving a methodology.....	125
Writing about artists and their environments .....	127
The methods used by artists to explore their own CPD.....	133
Choosing the subjects of my research.....	141
Metaphorical notion and physical motion.....	147
Happstance.....	151
<b>Chapter Three: Listening to Artists and CPD Providers in the South West.....</b>	<b>155</b>
Artist or Creative Practitioner?.....	159
Mid-career .....	162
The South West.....	169
Artists speaking about the South West.....	169
Providers speaking about the South West .....	176
Artists and providers discussing Higher Education and Local Authorities .....	178

Finding space.....	181
Artists and providers discussing the South West and London.....	184
CPD.....	185
Conclusion.....	194
<b>Chapter Four: Place, Space, Continuum and Languages of Economy / Ecology</b>	<b>197</b>
Space / place.....	200
Continuum and momentum: Travelling through.....	208
Language and movement: metaphor to embodiment.....	213
Habitus.....	217
Capital.....	218
Field.....	219
Cultural field / symbolic power.....	220
Practice.....	223
The language of arts economies and ecologies.....	223
Right time, right place / space.....	230
Conclusion.....	231
<b>Chapter Five: Two Approaches to CPD in the South West: Fellowships and DIY Schemes</b>	<b>235</b>
Introduction.....	237
The Artist as Cultural Agent: DIY (people, place and space).....	238
DIY 6: 2009. Professional development projects <i>by</i> artists <i>for</i> artists.....	243
“The real world”: Origins of the CCFS.....	245
Region, place and space.....	250
CCFS Phase One: Peer networking days, 21 February 2008 and 14 April 2008.....	253
CCFS Phase Two: The five successful Contemporary Craft Fellows.....	255
Observations from Phase One and Two.....	267
Mentoring.....	269
CCFS “Re-Route” Exhibition.....	271
Language.....	272
Finding a “route”.....	274
CCFS Partnerships: The Crafts Council (CC).....	276
Symbolic capital.....	281
Conclusion.....	285
<b>Chapter Six: Case Studies of Four Artists in Momentum</b>	<b>289</b>
Introduction.....	291
Alyson Hallett.....	293

Mariele Neudecker.....	306
The space / place of the South West.....	308
Helen Poynor.....	319
Phil Smith.....	334
Building social and symbolic capital, “navigating moments”.....	349
The business of CPD.....	350
Conclusion.....	352
<b>Conclusion: CPD Policy, Provision and Practice.....</b>	<b>357</b>
People and place.....	359
CPD policy and provision.....	365
Career.....	372
DIY and artist-led CPD.....	374
Administrative support.....	376
CPD practice.....	378
Concluding recommendations.....	381
<b>Bibliography.....</b>	<b>385</b>
Books and journals.....	387
Bulletins.....	392
Reports and documents.....	393
Personal communications.....	401
Websites accessed regularly throughout the period of research.....	402

## Table of Figures

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<i>Figure 1. Markets of Meaning in the Creative Industries.....</i>	39
<i>Figure 2. David Nash Wooden Boulder drawing (1978-). .....</i>	115
<i>Figure 3. Diagram of connectivity between “others” and “the artist”. .....</i>	153
<i>Figure 4. Alyson Hallett by her first Migrating Stone, Leigh Woods, Bristol. ....</i>	295
<i>Figure 5. Mariele Neudecker, Faintly Falling Upon All the Living and the Dead (1, 2 and 3), 2008, mixed media/fibre-glass. Installation (left) and detail (right). .....</i>	307
<i>Figure 6. Images of Helen performing Crow-nè, 2005. Helen Poynor and Annie Pfindst. .....</i>	324
<i>Figure 7. Peacock admiring itself in a convex mirror during walk one with Phil Smith. .....</i>	348

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## Author's Declaration

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At no time during the registration for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy has the author been registered for any other University award.

This study was supported and financed with the aid of a collaborative doctoral studentship from the Arts Humanities Research Council and carried out in collaboration with University of Plymouth and ArtsMatrix Ltd.

### Conference / seminar papers presented

**Living Landscapes Conference.** University of Aberystwyth. 18-21 June 2009.

Paper: Talking and walking overland: Narration, navigation and negotiation in artists' land-based practice.

**Cultural Management and the State of the Field Symposium.** HUMAK, Helsinki, Finland. 15-17 April 2009.

Paper: Boundaries, past, present and future. How does the extrinsic need of providers affect intrinsic value of cultural activity?

**Research Cooperation in Practice: Results from the AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Award Scheme.** AHRC at Institute of Historical Research and Tate, London. 25-27 February 2009.

Paper: Continuing Conversations: Methods on the Move.

**CreativeAmbition2.** CreativePeople network, Birmingham. 25 June 2008.

Invited facilitative presentation on CPD and artistic momentum.

**TRIP (Territories Reimagined International Perspectives).** Manchester Metropolitan University. 19-22 June 2008.

Paper: Peninsula, Province, Periphery. A topological perambulation regarding artists' navigation and orientation through their "career" and time, space and place.

**Creativity and Employability.** LIPA (Liverpool Institute of Performing Arts).

27-29 March 2008.

Paper: A topological perspective regarding artists' navigation and orientation through their "career" and time, space and place.

**Revealing All2.** City University, London. 12 February 2008.

Paper: "I am not lost, I am wherever I am." Exploring the momentum of artistic practice in the creative industries.

**"I'm a Creative, Get me out of here".** Bath Spa University. 2 May 2007.

Invited presentation responding to the needs of graduating students from Bath Spa, discussing my "career" to date.

## **Workshop facilitations and presentations**

**"The Eudemonics".** Birmingham and London. 2007-2009.

A series of peer-facilitated workshops with four other freelance practitioners discussing facilitation methodologies, leadership and creative change in the creative industries.

Funded by the Cultural Leadership Programme.

**Facilitated session for BA and MA Performing Arts Students.** University of Plymouth. 20 February 2008.

"Navigating your way on your professional artistic journey".

**Presentation of Phase 2 research and discussion.** ArtsMatrix Board Meeting. Arts Council England, South West. 12 December 2007.

**MPhil / PhD transfer presentation.** University of Plymouth. 19 November 2007.

Part of Critical Spaces seminar series.

**Presentation and facilitation of Phase 1 and Phase 2 research.** Pierian Centre, Bristol. 7 June 2007.

With and to ArtsMatrix Staff, Staff Development Day.

## **Conferences, seminars and training attended at**

### **University of Plymouth**

**During 2006 to 2009 attendance at various University of Plymouth symposiums, training, conferences and seminars including:**

Land / Water and the Visual Arts 2007 Symposium. 28 - 29 June 2007.

Land / Water and the Visual Arts 2008 Symposium. 26 - 27 June 2008.

Land / Water and the Visual Arts 2009 Symposium. 25 - 27 June 2009.

Critical Spaces Conference. 12 July 2007.

Hidden Cities Symposium. 4 October 2008.

Place, Writing and Voice Conference. 5-6 September 2008.

Art History Seminars (various) 2006 - 2008.

Critical Spaces Seminars (various) 2006 – 2009.  
Ethical Research Seminars 2007.  
Media and Photography Seminars (various) 2006 – 2008.

**Postgraduate Research Training Methods.**

15 and 16 November 2006  
13 and 14 December 2006  
24 and 25 January 2007  
7 and 8 March 2007  
16 and 17 May 2007  
7 and 8 November 2007

**Postgraduate Research Training Discussions.**

5 and 6 March 2008  
22 January 2009  
5 March 2009  
21 May 2009

**Critical Writing training with Diana Collins.** 10 January 2007, 16 February 2007.

**Endnote Library Session.** 15 January 2007.

**Graduate School Training.**

Introduction to Quantitative Research. 8 November 2006.  
Introduction to Qualitative Research. 21 November 2006.  
Introduction to Excel. 20 November 2006.  
SPSS Basics Part 1. 22 November 2006.

**Conferences, seminars and training attended at  
other institutions**

**Creative Facilitator Training.** Proper Job Theatre, Huddersfield (self funded). 25-26 April 2009.

**“Situations” Seminars** in collaboration with Arnolfini, Bristol. 2006-2009.

**Creative Clusters.** Glasgow. 18-20 November 2008.  
Assisted place scholarship.

**All over the place.** UWE. 8 November 2008.

**Land, specialisation and memory.** Bath ICIA. 19 April.2008.

**Walking as Ethnography.** Loughborough University. 17 March 2008.

**Writing for a wider audience.** UWE. 19 April 2007.

**Common Ground Symposium.** UWE. 10 November 2007.

**The Printed Path. Landscape, Walking and Recollection.** Tate Britain. 29 September 2007.

**Euclid “artist pensions” training.** Bristol. 10 April 2007.

**Writing long documents in Microsoft Word.** UWE. 22 March 2007.

**Creative and Cultural Skills, “Access All Areas”.** Watershed, Bristol. 13 February 2007.

Regional launch event of Creative and Cultural Skills

**LCACE – London Centre for Arts and Cultural Enterprise.** ICA, London. 9 February 2007.

Collaborations between the Cultural Sector and Higher Education.

**Using Excel to process data.** UWE. 1 February 2007.

**Euclid “The Future of Creative Workspaces”.** Tate Modern, London. 10 November 2006.

**ArtsMatrix Mentoring Day Evaluation.** 23 February 2007.

A facilitated day for mentors and mentees to discuss their experiences of the mentoring scheme.

## **Publications**

**Interview and article on research into Crafts and Continuing Professional Development (interviewed by Helen Johnson) in Craft&Design Magazine. Issue 204, July / August 2009.**

Driffield, East Yorkshire. PSB Design and Print Consultants Ltd. 2009.

Word count of main body of thesis: 79,976

Signed.....



Date.....

22 December 2010



## Introduction

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All these words come trailing clouds of connotations.

Doreen Massey, For Space<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Doreen Massey, For Space, London, Sage Publications Ltd, 2005, p. 12.

The provision and delivery of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) with and for artists and creative practitioners has evolved over the last ten years into an identifiable area of expertise and practice. It is seen as a viable and indeed valuable knowledge sector which gives many freelance arts consultants (like me) an income as well as supporting a number of agencies that advertise their professional development services to artists and creative practitioners.

### **The originating background: Collaborative Doctorate**

An extract from the original application for the funding of this PhD by University of Plymouth and ArtsMatrix Ltd to the Arts Humanities Research Council (AHRC) Collaborative Doctoral Award (CDA) states:

“Continuing Professional Development” is defined as a considered approach to identifying and realising the development needs of (in this case) artists and creative practitioners. The collaborating organisations have chosen to focus specifically on mid-career artists as their needs have yet to be analysed in any detail and they are a client group for whom there have been too few CPD opportunities to date. Although much attention has been paid to emergent artists / creative practitioners (and late-career artists tend to be established and confident), it is at this stage that artists usually “give up” feeling isolated and alienated, “in a rut”. CPD for a mid-career artist usually needs to focus on establishing himself and his art as a “branded” business able to “sell” both the artist and work in appropriate contexts.

The perceived proliferation of opportunities for emerging artists and the corresponding relative lack of opportunities for those in mid-career was the reason for the partners’ chosen topic for this research. The set title was “The continuing professional development needs of mid-career artists / creative practitioners in the South West.”

ArtsMatrix described itself during the period 2006 – 2009 as the regional agency representing the development of CPD for artists and creative practitioners in the South West and aimed to support individuals working in the creative industries to develop skills and fulfil their potential. Working in partnership, ArtsMatrix provided information, guidance and development opportunities through seminars, one to one support, and other approaches such as one-off reflective practitioner or mentoring schemes, and in 2008, a craft fellowship scheme. Job titles and personnel at ArtsMatrix changed significantly between 2006 to 2009. Changes had included three different people holding the post of “Director” (and therefore co-supervising this PhD), and also a change of this job title from “Director” to “Chief Executive Officer” (CEO). During the writing-up stages of this thesis, ArtsMatrix went into receivership. I return to the implications of this in the thesis conclusion.<sup>2</sup>

The University of Plymouth's mission and core values, according to the Collaborative Doctoral application, stress the importance of service to the region and the provision of open and accessible higher education. As well as being a major provider of a number of freelance and salaried employment opportunities for artists who are often self-defining as “experienced”, the University leads on a significant number of practice-by-research PhDs which have been undertaken by experienced artists. The University was additionally interested in the opportunities for a collaborative doctorate to become engaged with the support and development of what it considered to be a vibrant network of arts organisations throughout the South West with a shared desire to provide the potential for critical discourse and dialogue around artistic practice.

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<sup>2</sup> ArtsMatrix announced its immediate closure in mid December 2009.

As a collaborative doctorate, the research undertaken developed via discussion with the main partners. The process of developing a methodology, together with my cumulative experiences as a freelance arts practitioner, which are described below, have evolved into an individualised research methodology. The setting up of a collaborative doctorate project forced the question of whether it is a fixed project within which the award holder is “employed” to undertake a piece of research with a set methodology, or else, a negotiated project led by the award holder’s interests and passions. All CDA holders appear to have this issue in common.<sup>3</sup> The CDA scheme seems to emphasize the immediacy of research, with an emphasis on sharing in the “now”. ArtsMatrix were happy to allow me to design and develop my own PhD, without imposing a direction or end product which clashed with the academic nature and expectations of the PhD.

During the process of researching and writing the thesis from 2006 to 2010, the landscape of arts funding and arts provision has changed hugely. This research captures the narratives, negotiations and navigations of certain artists and organisations at this time. Some of this research was conducted at a time prior to the “credit crunch” and some as the economic downturn began to impact on artists and the surrounding ecology.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> These issues were discussed following my paper on my research methods at “Research Cooperation in Practice: Results from the AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Award Scheme.” London, 26-27 March 2009, organised by the London network of CDA award holders and funded by the AHRC.

<sup>4</sup> In Spring 2009, Arts Council England (ACE) launched their “Sustain” fund to support arts organisations during the economic downturn; “Sustain provides grants to arts organisations to help them maintain their artistic, financial and organisational viability during the recession and implement essential changes to ensure their long-term sustainability. Sustain will make one-off awards between £75,000 to £3 million (unless there are exceptional circumstances) to cover the period 2009-2011.” The information stated that applications could be made at any time. ACE, at: <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/funding/sustain.php> (accessed 21 September 2009). The Sustain fund closed to any further applications at the end of 2009.

## **What activities might Continuing Professional Development (CPD) cover?**

Chapter One explores the development of the policy and practice of CPD in the creative industries in the UK and in the South West of England in particular. The following is a snapshot of the many activities that may be considered under the heading “CPD”.

Artists choose these based on learning style, preference, process, and being in the right place at the right time to take up an opportunity. Timing, location, availability and price all impact on what opportunities may be available, and there are many learning styles, development methods and approaches. Examples of CPD activities include:

- Training and development such as attending a conference or event, a workshop, a seminar, a long-term full or part-time college course, or residential or non-residential specialist course;
- Self-directed CPD such as reading and researching via the Internet, reading reports, professional journals, books, taking time out to reflect on a daily or longer-term basis, sabbaticals, self-devised and auto-didactic programmes of learning;
- One to one development, such as coaching, working from a distance with a mentor or tutor, mentoring, supervision, work-shadowing;
- Peer or group based CPD, such as co-mentoring, networking as a group forum, skill-sharing, conversations, meetings both informal and formal, placements, residencies, skills swaps, action learning sets. This could include digital learning activities such as blogs, wikispace, social online platforms and discussion forums.

In each of these categories there can be: diagnostic activities; generic skills development (business, PR, marketing, accountancy); practice-based skills development (new or advanced techniques) in main artistic discipline(s), or new or advanced skills that could enhance main discipline(s). Some of these new skills may create potential to shift artistic practice into a new arena or collaboration which becomes equal to or more important than an artist's original main discipline or disciplines of practice.

Combinations and synergies of all the above happen in various ways through informal and formal CPD, non-advertised opportunities, and competitive advertised opportunities.

In recent years CPD has tended to be themed around particular trends which have policy and funding attached. These include, for example, audience development and action research (bolstered by the provision of "new gateway audience development" funds from Arts Council England in the early 2000s), and cultural leadership (particularly through the rise of the Clore Leadership Programme in 2004).<sup>5</sup>

## **The aims of this thesis**

This thesis aims to make a contribution to knowledge in the following four ways:

1) To offer a broad range of empirical data based on extensive interviews with artists and CPD providers, demonstrating the attitudes and experiences of artists and providers to CPD. This is absent in previous research on artists' careers. I also offer an analysis of CPD policy documents and map CPD provision in the South West against these

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<sup>5</sup>Arts Council England are discussed below. The Clore Leadership Programme is discussed in Chapter One.

policy documents over the last ten years. In doing so I wish to represent the voices of artists at the centre of the research and test out a variety of research methods to collect data. I question what CPD means and might mean to experienced artists; how they navigate through their practice over an extended period of time; how they articulate their needs; and negotiate to fulfil those needs.

2) To explore the applicability of key theoretical contributions to understandings of space, time, place, and language in order to investigate how the empirical data gathered during this research can reassess these theories in relation to regional CPD provision. Cultural geographers' theories of region, space and place have enabled me to consider the mutual impacts of people and region on CPD provision and understand the complexities. I explore CPD as inseparable from the rest of an artist's practice and from the effect of location. The theorists I have used do not consider the South West in particular yet their theoretical concepts support my exploration into how policy and provider conceptualisations of the idea of a South West may differ from those of artists. Some of the documents I review and analyse in Chapters One and Two are particular to the South West.

I explore sociological and philosophical theories to consider how practice and career cannot be seen as separate from space and time, and have used these theories to consider both the *situation* and concept of *career* when applied to an experienced artist in a continuum of practice, and have explored artists' needs from this viewpoint. I have also used theory on language and the concept of articulation to further analyse the key terms in this thesis and explore how cultural policy and CPD providers employ language.

3) To analyse CPD provision in South West England for and with mid-career artists, by interrogating the key terms CPD, mid-career, South West, and artist. I explore how artists practicing from the South West region perceive the language and effect of CPD provision, and how policy provision relating to CPD in the South West might be researched and approached differently.

4) To make a contribution to policy-making by examining whether thinking about CPD and CPD provision is flawed in relation to experienced artists; by offering alternative models for CPD; by exploring how theories may critically engage with CPD provision; and by mapping different sets of empirical data against each other to find points of disjuncture. In doing so I explore how my research could be of benefit to experienced artists and their practices in the South West in future writing and subsequent implementation of policy regarding funding of CPD provision to experienced artists.

## **The arts funding system in England**

In 1993, the Arts Council of Great Britain (ACGB) with Regional Arts Boards (RABs) formed the Great Britain arts funding system. In 1994, ACGB was abolished, and its functions transferred to three new bodies: the Arts Council of England, the Arts Council of Wales and the Scottish Arts Council. A further reorganisation in 2000-2002 merged the national office and ten regional arts boards into a single organisation: the Arts Council of England (ACE). ACE formally announced its new identity and name in February 2003.<sup>6</sup> I have included this information because it is relevant to how CPD is

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<sup>6</sup> In practice, for example, this meant that Yorkshire Arts became ACE, Yorkshire. South West Arts Board merged with some parts of Southern Arts Board to form ACE, South West. Southern Arts disappeared entirely. Later in the process, Northern Arts became ACE, North East, but lost some of its

developed and funded in the South West and how changes to funding bodies affect how policy is written and how provision is supported.

The aims of the ACE reorganisation were: to create a simpler, more transparent funding system for artists and arts organisations; to make savings on administration; and therefore theoretically invest more in the arts. In 2009 there were nine regional offices and a national office. The regional boundaries follow those of the Regional Development Agencies. As this thesis was being written, a further significant reorganisation of ACE regional offices and the national office was underway.<sup>7</sup>

## **The boundaries of the South West**

The geographical boundaries of what constitutes the “South West” as defined by South West Regional Development Agency (SWRDA) were adopted by ACE, South West (Arts Council England South West) in ACE’s reorganisation discussed above.<sup>8</sup> Most artists and arts projects need to fit into this arbitrary administrative construct when working across or within public funding. Both SWRDA and ACE SW are based in Exeter. The loss of Southern Arts Board in the 2000-2002 reorganisation can still affect those who live in the areas where territories merged (for example, Wiltshire and Bournemouth).

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geographical area to ACE, North West (previously North West Arts).

<sup>7</sup> ACE, History of Arts Council England, June 2004, pp. 3-4, at: [www.artscouncil.org.uk](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk) (accessed 12 June 2008). ACE began in December 2009 to announce their new structure. By the time of completing the writing of the final draft of this thesis (February 2010), ACE had re-organised their staffing and major redundancies had been announced.

<sup>8</sup> The sub-regional areas covered by the construct “South West” are: Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly; Devon; Somerset; Bournemouth; Dorset and Poole; West of England; Wiltshire and Swindon; Gloucestershire. For those sitting on the boundaries of one region and another, or wishing to work in more than one region, anecdotally, these challenges remain a source of frustration. The website of the South West Regional Development Agency has more detailed information on the sub-regions of the South West.

## **My own cumulative experiences: CPD, a personal reflection**

Alongside ArtsMatrix and University of Plymouth, it is my own cumulative experiences that have shaped the methodology and focus of this thesis. These are briefly described in this section. The advertisement for this PhD research fitted my interest in exploring and finding ways of supporting artists throughout their professional working lives. I wished to do this with integrity, and with an awareness of how CPD is positioned within discussions of the creative industries.

The acronym CPD was not familiar to me as an artist graduating from Art College and University with a combined Fine Art and English Literature degree in 1990 and beginning a practice. I needed to gain vocational experience and did what would now be called an “internship” at a contemporary art gallery (Spacex in Exeter), and also gained paid environmental arts work with an experimental education project within the National Trust and then a “traineeship” as a community arts administrator at DARTS (Doncaster Arts Project), set up by Yorkshire Arts.<sup>9</sup> After holding three salaried positions in the subsidised “cultural sector”, I became, first, Planning Officer and then Combined Arts Officer at Yorkshire Arts; this was a time where I remember articulating the need for innovation and risk to be included in funding for artists. The words “professional development” appeared later in my vocabulary, particularly when I negotiated to develop a research and development (R&D) scheme for artists.

ACGB had nominated a different city or region to each organise a year-long celebration of various art forms (for example: Manchester – city of Drama 1994; Bradford – city of

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<sup>9</sup> Yorkshire Arts (previously Yorkshire and Humberside Arts until 1994) was one of the eleven regional arts boards alongside Arts Council of Great Britain (ACGB) which formed the English Arts funding system. In the reorganisation of 2000-2002, Yorkshire Arts became ACE, Yorkshire.

Photography 1998), culminating in a UK-wide Year of the Artist in 2000 which provided funding for individual artists. The scheme was based on trusting the artist to use their funding well, and with no expectation of an end product. Piloted by Yorkshire Arts in 1999-2000, the scheme was set up by myself as Combined Arts Officer in partnership with the then Literature Officer. Prior to this, artists could build some development time into their projects, and apply for training, however, only to a maximum cost of £500, and this needed to be connected to an end product of some kind. The new scheme allowed larger grants to be given for ideas development, or skills-based research without the need for partnership funding, and with no expectation of an end product of artwork (e.g. script, vessel, live art performance).

As Bronac Ferran, an ex-ACE employee, noted:

While the Arts Council had initiated programs during the 1990s ...there was a lack of any sustained support structures for artists who wished to take their experimental ideas into deeper and more open-ended research territories. Spaces offering longer-term opportunities for collaborative, interdisciplinary research hardly existed in the U.K.<sup>10</sup>

Yorkshire Arts' R&D scheme was externally evaluated, culminating in a packed meeting with all the artists demonstrating that their processes fulfilled far more than their funding could have been expected to cover, and that artists can on the whole be trusted to exceed any expectations of best utilisation of public monies. The scheme became embedded as a successful Yorkshire Arts funding programme titled "Research and Development Fund" in 2001. By this time, both the Literature Officer and I had left

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<sup>10</sup> Bronac Ferran, "Creating a Program of Support for Art and Science Collaborations", LEONARDO: Journal of the International Society for the Arts, Sciences and Technology, Vol 39, No.5, 2006, p. 444. This edition of LEONARDO carried a special section: "Arts and Science Research Fellowships funded by ACE and AHRC." Ferran's introduction elaborates on the need for funding of research and development to support the progression of artist's practice.

our positions in Yorkshire Arts. The scheme's implementation was delayed because some colleagues were suspicious that artists could not be trusted to best utilise the funding without being accountable to an end product or "goal".

Meanwhile, in 2000, I was seconded to London Arts to, amongst other initiatives, use new funding to set up the first development scheme to provide research and development opportunities to circus artists. By 2001 I was a freelancer gaining contracts to research professional development in the arts sector. I evaluated a number of professional development projects, particularly in relation to the circus sector across the UK (circ-elation), the community arts sector in the North West (for ACE North West and various partners), and for the Woo Foundation on artist and curatorial long-term CPD schemes in partnership with ACE North West and Employing Creativity.<sup>11</sup> At this time, advertisements for tenders regularly appeared in The Guardian jobs section and other arts-related press to develop CPD programmes, or evaluate CPD around the country. Sometimes these CPD programmes were artist-specific, and sometimes for a wider group of people working across the creative sector. I was successful in gaining freelance contracts particularly in the South West of England to evaluate both the Reflective Practitioner Scheme 2002-2003 (artist specific) and later, First Stop Shop 2003-2005 (for a wider group of individuals known as "creative practitioners"). Applying for and gaining the contract to evaluate the Reflective Practitioner Scheme in the South West led to me relocating my freelance practice to the South West from a well established creative practitioner base in Yorkshire.<sup>12</sup> The data for and my findings

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<sup>11</sup> Employing Creativity is discussed in Chapter One. It was a partnership scheme delivered between North West Arts Board and the University of Salford, funded by the DCMS, seeking to gain understanding and make recommendations regarding the "skills needs of the creative sector in the North West".

<sup>12</sup> I have subsequently relocated back to Yorkshire at the end of 2008.

arising from both South West schemes are filtered throughout this thesis and the case material offers two ways of working with artists and creative practitioners.

Various organisations such as NALGAO (National Association of Local Government Arts Officers) and NALD (National Association of Literature Development) have also asked me to train, facilitate, evaluate or mentor CPD schemes and projects in the last five years, most recently in June 2008.

Metier, a National Training Organisation (NTO) which is now defunct following the change from NTOs to Sector Skills Councils,<sup>13</sup> had also in 2001 advertised for “learning champions” to train “free” with Metier and become skilled in mentoring and one to one advice. I thus became a “learning champion”. I also trained as a “coach” privately with Kaizen Creative (now Rivca Rubin), focusing on similar areas to Metier but with a more experienced peer group and an extended length of training. This included different learning styles, group and leadership dynamics. Subsequently Matrix in the South West (the precursor to ArtsMatrix) used Rubin<sup>14</sup> to train their “Professional Development Coordinators” in Kaizen techniques.<sup>15</sup>

More recently, in 2007, I signed up to Sage Gateshead and Creative Partnerships’ co-mentoring scheme, a national scheme in which arts practitioners and teachers were paired together to voluntarily co-mentor each other. A large national network of “pairings” met quarterly in regional networks. I was paired with a head teacher,

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<sup>13</sup> For culture, the replacement for Metier is the Creative and Cultural Sector Skills Council, at [ccskills.org.uk](http://ccskills.org.uk). Chapter One includes a more detailed description of Creative and Cultural Skills.

<sup>14</sup> Recommended by the author to Matrix whilst working on the Reflective Practitioner Scheme.

<sup>15</sup> ArtsMatrix Professional Development Coordinators (PDCs) were renamed Enterprise Development Specialists during 2008. The reason given for the name change by the existing Chief Executive Officer (CEO) at the time was to fit more accurately with funding agencies understandings, and appeal to a wider economic landscape.

working on the theme of creative leadership. This relationship culminated in a national gathering at Sage in June 2008. I have also had access to cultural leadership training via the Cultural Leadership Programme “Leader+” initiative.<sup>16</sup>

Our contemporary cultural context is influenced by not just offerings from inside the cultural sector or wider creative industries, but world economics and political objectives. Expert views from outside the cultural sector have great influence on what is or is not funded, provided, or developed. I am an “insider” with some experiential knowing, working in-between arts practice and arts governance; I am not an expert “outsider”. Through working freelance in many one-off contracts, and in longer durations such as freelance Head of Arts in Bristol City Council, I have gained further experience in the arenas of evaluation and policy, strategy and action, to counterbalance some of the expert knowing from the outside.

Yet, I believe that consequently there has been a loss of artist’s voice in policy making. As soon as I became an arts administrator / consultant / researcher / facilitator / creative practitioner (there are many labels), I lost the time and space to continue to practice as an artist. I returned to artistic practice in 2001 in receipt of an inter-disciplinary arts Research and Development award to develop my project, Lost at Sea, while simultaneously covering ACE North West’s New Audiences and Participation area of work (whilst the Head of Participation and New Audiences was on maternity leave). I was successful in gaining freelance contracts for arts administration work and therefore again mostly stopped practising as an artist. The start of this section on personal experience noted that it is my experience that has got me here; I am coming from an

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<sup>16</sup> I discuss Cultural leadership and the Cultural Leadership Programme in Chapter One.

“in-between” perspective. My point of view, based on many years of experience, is that there are many artists who are already expert at their own CPD, research, development, and reflection, as a crucial, essential and intrinsic part of their practice as an artist, and are unlikely to need convincing of their need for development.

## **The creative industries**

A creative industries model applies an economic bias demanding evidence of cost, supply, and relative value to CPD. Alternative understandings of why and how artists may need to professionally develop their skills, and how they may articulate their need, appear to be lacking within this concept of “industry”. The creative industries are defined by The Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) as

Those industries that are based on individual creativity, skill and talent. They are also those that have the potential to create wealth and jobs through developing intellectual property. The creative industries include: Advertising, Architecture, Art and Antiques, Computer and video games, Crafts, Designer fashion, Film and video, Music markets, Performing arts, Publishing, Software Design, Television and Radio.<sup>17</sup>

The usually cited statistics for the creative industries are that they account for 7.3% of the UK economy, making them comparable in size to the financial services industry.<sup>18</sup>

However, a statistical bulletin produced in January 2009 estimated a growing industry

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<sup>17</sup> DCMS at: [http://www.culture.gov.uk/what\\_we\\_do/creative\\_industries/default.aspx](http://www.culture.gov.uk/what_we_do/creative_industries/default.aspx), (accessed 8 February 2010). The DCMS is the Government department responsible for policy on the arts, sport, national lottery, tourism, libraries, museums and galleries, broadcasting, creative industries and other linked sectors. It is also the department responsible for the 2012 Olympic and Para Olympic Games.

<sup>18</sup> DCMS, Creative Industries economic estimates “Statistical Bulletin October 2007”, at <http://www.culture.gov.uk>, (accessed 23 January 2008).

accounting for 6.4% of Gross Value Added (GVA) in 2006. This is based on eleven of the thirteen sectors; Crafts and Design are now excluded from this total.<sup>19</sup>

However one chooses to view these statistics, the livelihood of a growing proportion of British citizens now depends upon the sector maintaining its trajectory of growth. It is these figures which allow the UK to claim that it is a world leader in creativity. In January 2009, Arts Professional Magazine ran the headline “Arts Sector Trails Other Creative Industries”.<sup>20</sup> Using the bulletin of January 2009 cited above, Arts Professional described UK creative industries showing 4% overall growth between 1997-2006. Significantly, the less “market” orientated music, performance and visual arts sectors did not match this overall figure, instead showing a suggested growth in employment at 2% compared to 11% in the crafts sector and 14% in photography, video, and film. Also interesting is a qualifying statement in the DCMS seventh bulletin about datasets:

The classifications used by international convention for official statistics do not accurately reflect the structure of the Creative Industries and as such it is difficult to capture the full extent of activity. **Due to these constraints the figures throughout the bulletin are estimates and are not classed as National Statistics.**<sup>21</sup>

This acknowledgement of the invisibility of many individuals who work in the sector is repeated in many documents about the cultural and creative sector. The national statistics classification codes fail the sector on two levels: They can make artistic practice invisible, and also hide the artists themselves, yet conversely capture as economic output, the part-time or casual jobs which may earn income, but are not core

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<sup>19</sup> DCMS, Creative Industries economic estimates “Statistical Bulletin January 2009”, at: [http://www.culture.gov.uk/images/research/Creative\\_Industries\\_Economic\\_Estimates\\_Jan\\_09.pdf](http://www.culture.gov.uk/images/research/Creative_Industries_Economic_Estimates_Jan_09.pdf). (accessed 2 April 2009).

<sup>20</sup> Arts Professional, Cambridge, issue 186, 26 January 2009, p. 3.

<sup>21</sup> DCMS, Creative Industries economic estimates “Statistical Bulletin January 2009”, Emphasis in the original.

to artistic practice and its potential economic output. Therefore, one artist may be completely absent in statistics as an artist, and yet be multiply present for their income earning additional practices, providing plural (and unapportioned) outputs for employment statistics.

## **The cultural sector within the creative industries**

DCMS views the cultural sector as a sub-sector of the creative industries, and importantly for this research, the cultural sector is seen as subsidised. This thesis focuses primarily on the subsidised cultural sector as a small part of a wider creative industries sector. However, it seems inappropriate to falsely delineate between describing the cultural sector as “subsidised”, and the commercial sector as “non-subsidised”. Increasingly over the last decade, there has developed considerable middle ground between the two sectors. One useful description of the new ways artists now practise appeared in 2007, when Demos described “markets of meaning”. Here a market can be a social transaction as well as a financial transaction, with “patronage, cultural consumerism and social production” forming three key markets of the creative industries.<sup>22</sup> I have interpreted Demos’ description in the diagram below:

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<sup>22</sup> Charlie Tims and Shelagh Wright, So what do you do? A new question for policy in the creative age, June 2007, p. 19, at: [demos.co.uk](http://demos.co.uk) (accessed 2 April 2009).

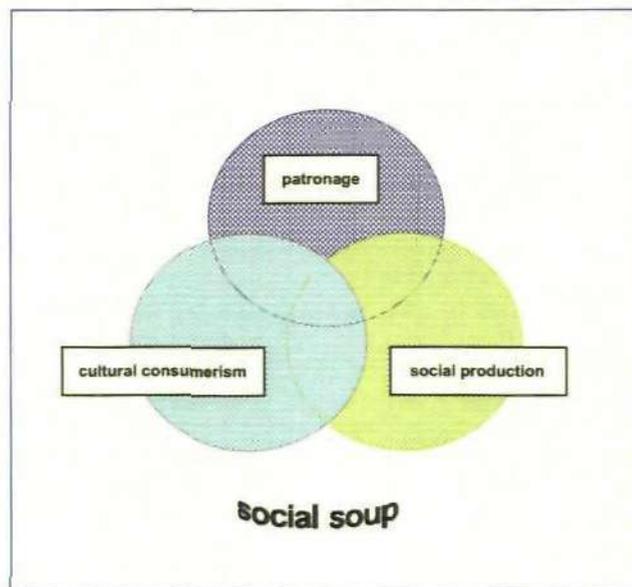


Figure 1. Markets of Meaning in the Creative Industries.

Demos regard ACE as the biggest patron in the patronage market. Recorded or downloaded music, according to Demos, appears in the cultural consumerism market and collaborative practices which use new social networking opportunities are located within “social production”. Importantly, Demos argues for fluidity between each market, describing a “social soup” of cultural activity that makes the UK creative industry. Policy-makers who seek to develop solutions relying on an understanding of creative practice as an industrial practice in this new world are seen as outdated, and yet these activities are still described by Demos as an industry:

The creative industries are a new way of doing business, but the policy interventions to support them proceed to work in old, industrial ways.<sup>23</sup>

Demos continue to use the term creative industries, as do NESTA (National endowment for science, technology and the arts), but more provocatively.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

In February 2008, NESTA published Beyond the Creative Industries: Mapping the creative economy in the United Kingdom.<sup>24</sup> This report attempted to map the creative economy in the United Kingdom, and go “beyond the creative industries”. One of the report’s key findings is that “no single dataset exists for the UK... No single dataset provides the basic information required.”<sup>25</sup> Beyond the Creative Industries report supports the data from the January 2009 creative industries statistical bulletin, and articulates that there is little information on the self-employed. The “specialist artist” classification used continues to exclude those working project by project, who may be invisible in a national mapping exercise.

Datasets in and for the South West are equally problematic, working with the same information as NESTA and the DCMS. The most recent statistics used in the South West suggest:

Creative industries within the cultural sector are growing faster in the South West than elsewhere in the UK despite a national concentration in London. According to *State of the South West* (2005), 85,860 people were employed in creative industries, generating over £6.4 billion in revenues and £1.64 billion GVA.<sup>26</sup>

These statistics use two definitions from DCMS that are currently applied to data collection on the creative industries and note that “Statistical counts, therefore, for the region’s Creative Industries sector will differ according to the definition used.”<sup>27</sup> These

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<sup>24</sup> Peter Higgs, Stuart Cunningham and Hasan Bakhshi, Beyond the Creative Industries: Mapping the creative economy in the United Kingdom, February 2008. <http://www.nesta.org.uk/beyond-the-creative-industries-pub/> (accessed 2 April 2009).

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34.

<sup>26</sup> Culture South West, “Key Facts About the South West”, People, Places and Spaces, updated on 30 April 2007, n.p, at: <http://culture.swo.org.uk/information-publications-presentations/culture-south-west-research-publications/people-places-and-spaces/?locale=en> (accessed 5 May 2009). GVA stands for Gross Value Added.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

datasets lack detail, and I could find none that offered reliable information about sub-sectors of artists, such as those in “mid-career”.

The UK Cultural Sector, edited by Sara Selwood, was published in 2001,<sup>28</sup> and evidences how the ground has shifted since then, particularly for ACE which a decade ago was mostly left to its own devices by DCMS. The book demonstrates the continuing difficulties of ACE’s new position in a fluid landscape occupying the substantial middle ground between the subsidised and non-subsidised sectors. A new updated UK Cultural Sector was due to be published in 2008. An attempt in 2009 to find out when the publication would be available prompted a response from Blackwells booksellers: “The editor suggests try again in 2015 as publication has been delayed.” To me, this is funny and fascinating, since governmental agendas now change so fast that provocations and subsequent policy documents are published quickly, one on top of the other, creating a lack of embedded activity, and also a difficulty for those attempting to summarise and write about them. The relatively slow tempo needed to thoroughly research, and write a book, on cultural policy strikes me as very different to the fast paced policy publication. Following discussion with Sara Selwood, it appears that a new book updating the cultural sector will now not take place, mainly because the compilation of the first edition required a huge amount of resources (people and funding) and the investment required for a second edition is too substantial.

It is clear that there is a difference between what Selwood would term the cultural sector and what is termed the creative industries. Artists are prone to “market failure” (not necessarily earning a viable wage to be deemed economically successful) and are

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<sup>28</sup> Sara Selwood, The UK Cultural Sector. Profile and Policy Issues, London, Policy Studies Institute, 2001.

therefore inconsistent with a creative industries model of income earning and economic generation adding to Gross Value Added, and Gross Domestic Product. This is why Sara Selwood says that the delineation between the “cultural sector” and “creative industries” is important.<sup>29</sup> NESTA argue “that the UK should start to think in terms of a ‘creative economy’ rather than a set of ‘creative industries’”.<sup>30</sup>

Rather than a creative economy, or creative industries, or a subsidised cultural sector, the term “arts ecology” is used within this thesis, as a description of the “social soup” within which artists now practice. If industrial practices are outdated, I would consider the word industry as a term for artistic practices to also be outdated. However there is disagreement on what terminology should be used, and economic imperatives rather than creative imperatives appear to be driving that terminology.<sup>31</sup> The creative industries are not an adequate categorisation in which to locate the artists who form the main research of this thesis. I explore language and the concept of an arts ecology in Chapter Four.

## **Understanding the term “artist”**

This research is focused on experienced professionally practising freelance artists of any art discipline who work on a project by project basis in their artistic practice. These same artists may also work in a diverse range of positions such as lecturers or administrators. I focus on artists who practice primarily from a sole-trader basis

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<sup>29</sup> Sara Selwood, interview with the author, London, 31 March 2009.

<sup>30</sup> NESTA Policy and Research Unit, Policy Briefing BCI/20, 20 February 2008, p. 1, at: <http://www.nesta.org.uk/beyond-the-creative-industries-making-policy-for-the-creative-economy-policy-briefing/> (accessed 2 April 2009).

<sup>31</sup> Chapter Three demonstrates the ongoing issues of terminology and language within the CPD field.

working peripatetically on one-off contracts, rather than those with a full-time salaried position within a company or arts organisation. In the a-n (artists newsletter) Future Forecast series, Debra Savage investigated the way that artists make a living, and explored the term, “artist”:

“artist” is readily accepted as an accurate job description. For many artists, however, the practical application of this term often refers to a single career that comprises a portfolio of jobs; additional activities such as lecturing, curating, commissions or part-time employment used to supplement the income derived from making work.<sup>32</sup>

Savage discusses practical issues for artists, and throughout her writing interchanges the term “artist” with the term “creative practitioner”, and the word “professional”. Savage explored the working lives of ten artists at different stages of their career.

That Savage also felt the need to use a variety of descriptions, in a publication whose main audience is artists, does suggest that “artist” means different things to different people. The melding of many labels together also takes place in the line on the book cover of Art, not chance: Nine Artists’ Diaries:

performanceartistchoreographermusicianwriterpoetplaywrightdirector  
composersculptor<sup>33</sup>

The diaries evidence the interdisciplinary activity of even the most seemingly single art form artist; all artists included in this collection have worked with other artforms as well as being what could be considered mid-career and successful in their dominant field.

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<sup>32</sup> Debra Savage, “Introduction”, Making a living as an artist, in D. Savage (ed) 2006, Newcastle: a-n and Louise Wirz. This was a-n’s second publication in their Future Forecast series.

<sup>33</sup> Paul Allen (ed), Art, not chance: Nine artists’ diaries, London, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 2001, front cover.

The AHRC, the funding body for this collaborative doctorate, has published the following understanding of the term artist:

...producers of original creative work. This list is not exhaustive but includes: visual artists; performers; musicians; creative writers; architects; poets; choreographers; scenographers; theatre or film directors; designers; those working in the applied arts, fashion, curatorial practice or film, video and/or other multi-media.<sup>34</sup>

When I discuss “artist” in this thesis I am using it in preference to the term “creative practitioner”. The artists I researched may choose not to use the label “artist”, or may more specifically call themselves a “poet” or “choreographer” and so on. Bob and Roberta Smith suggests that “It’s a mode of thinking and activity connected with action. Art brings the possibility of inventing who you are or want to be.”<sup>35</sup>

### **Understanding the term “mid-career”**

The term “mid-career” in association with “artist” has tended to be used in the visual arts sector more readily than in other art forms. Tate Galleries’ February and March 2007 guide, for example, called Jake and Dinos Chapman’s When Humans Walked the Earth their “mid-career” exhibition.<sup>36</sup> Artsadmin use the terms “early” and “mid-career” for their artists’ development schemes, mid-career is targeted towards those needing to take time to step away from their ongoing practices.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> AHRC, “Frequently Asked Questions”, Fellowships in the Creative and Performing Arts, 2008, p. 4, at: <http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/FundingOpportunities/Documents/Frequently%20Asked%20Questions%20FCPA%202008.pdf> (accessed 1 May 2009).

<sup>35</sup> Bob and Roberta Smith, Make Your Own Damn Art, London, Black Dog Publishing Limited, 2005, p. 136.

<sup>36</sup> Tate “What’s On” February-March 2007 guide, p. 6.

<sup>37</sup> Founded in 1979, Artsadmin is a producing organisation for contemporary artists working in theatre, dance, live art, visual arts, and mixed media. Based at Toynbee Studios, London, the organisation offers a free advisory service for artists, mentoring and development programmes and a number of bursary schemes. Artsadmin are also mentioned in Appendix 1.

The term “career”, has had a variety of meanings. Part of the definition in my Chamber’s Dictionary (100<sup>th</sup> Edition) is

... progress through life; one’s profession or occupation; progress or advancement in one’s profession or occupation... having a career; dedicated to a career...to gallop; to rush wildly; to move or run rapidly.

In Keywords (1976), cultural theorist Raymond Williams saw not only the etymological importance but the social importance of his chosen “keywords” shift over time.<sup>38</sup> An indicator of the continuous evolution of our vocabularies is that words crucial to Williams’ selection in Keywords in 1976 and revised in 1983, are not considered key in Bennett, Grossberg and Morris New Keywords in 2005, in which they demonstrated that words continue to grow into new meanings or become senescent. In 1976 and 1983, Williams selected “career” as a keyword but it was absent in the 2005 New Keywords revision, no longer included because it had “lost the special quality of ‘significance and difficulty’ that attracted his attention”.<sup>39</sup>

Williams found “career” to be “inseparable” from work, labour and job, having “some implicit promise of progress”. On “work”, Williams discusses “the specialisation of work” to mean “paid employment” as the result of the development of capitalist productive relations.<sup>40</sup> As Williams suggests, work used to mean “doing”: the effort of working. Now it more likely refers to the status of “being” in work, and refers to the relationships (social, organisational, institutional) validated by a salaried career title.

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<sup>38</sup> Raymond Williams, Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society, New York, Oxford University Press, revised edition, London, Fontana Paperbacks, 1983.

<sup>39</sup> Tony Bennett, Lawrence Grossberg and Meaghan Morris, New Keywords, Oxford, Blackwell Publishing 2005, p. xvii.

<sup>40</sup> Williams, Keywords, revised edition 1983, pp. 53 and 335.

The notion of career has changed. Trajectories veer wildly from art form to art form. Morrissey and Johnny Marr have gone on from successful careers in the band “The Smiths” to different navigations in their musical fields. David Byrne is famously known as a singer, particularly as the lead singer in “Talking Heads”, but has an equally interesting (if less “successful” in profile terms) career as a photographer. It is often more useful to consider an artistic career as a *continuum* of development for an artist in momentum.

It would be straightforward to suggest that emergent, mid and established artistic careers follow a simple trajectory which, when using traditional management principles, is chronological and therefore related to age. It would also be wrong. Using a “mid-career” word search through the titles of all books and documents catalogued in University of Plymouth’s library system in 2007, I found only one book: The Dynamics of Management Education: Observations on the mid-career development process (1981), an out of date yet illuminating work by Alistair Mant which charts the environment of management education, and describes “mid-life” and “mid-career” characteristics. Mant categorises these characteristics as

Entry: (20-30 yrs) – traditionally graduates with few or no years of actual experience. Resolution: (30-40 yrs) – middle managers moving into more responsible general positions. Post Resolution: (40-50 yrs) - Senior Managers.<sup>41</sup>

Evaluation and research statistics in arts professional development repeatedly show that artists do not fall into these neat categories. The above perspective suggests either that there is little possibility of deviation from where you are heading, or little chance of

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<sup>41</sup> Alistair Mant, The Dynamics of Management Education: Observations on the mid-career development process, England, Gower Publishing, 1981, p. 23.

varying interpretation of the narrative to describe where you have come from. The idea of understanding and knowing where “mid” is in a career suggests that the trajectory is already fixed and plotted, and that nothing will throw it off course in any way. This is an unlikely scenario in any life.

According to Mant:

...it is in mid-life that the individual becomes capable of defining work in a personally responsible way, i.e. his experience of his working life may now begin to merge with a dawning sense of what his life's work might be...orientation to any educational opportunity will differ according to the nature of his career expectations or the success with which he has resolved his own engagement with the matter of work in relation to life.<sup>42</sup>

Although actual age may have nothing to do with artists' positioning in their “careers”, an “amount of experience” in accumulating years does; it is the experience which creates a body of expertise. However, that body of experience or expertise does not, for artists, necessarily equate economically with financial stability or pay rises. Mant discusses mid-life as a point where the “individual is recognising that his first 35 years are real; you *are* in effect, what you have managed to do, whatever you had in mind.”<sup>43</sup> Later he suggests that this can lead to a move towards “sculpted creativity” where a realism about one's own talents and the opportunities that are out there enables a non-perfectionist stance where one can judge when work is good enough to be released so as to move onto the next task.

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<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 22-23.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20. Emphasis in the original.

Mant's observations are related to one particular idea of career and work, however there is huge diversity of arts practitioner need from different art form disciplines (including inter-disciplinary practices), and some commonalities. The central enquiry set by the title of this PhD project concerning mid-career artists and CPD provision creates other questions: Is there a need for *different* CPD provision for experienced artists? Who defines *need*? Are artists able to access existing resources and provision when they need it? Is the current "standard" provision at a high enough quality with qualified providers? Chapter One analyses, maps and reviews CPD in the cultural sector in England, and in the South West of England, from CPD's originating context in the arts through to 2009. It considers the two key generic creative industries providers of CPD in the South West during the period of this project: ArtsMatrix and Creative Skills.

To date no research appears to have been undertaken specifically on mid-career artists in the South West, yet there is a body of research charting artists' professional development needs. Chapter Two articulates my research methodology and reviews my own and other's methods to research artists' careers, including one short piece of work from the North West of England on mid-career theatre practitioners.

Chapter Three explores the key terms in the research title: "South West", "Mid-Career" and "CPD". It moves between freelance artists' voices and salaried administrators / curators' voices, based on my primary research in a snapshot of time in 2006-2007.

Chapter Four grounds in theory my repertoire of research methods, and demonstrates the importance of place, space and region, language, articulation and momentum to this research. The theories discussed in Chapter Four form the pivots of my research. Policy impacts on practice, and these theories have allowed me to explore how provision is

affected by policy-maker's conceptualisations of region and the inter-connectedness of provision, location, and artists' practices affect how *any* region is viewed, in this case I am specifically exploring the idea of a South West region.

Chapters Five and Six represent and analyse artists' needs, as described in response to my enquiries about CPD provision in the South West. Because the research is led from interviews with artists, issues pertaining to race, community, gaps or lack of connecting practice within South West based institutions and organisations are covered only if they are signposted by the artists included in this research project. The research does not speak for artists; it attempts to reposition some artists' voices at the centre of professional development providers' thinking, and values individual narratives. The research concentrates on artists in the ArtsMatrix catchment area, and not those in the Creative Skills (the partner organisation to ArtsMatrix in Cornwall) catchment area, however, sometimes these overlap.

Chapter Five is a detailed case study of the South West based Crafts Council Fellowship Scheme for mid-career crafts people. I observed the scheme from the beginning through to its culmination in March 2009, and followed the five successful fellows. The chapter explores this particular type of CPD support structure, language and need, through the lens of South West and mid-career specificity, and contrasts it with previous CPD schemes, DIY and artist-led practices which I also attended, participated in and observed.

Chapter Six constitutes the final data collection chapter, detailing my walking and talking with four experienced artists on their choice of walks. It seeks to explore the challenges of support and provision for these practitioners and discusses alternative

ways that artists may be able to articulate and develop ways to fulfil their skills needs. Both philosopher Brian Massumi and sociologist Pierre Bourdieu demonstrated that the essence of our practices are jointly articulated via body and mind (*habitus*). Bourdieu also demonstrated that certain forms of articulations in language can have powerful status. Can *inclusive* CPD be created which allows *articulation* and room for manoeuvre not constrained by language or the perceived value of certain capitals in certain fields? I consider this in relation to these four case studies who are not drawn together by a CPD initiative but by my own enquiry, framed by the key theoretical contributions, into how artists navigate, negotiate and narrate their experiences. I made a choice to use artists' narratives, and in telling their stories I drew upon the issues they discussed, and use direct quotes from the artists that relate to my theoretical engagement. To produce this chapter, I have edited down from over 200,000 words of transcripts to 18,000 and in most cases I felt the theory is evidenced through the artists' narrative. The theories of Bourdieu and Massumi whilst not directly addressing the question of CPD supported a questioning of the language and articulation of CPD in the South West and corresponded with my aim to allow artists to speak for themselves, in recognition that a construct such as CPD "needs" for "mid-career" artists may appear to constrain as much as enable.

The Conclusion synthesises my research and reviews the themes of continuum, momentum and commitment to practice. It questions how CPD policy and provision might more imaginatively fit to experienced artists' practices in the future. In the thesis that follows, I explore my hypothesis that CPD for artistic practice could be rethought to allow for the possibility that the term "career" with planned "routes" or "paths" may not

be the most appropriate way to understand and discuss the professional practices of experienced artists.

## Chapter One

### CPD Policy and Practice

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I struggle to think of things I have learnt on a short training course. All the useful methodologies I employ, most of the tips I pass on, were passed on to me by a friend or colleague saying “when I am doing that, I do this.” Things I struggled to understand – reading figures for instance – I finally understood working alongside someone who was fluent, who could read the subtext, who knew how money worked.

I have learnt, not by being told but by being involved, inspiration not instruction. You can create learning tools round breath, it is harder to create breath from tools.<sup>1</sup>

Steve Dearden

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<sup>1</sup> Steve Dearden, “Breaking Eggs” for Literature Training series How did I get here?, June 2006, p. 3. at: [www.literaturetraining.com](http://www.literaturetraining.com), (accessed 16 June 2008). Steve Dearden is a writer, trainer and a literature consultant.

This chapter seeks to map the context of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) in the cultural sector in England in general, and in the South West of England in particular. An explanation of the genealogy, definition and originating context of CPD in the arts is followed by the evolving context to date, and finally the contemporary context in 2009. Each contextual section includes a policy review. The final draft of this chapter was completed at the end of March 2009; policy reviews are current to that date. Any substantial revision of policy between March 2009 and the final thesis draft is picked up in additional footnotes here, and in the conclusion of the thesis.

This snapshot of England's CPD ecology is followed by an action review (with detailed appendices) of what is broadly on offer to artists across the country, and a detailed, although not comprehensive, outline of what and where CPD is on offer in the South West, considering the two key generic creative industries providers of CPD in the South West: ArtsMatrix, with a central office in Bristol and who are based across the South West except Cornwall; and Creative Skills, who have offices in Redruth and Penzance, and cover Cornwall.<sup>2</sup>

## **Originating context of CPD**

The term Continuing Professional Development, shortened to CPD, was in common use in the 1990s in other professionalised sectors, particularly accountancy and psychology. However in the cultural sector, until the late 1990s, it had not been identified as a useful term. A concerted campaign to advocate discussion about the field of CPD using

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<sup>2</sup> ArtsMatrix changed significantly between 2006 and 2009. The final version of this chapter was written in 2009 shortly before ArtsMatrix went into receivership and the company is therefore discussed here in the present tense.

language from Business Psychology Solutions, took place in Spring 2000 when the Arts Council of England (ACE) Employment Team launched their vision of a CPD Framework for England.<sup>3</sup> Edward Birch, former Senior Employment Adviser to ACE, kick-started discussions on arts professionals' CPD.<sup>4</sup> Simultaneously ACE and HEFCE (Higher Education Funding Council for England) had created a working group to discuss CPD across the visual and performing arts sector.<sup>5</sup>

In September 2000, ACE developed a glossary of terms for CPD which distinguished "the arts" from other professions that follow an official route of CPD and have "chartered" status awarded. These include accountants (Institute of Chartered Accountants) and psychologists (British Psychological Society). In these cases, after accreditations, the individual must evidence their continuing engagement in CPD activity, for a number of stated hours per year, directly linked to improving their professional knowledge (e.g. formal training, self-directed learning, or attending conferences). Communication skills would be excluded in this definition of CPD as communication is considered to be a general rather than profession-specific skill. No regulatory body exists for CPD in the arts, and Birch felt each individual case should be self-defining. In 2000 as now, the arts embrace a huge diversity of practices, each with different emphases and needs in terms of CPD.

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<sup>3</sup> Ed Birch, "The Thinking behind CreativePeople – a Continuing Professional development service for the arts." August 2002. Emailed by E. Birch to Karen Smith, 15 April 2003.

<sup>4</sup> "Arts professional" was a wider term used in the same way as "creative practitioner".

<sup>5</sup> The membership of this group was: Christopher Frayling (Chair) - Royal College of Art; Nick Barter - Royal Academy of Dramatic Art; Pauline Tambling - Arts Council of England; Ann Bridgwood - Arts Council of England; Edward Birch - Arts Council of England; Vanessa Conte - HEFCE; Edward Gregson - Royal Northern College of Music; Robert Hutchinson - Southern Arts Board; Paul Hubbard - HEFCE; Leslie Morris - Design Council; Jim Roddis - Sheffield Hallam University; Elaine Thomas - Surrey Institute of Art & Design; Lola Young - Middlesex University.

## Understandings of CPD

In developing a framework for CPD in 2000 following the initial discussions in Spring 2000,<sup>6</sup> Birch highlighted the need for arts professionals to achieve both excellence and survival simultaneously, within a “highly competitive and pressurized environment.” He articulated the “dilemma” of attempting to define the diversity of development activity and thereby running the risk of “minimising or excluding” activity. He argued that rather than defining activity, it was more useful to “highlight” possible outcomes of CPD. His suggested working definition of CPD was:

...a voluntary activity, where the individual has the desire to develop themselves – this could be directly related to skills needed for their profession, or skills which would be transferable between occupations, or skills which are purely for self-enhancement.

... any activity which results in enhanced artistic or management practice, increased employability and/or facilitates personal development.<sup>7</sup>

In general, Birch’s description of CPD remains as relevant today as it was in 2000.

Understandings of CPD are bespoke to organisations and individuals and vary immensely. Three understandings of the term follow. CPD in Reflective Practitioner was defined as “a considered approach to defining and realising development needs”.<sup>8</sup>

HEFCE, ACE and the Design Council described it as:

The planned acquisition of knowledge and skills, building on existing experience, assisting career progression and the development of the

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<sup>6</sup> Birch, “The Thinking behind CreativePeople”, August 2002.

<sup>7</sup> Ed Birch, Arts Council of England. “Continuing Professional Development. Glossary of Terms”, new version 2003. The original glossary was developed during 2000.

<sup>8</sup> Karen Smith for Matrix, *On Reflection. Reflective Practitioner Project Evaluation Report*, June 2003, p. 7. The matrix of arts organisations leading the Reflective Practitioner project defined CPD in this way.

personal qualities necessary for the execution of professional and technical duties throughout working life.<sup>9</sup>

This may include (not exclusively) “training, mentoring, networking and IAG (information, advice and guidance) services”.<sup>10</sup> The Foundation for Community Dance has a longer definition, which includes the following qualifying statement:

All our personal and professional experiences contribute to our professional development, but “CPD” denotes a deliberate, planned approach to maintaining and extending one’s professional skills, knowledge and expertise (competence). ... What defines an activity as CPD, is that it is done in order to reach a particular personal/professional goal, to achieve a specific personal/professional outcome, or to enhance an aspect of professional practice.<sup>11</sup>

To summarise different understandings of CPD I have constructed three categories of provision:

- 1) Business support where advice is constructed largely from within the specialised employed creative industries sector and in which a language for CPD such as the CPD glossary that I discuss here is developed. In this scenario, business skills are foregrounded. This is an institution-led approach to an artist’s career and what CPD is available.
- 2) Professional development by artists and arts organisations, with a diversity of labels, but generally not including generic training courses. This type of CPD

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<sup>9</sup> Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), Arts Council England (ACE) and the Design Council. Connections and Collaborations. Developing Higher Education’s Continuing Professional Development provision for arts and design practitioners. Falmouth College of Arts and Dartington College of Arts, n.d, p. 8. A conversation with one of the contributors identified the approximate date as 2005. The definition uses one identified by the Joint Working Group of HEFCE (2001) Arts Council England and Design Council Continuing Professional Development for Arts and Design Practitioners.

<sup>10</sup> Mary Schwarz and Cat Radford for Youth Music and Arts Council England, South West, MusicLeader South West. Report on Research and Development phase, 20 December 2006.

<sup>11</sup> The foundation for Community Dance, at: <http://www.communitydance.org.uk>, (accessed 28 January 2008).

is more often peer-led or peer-supported, or generated on an “as and when” basis. Artistic practice needs tend to lead this development; art is at the core.

- 3) Artists participating in their practices who perceive professional development as an ongoing and necessary part of their practice, and see no reason to label it with a title such as “CPD”.

## **Evolving CPD networks**

Birch’s new proposals at ACE called for potential partnership applicants to apply in two stages for money to develop a joined-up approach to CPD, and if successful, applicants would gain two year funding for 2000-2002 to test pilot phase developments for a CPD Framework that drew upon both regional and national groupings supported by web-based technologies. It was stated that the framework would not deliver CPD itself but provide “an information, advice, diagnostic and support service for arts professionals”. The framework was seen as “an immense task; to build a national and inclusive CPD service for 500,000 employees of the arts sector”.<sup>12</sup> This comment demonstrates that in 2000, ACE were considering CPD development for employees, not freelancers.

## **Creative People Network**

In June 2000 Metier (the now defunct National Training Organisation referred to in the introduction of this thesis) surveyed the arts sector and produced a report called AS2K. The recommendations of that report were taken up by “The CPD Network Consortium” who developed a business plan in response to the Arts Council of England’s two-stage

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<sup>12</sup> Birch, “The Thinking behind CreativePeople”, August 2002.

call (as detailed above) for second-round bids for a CPD Framework following the first-round selection process in October 2000. This plan was successful in its bid to ACE and was entitled: "A network to support Continuing Professional development May 2001." Presenting the joint vision of a "Consortium of ten consortia" and two steering groups to put in place a network of CPD support centres that would address the needs of arts practitioners across England, the plan focused on establishing a pilot scheme for developing and implementing a connected CPD framework for the new network across a limited selection of artforms and geographic areas over a two-year period. By September 2002 Creative People had become the national network of organisations for CPD in the arts and crafts. In addition to the network, these organisations individually supplied training and CPD information, advice and guidance service to current and aspiring arts and crafts practitioners. Members of the original hub are detailed in Appendix 2.

The market information Metier provided in AS2K observed a lack of clear training routes or career progressions within the (arts) industry, particularly noting the lack of availability of training for freelancers. Metier predicted that short-term contracts and number of freelancers would "rise significantly" alongside growing competition for contracts and a trend towards "portfolio careers" (a new term in 2000). They also predicted that "multi-skilling" would become a necessity. Consequently, Creative People's Business Plan noted:

The National Advisory Group for Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning has identified certain features that make access to lifelong learning essential for a secure, inclusive and economically successful society. The arts sector is no different from any other industry sector in its need to provide accessible and appropriate professional development opportunities for all those involved in the arts and arts

management. However there are some special characteristics that create particular challenges in terms of CPD for the arts sector.<sup>13</sup>

Many of these “special characteristics” are as pertinent now as they were then. They include: erratic working hours that make predictable and ongoing training difficult to attend; commercial and subsidised sectors that exist simultaneously; self-employment that spans non-arts as well as arts sectors; too few large employers with sufficient funds to provide CPD; a notable lack of investment in retention of expertise, and so on.

Importantly two characteristics were:

- the lack of awareness of the link between professional development activity and financial rewards / career progression;
- career paths in the arts sector can be ambiguous and confusing.<sup>14</sup>

These findings were important to the future direction of CPD provision; artists were invisible in these findings and the support was largely geared towards developing economic growth.

## **HEFCE, and other artist and organisation-led CPD networks and activities**

In September 1998 a report from HEFCE used the terms CPD and CVE (Continuing Vocational Education) simultaneously and interchangeably.<sup>15</sup> HEFCE also produced

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<sup>13</sup> CreativePeople, “A Business Plan for A Network to Support Continuing Professional Development in the Arts & Crafts”, December 2001, p. 4.

<sup>14</sup> “A network to support Continuing Professional development May 2001”, the original business plan to set up CreativePeople. Extracts emailed by Barbara Brunson to Karen Smith on 8 February 2008.

<sup>15</sup> The University of Birmingham School of Education, The evaluation of funding for the development of continuing vocational education (CVE), The University of Birmingham, September 1998, pp 98-99.

three other notable reports: Good practice in non award-bearing continuing education (1998),<sup>16</sup> Non award-bearing continuing education: An evaluation of the HEFCE programme 1995-1998 (1999);<sup>17</sup> CPD for arts and design practitioners (2001).<sup>18</sup> This last report by a joint HEFCE, Arts Council, and Design Working Group, linked directly to a need to coordinate with the Art Council of England's CPD framework initiative at the time. The report was jointly funded by ACE, HEFCE and the University of Birmingham.

Although the context has altered significantly since publication, these reports are useful as a contribution to understanding the national policy agendas for CPD and the debates around them. The working group established by HEFCE for the November 2001 study was asked to assess: current provision made within Higher Education for meeting the CPD needs of professional workers in the creative industries; current and potential demand for such opportunities; and to make recommendations for improving the match between supply and demand.

This report defined "creative industries" similarly to the broad interpretation applied by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) mapping study at the time. The report excluded technology-based needs and concentrated on consideration of the needs of professional workers whom they defined as:

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<sup>16</sup> Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), Good practice in Non award-bearing continuing education, September 1998. Preceding the Stephen McNair and Sue Cara report of March 1999 (detailed below), this report is now useful as a contribution to understanding the national policy agendas and the debates around them in the context of experience and continuing change.

<sup>17</sup> Stephen McNair, Sue Cara, Veronica McGivney, Fiona Raybould, Jim Soulsby, Alastair Thomson, and Mike Vaughan, Non award-bearing continuing education. An evaluation of the HEFCE programme 1995-1998, National Institute for Adult Continuing Education, March 1999. Since this report was published, the context has altered significantly.

<sup>18</sup> HEFCE, Arts Council and Design Working Group, CPD for arts and design practitioners, November 2001.

all of those engaged in industry in a creative capacity: performing artists working in both traditional and non-traditional settings, artists and designers, composers, craftspeople, writers, theatre directors and arts administrators, but not box office staff or stage hands. We refer to this grouping of industries and occupations as “the arts and design”.<sup>19</sup>

Contemporaneously with ACE and HEFCE’s discussions and funding provision for CPD, other arts organisations and individuals, were investigating, discussing and developing the potential effectiveness of various types of professional development support, including opportunities for reflective practice, mentoring and research and development. This groundswell is evidenced by a plethora of policy documents, evaluations and project developments.

Education Through Art (ETA) based in the South East of England is notable for its visual arts focused pioneering professional development scheme for artists which ran from 1995, and also focused on “already established artists”.<sup>20</sup> a-n, the artists information company, have also in the last decade consistently provided an artist-led approach to professional development for artists. Other notable reports and initiatives nationally were researched by Phyllida Shaw and Keith Allen who provided a review of CPD provision in the HE sector in 2001.<sup>21</sup> Additionally, organisations such as the

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<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>20</sup> ETA are particularly noteworthy for their groundbreaking work, for further detail see: Education Through Art, Artists Professional Development Training Programme 2002. Evaluation Report, December 2002-2003; Education Through Art, Annual Review 2001-2002; Jane Heath for Education Through Art, Professional Development in the Making: Options for a new Education through Art scheme, Confidential research report, November 2001; Education Through Art, Artists Professional Development Scheme (APDS) 2000-2002, 2 April 2003, at: <http://www.eta-art.co.uk/services/pdtp.html>, (accessed 8 April 2004). This document contains details of the original artists’ professional development scheme run in the South East region aimed at people who have been in practise for some time. Tailored to meet the needs of visual artists and crafts practitioners; Education Through Art, Artists Professional Development Training Programme (PDTP) 2002-03, 2 April 2003, at: <http://www.etaart.co.uk/services/apds.html>, (accessed 8 April 2004). As above, with details of the training programme running parallel to the development scheme; Education Through Art, Deborah Rawson and Andrew Wheatley, Artists Professional Development Scheme 1995-2000. Review, May 2000.

<sup>21</sup> Phyllida Shaw and Keith Allen for HEFCE, the Arts Council of England and the Design Council, Continuing Professional Development For The Creative Industries: A Review Of Provision In The Higher Education Sector, 20 April 2001. The intention of this report was to provide the commissioners with an

Learning Skills Council and NESTA were producing their own papers on learning and skills development within cultural activity.<sup>22</sup>

In Yorkshire, circ-elation, an annual national professional development scheme for circus artists was developing, organised and managed by independent consultants, CB Projects, and delivered by artists and directors for circus artists and directors. This project was professionally evaluated for the first time in 2004.<sup>23</sup> The DIY bursary scheme, initiated and hosted by the Live Art Advisory Network (Artsadmin, Live Art Development Agency and New Work Network) developed in close consultation with artists.<sup>24</sup> The wording for bursaries were based directly on artists speaking to other artists; the language then attempted to reflect that dialogue rather than the language of the partners that funded the scheme:

DIY was a pilot initiative that offered artists working in Live Art the chance to conceive and run professional development projects for other artists.<sup>25</sup>

From the initial pilot which invited proposal applications to a deadline of 16 September 2002, an extremely successful annual initiative has grown. In 2009, DIY 6 took place,<sup>26</sup> Daniel Brine observed:

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overview of the breadth of CPD provision in the higher education sector and a summary of issues relevant to the development of such provision. It has been superseded by further more detailed investigations of CPD supply and demand.

<sup>22</sup> The Learning and Skills Council Quality and Standards Directorate developed a Position Paper on Recognising and Recording Progress and Achievement in Non-accredited Learning, January 2003; NESTA produced: Barriers to the realisation of creative ideas, August 2002. Qualitative research with both practitioners and advisors about barriers to the realisation of creative ideas. An example of points made are: "The notion of learning by doing and being allowed to make mistakes is counter to the drive for short-term, measurable returns currently expected in the UK culture" (p. 2).

<sup>23</sup> Karen Smith, Circelation Professional Development Programme for Circus Artists and Directors Evaluation Report, April 2004; Karen Smith, Summary Evaluation Report - Circelation Professional Development Programme for Circus Artists and Directors, May 2004.

<sup>24</sup> DIY was financially assisted by London Arts as part of Creative Capital and Creative People. I researched the initial DIY scheme for On Reflection, June 2003, p. 58.

<sup>25</sup> DIY Summary Report. Emailed by Daniel Brine, Live Art Development Agency, to Karen Smith, 9 April 2003, n.p.

DIY demonstrated that artists are well equipped to conceive and manage professional development initiatives. The role of the host organisations (Artsadmin, Live Art Development Agency and New Work Network) in DIY was therefore to facilitate, encourage, and advise rather than to control.<sup>27</sup>

DIY, like Matrix in the South West (detailed in this chapter), was formed via the (London) hub of the Creative People network.

In other regions there were initiatives researching existing professional development programmes and / or evidencing need for development. In the North West, for example, “Employing Creativity,” a partnership between North West Arts Board and University of Salford funded by DCMS, sought to gain understanding and then make recommendations regarding the “skills needs of the creative sector in the North West in particular” noting that “the findings also have a national significance.”<sup>28</sup> The emphasis here was on skills in relation to creative employment and economic development. The report detailed information from fourteen “Action Research Projects” and six “scoping studies” across the North West, including a scoping study by myself.<sup>29</sup> The following year, NWAB who had by then become ACE North West, commissioned research into the CPD needs of the participatory arts sector in the region.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> DIY 6 is explored further in Chapter Five.

<sup>27</sup> DIY Summary Report.

<sup>28</sup> Jo Heeley and Claire Pickard for ACE, Employing Creativity. Skills development in the Creative Industries in the North West of England, May 2002. Michael Eakin, then Regional Executive Director, North West Arts Board, “Foreword”, p. 3.

<sup>29</sup> Karen Smith for Arts Council England North West and Creative Industries Task Force, Woo Arts Traineeships Research in Relation to the Objectives for Employing Creativity, February 2002.

<sup>30</sup> Karen Smith for Arts Council England North West, Study of the current and future continuing Professional development needs of artists, workshop leaders and project managers in the community / participatory arts sectors in Manchester and East Lancashire, November 2003.

## **CPD: Originating context in the South West**

The desire to consolidate a network of CPD providers in the South West drove many South West based organisations (mostly arts based) to form Matrix, the South West “hub” of the Creative People Network’s consortium in 2001. Matrix was included in Creative People’s original business plan to gain the two year ACE funding described above. Matrix’s purpose was described as:

Delivering advice, guidance and support for all arts and crafts practitioners in the Southwest.<sup>31</sup>

Members of Matrix were:

Arnolfini Gallery, Art Shape Limited, Arts Centre Trust, Barbican Theatre Plymouth, Bath Festivals Trust, Dance Agency Cornwall, Dartington College of Arts, Devon Guild of Craftsmen, Equata, Folk South West, Perfect Moment, South West Arts, Watershed Media Centre, Wren Trust.

Plus various associates to provide expert advice.<sup>32</sup>

Arts Centre Trust, a member of the above Matrix network, were administering The Creative Skills Consortium, a partnership of twenty arts organisations in Cornwall. This complex grouping of organisations comprising consortia within consortia were led by the Regional Arts Board (now ACE SW). Matrix began to use the name ArtsMatrix in 2003, and in 2004 was incorporated as ArtsMatrix Ltd with a board of directors.

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<sup>31</sup> CreativePeople, “A Business Plan for A Network to Support Continuing Professional Development in the Arts & Crafts”, December 2001, p. 2.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31.

## **Reflective Practitioner and First Stop Shop**

Matrix undertook to develop and pilot two schemes: The First Stop Shop and Reflective Practitioner. Pilot projects tend to be those which are seen to be new or innovative, and which experiment with a structure that has not been previously tested. Both First Stop Shop and Reflective Practitioner were to run simultaneously. First Stop Shop was aimed at

...establishing and testing a strategic network of partners who can provide CPD information and guidance to individuals in the sector.<sup>33</sup>

and Reflective Practitioner aimed to explore:

...what and how artists and makers need to learn to develop their work. The focus is on practice based self-evaluation and the creation of a language for continuing professional development for arts practitioners that is meaningful for them and for their funders / supporters alike.<sup>34</sup>

The users, clients or beneficiaries of ArtsMatrix First Stop Shop Service were expected to include: emerging practitioners; those training or recently qualified artists; and professionals with an established career in the arts and crafts sector who wished to develop further.

Reflective Practitioner aimed to be completed by March 2003 (starting March 2002) and six First Stop Shops providing CPD information and advice to individuals were to be established by April 2002.<sup>35</sup> In practice, Reflective Practitioner began two months later than expected, taking place May 2002 to May 2003; and First Stop Shop (phase one)

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<sup>33</sup> Perfect Moment, Matrix Business Plan, March 2002, "Aims, Objectives and Key Activities", n.p.

<sup>34</sup> From Matrix Reflective Practitioner Recruitment pack, 2002.

<sup>35</sup> Perfect Moment, Matrix Business Plan, March 2002, n.p.

commenced eighteen months later in September 2003, after Reflective Practitioner completed, and finished in February 2005.

First Stop Shop was funded by the European Social Fund (ESF) to deliver development needs analyses (DNA's), information, advice and guidance in support of the professional development of people working in the creative industries in the South West. Through five geographically located First Stop Shops, each with a specific creative interest, the project was tasked to deliver a total of 680 individual DNA's by February 2005. Each DNA was to comprise an initial meeting, and follow through of up to 3 sessions, at flexible intervals up to a year (up to 9 hours face to face, with individual reflection and development activities in between). The DNA process recorded by practitioners through a workbook approach was meant to lead (as a requirement of the ESF funding) to achievement of an Open College Network Unit accreditation at Level 2 for participants. In practice, accreditation was highly unpopular.<sup>36</sup>

Creative Skills managed the Matrix consortium and phase one of First Stop Shop. A subsequent phase two, again managed by Creative Skills, began in March 2005, ending in December 2006. It was delivered by Cornwall Arts Centre Trust (for Creative Skills) and funded by ESF Objective Three under the scheme heading: "Professional Development support for creative practitioners". An evaluation was commissioned in February 2006.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Evidence for this can be found in my own evaluations for the Reflective Practitioner Scheme and the first phase of First Stop Shop; in Hutcheson's report on the second phase of First Stop Shop; Schwarz and Radford's MusicLeader South West: Report on research and development phase, 20 December 2006, p.19 and in Connections and Collaborations detailed in this chapter. All evidence a lack of desire to accredit or certify knowledge.

<sup>37</sup> Nicola Hutcheson, Platform3 for ACT Ltd. (Cornwall Arts Centre Trust Ltd.), ArtsMatrix Final Report,

ArtsMatrix thus originated from the ACE CPD Framework development via Creative People Network and Matrix and together with Creative Skills who were already in existence prior to proposals, they became the two generic CPD providers in the South West. Creative Skills and ArtsMatrix are independent organisations who work in partnership where appropriate.<sup>38</sup> Current contexts are provided later in this chapter. Similar to many of the key partner organisations detailed in the Creative People Network bid, ArtsMatrix have also developed partnerships with other training providers, arts project delivery and cultural sector activities. ACE, Creative People, ArtsMatrix and Creative Skills were in 2009 key players in the ongoing advocacy, policy development and articulation of CPD to the arts sector.

Over the last decade, policy development has changed the descriptions and availability of funding for CPD. Prior to ACE intervention, there had, of course, been other labels which described artists' and creative people's professional development, such as: research and development, skills development, career development, lifelong learning, creative renewal, individual renewal, and reflective practice. The beginnings of this groundswell of awareness and training around CPD in the late 1990s and early 2000s continues today with the production of a plethora of documents either from Government or independently commissioned.

Significant policy documents between 2003 and 2005 related to Reflective Practitioner, First Stop Shop and South West CPD were: On Reflection. Matrix: Reflective

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December 2006.

<sup>38</sup> This wording was agreed in a phone conversation with the CEO of ArtsMatrix on 26 March 2009.

Practitioner Project Evaluation Report (2003);<sup>39</sup> ArtsMatrix First Stop Shop (Phase 1). Final Evaluation Report (2005);<sup>40</sup> and Connections and Collaborations (circa 2005).<sup>41</sup>

Connections and Collaborations in particular provides analysis of the map of supply and demand for CPD within twelve Higher Education Institutions in the South West and provides statistics regarding practitioner demand for CPD.<sup>42</sup> The background to Connections and Collaborations stated:

The South West was chosen as a regional focus for further research because of its wealth of creative activity; large number of self-employed practitioners and micro-enterprises – a key employment characteristic of the sector; its rural and urban mix; the existence of a regional CreativePeople hub (ArtsMatrix); and its range of HE provision from small specialist arts institutions to large multi-faculty universities; and its uneven provision of HE based CPD.<sup>43</sup>

Career stages of practitioners were defined in number of years of practice; one question asked: “At what point would you say you were in your career?” Choices were: Early (one to seven years); Mid (seven to fourteen years); Established (fourteen plus years).<sup>44</sup> The report stated that seventy one percent of all respondents were “mid-career” or “established” practitioners. The report also evidenced strong CPD activity, despite the effect of fluctuation of opportunities in the region dependent on artists’ location, ability to travel in the region, and art form. In its conclusion the report stated that the South West had:

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<sup>39</sup> Karen Smith for Matrix, On Reflection, 2003.

<sup>40</sup> Karen Smith, ArtsMatrix First Stop Shop (Phase 1). Final Evaluation Report. ArtsMatrix. May 2005.

<sup>41</sup> HEFCE, ACE and the Design Council, Connections and Collaborations, n.d. This report is also discussed in Chapter Two.

<sup>42</sup> Four maps are detailed: two Regional sub-sector studies, one examining the visual arts, crafts and design, one examining the performing arts, including music; two pan-sector studies, one examining Cornwall as a rural sub-region; and one examining Plymouth as an urban sub-region.

<sup>43</sup> Connections and Collaborations, n.d, p. 8.

<sup>44</sup> Approximately forty percent of respondents selected “established”. Thirty one percent selected “mid-career”, and twenty eight percent selected “early”. Connections and Collaborations, n.d, appendices.

a more promising picture than the national overview...HEIs in the South West are actively engaging on many levels with CPD for arts and design practitioners. Most institutions recognise the scope for, and benefit of, developing this activity further.<sup>45</sup>

The report also observed that “the majority of respondents were self employed (63.7%)...earned less than £15,000 and a significant minority (36.3%) earned less than £5,000 from their creative practice.”<sup>46</sup>

Secondary source material draws from a variety of research documents for the creative sector: for example, Continuing Professional Development For The Creative Industries A Review Of Provision In The Higher Education Sector by Phyllida Shaw and Keith Allen (2001), mentioned previously in this chapter; various DCMS mapping documents; Nottingham Trent University and Perfect Moment’s 2003 economic study of the Creative Industries in Cornwall: Creative Value; Cornwall Arts Marketing’s figures; and Davis and Lindley’s 2003 research, Artists in Figures. This cross-referencing of statistical material is useful, however, it is now out of date, and the report concludes with a note that the formation of ArtsMatrix was likely to change the picture which the research had painted.<sup>47</sup>

The report also gathered information on emerging local or regional initiatives, and again, the picture has changed significantly in only a few years. As the report was completing it noted the spearheading of theatre locality plans, which eventually led to CPD opportunities in particularly Bristol and Bath<sup>48</sup> (for example, Theatre Bristol

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<sup>45</sup> Connections and Collaborations, n.d, p. 60.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 59. As discussed fully in this chapter, ArtsMatrix were during 2005, undergoing organisational development moving from a consortium-led organisation to establishing as a legal business and an independent regional CPD development agency.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 40-41.

established a website, and three creative producer posts). It observed the Bristol Visual Arts Consortium (BVAC) originally constituted to support the British Art Show in Bristol in 2006, which has continued to discuss the development of visual arts support in critical contexts, and Spike Island in Bristol was developing an associate scheme (now developed and running from early 2008, with associates using a dedicated room space with library, reading group and a collaborative doctorate PhD attached to the network).

## **National initiatives 2007-2009**

Nationally some of the main developments will be discussed below in the following order: Creative Britain; Leitch Review; Creative and Cultural Skills; NESTA, Demos and Mission Models Money; Higher Education and ACE; McMaster Report.

### **Creative Britain, a creative economy strategy for the UK**

Leading from the Creative Economy Programme in November 2005, where Government first emphasized the desire to make the UK the world's creative hub, DCMS commissioned Will Hutton and the Work Foundation to produce an economic analysis of the Creative Economy in the UK as part of the Creative Economy Programme. The resulting paper, Staying ahead: the economic performance of the UK's creative industries, is a significant contribution to the debate about the importance of the Creative Economy in the UK and was published in June 2007.

Creative Britain: New Talents for a New Economy produced by the DCMS in February 2008, is the creative economy strategy for the UK and documents twenty-six

commitments from Government to support the creative industries. It claims to be heavily influenced by Staying Ahead which “sets out the territory on which this strategy is built”.<sup>49</sup> It is worth noting that the strategy states:

This document is valuable as a *statement of intent* – but the commitments it makes can only be a high-level summary of the many actions currently underway or imminent.<sup>50</sup>

Creative Britain argues the need for the creative industries to move from a peripheral to a central position of economic and policy thinking; it is a document of which DCMS is “proud”, seeing it as a “genuinely cross-government document”.<sup>51</sup>

Continuing Professional Development is mentioned once in the seventy-seven page report, in relation to sector skills councils that need to:

identify the right mix of qualifications and continuing professional development to respond to changing demands and to help individuals progress in their careers.<sup>52</sup>

The strategy includes measures to help “untangle the complicated and fragmented paths into a creative career”, and a section headed “clear career paths”.<sup>53</sup> Mid-career is not used as a term in the document. However the document discusses “professional skills needs” and is clear that individuals are themselves responsible for the “huge effort” and “dedication” required to “reach the top” of professions under the umbrella label of “creative industries”. A proviso is added: “but we need to strengthen provision. We

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<sup>49</sup> DCMS, Creative Britain: New Talents for a New Economy, 22 February 2008, p. 5, at: [www.culture.gov.uk/reference\\_library/publications/3572.aspx](http://www.culture.gov.uk/reference_library/publications/3572.aspx). 22 February 2008, (accessed 3 March 2008).

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p.11. My emphasis.

<sup>51</sup> Will Callendine of DCMS presenting an overview and background to Creative Britain at CreativeAmbition2, 25 June 2008. Birmingham Hippodrome.

<sup>52</sup> DCMS, Creative Britain, p. 7.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7 and p. 21 respectively.

need to help talented individuals map out their paths to success, in industry and beyond.”<sup>54</sup>

The cultural sector appears four times, most significantly for this research, under the heading “Exploiting links with the cultural sector”:

As the Work Foundation argued in *Staying Ahead*, the creative and cultural sectors enjoy a symbiotic relationship. Our rich cultural infrastructure and diversity has contributed to the UK becoming a thriving hub of the creative industries ... over the last 10 years, one achievement of the Arts Council has been to break down the barriers between the cultural sectors and the creative industries... Many creative businesses would never dream of seeking subsidy; many theatres, opera companies and orchestras depend on it. In the middle, however, there is a space where subsidy and profit meet, with artists and organisations that are thriving in the mixed economy. The Arts Council deserves much credit for making that middle ground habitable.<sup>55</sup>

Creative Britain here acknowledges that the cultural sector, previously seen as subsidised and represented by ACE, does have a relevance to the wider creative industries represented by DCMS.<sup>56</sup> In the last decade, the subsidised cultural sector and ACE have become woven into the larger creative sector. During this time, ACE has needed to become more expert at dealing with a far more “hands-on” approach from DCMS who previously had left ACE to deliver cultural policy with little political intervention. This new approach is affecting the activities of ACE and contemporary cultural policy.

Creative Britain references and organises many contemporary policy documents and contemporary influences into its commitments, including: NESTA’s Arts and

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<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19 and p. 30.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41. Emphasis in the original.

<sup>56</sup> I discuss subsidy in the introduction to this thesis.

Innovation Research in the Creative Industries; Leitch Review of Skills in 2006; the Cox review of creativity and business in 2005; AHRC knowledge catalyst; The Sector Skills councils; Creative Choices website (launched 2008 and detailed in this chapter); research into HE provision; ACE objectives to support projects that combine artistic excellence with commercial potential, and also in partnership with the Cultural Leadership Programme; and The Crafts Council.<sup>57</sup>

## **Creative Britain and the South West**

Creative Britain is significant to CPD development and delivery because national strategy develops into regional strategy and subsequent funding and action for the South West. It also feeds into other consultancy and mapping reports such as Burns Owens Partnership's (BOP) Scoping and Evaluation Report on the "Business Support Simplification Programme and the South West's Creative Industries" (October 2008), and the South West Creative Industries Framework. In the South West, relevant commitments from Creative Britain include the establishment of regional beacons (being piloted in the region from late 2008 onwards), along with north west, south east, north east and the west midlands regions<sup>58</sup> and the piloting of creative economy strategic frameworks in two regions: South West and North West.<sup>59</sup>

Aardman Animations based in Bristol will be partnering one of the five projects in order to develop a "world-class centre of excellence and finishing school in animation", and the South West RDA are partnering Hewlett Packard and Alias in access technology

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<sup>57</sup> Craft is treated as a separate sector in Creative and Cultural Skills "footprint", yet the crafts council is funded by ACE and is effectively a Regularly Funded Organisation (RFO).

<sup>58</sup> DCMS, Creative Britain, pp. 9 and 45.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 10 and 59.

case studies. Watershed Media Centre in Bristol is highlighted as a “major regional centre for cinema, digital media and new technology.”<sup>60</sup>

## **Leitch Review**

Lord Sandy Leitch published his final report to UK Skills, Prosperity for all in the global economy – world class skills, on 5 December 2006. Commissioned by the Chancellor in 2004, its remit was to “identify the UK’s optimal skills mix in 2020 to maximise economic growth, productivity and social justice, and to consider the policy implications of achieving the level of change required.”<sup>61</sup> The interim report of the Review was published in 2005, and in 2006 the Chancellor also asked Lord Leitch to consider how to better integrate employment and skills services at a local level. In his final 2006 report, Leitch recommends that the UK should aim to be a world leader on skills by 2020, and makes a number of recommendations for how that vision should be delivered.

World Class Skills: Implementing the Leitch Review of Skills in England published on 19 July 2007, marks a significant shift in debate from discussion around the need for “learning” to discussion around “skills,” particularly those skills which are economically valuable.<sup>62</sup> Creative Britain, discussed above, highlights the following:

Lord Leitch’s review...set out the critical importance of skills for the continuing prosperity of the UK’s economy.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33 (Hewlett Packard) and p. 58 (Watershed).

<sup>61</sup> Treasury Department home page, at: [http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/leitch\\_review\\_index.htm](http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/leitch_review_index.htm) (accessed 10 February 2009).

<sup>62</sup> HM Government: Implementing the Leitch Review of Skills in England, 19 July 2007.

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/skillsstrategy/uploads/documents/World%20Class%20Skills%20FINAL.pdf>

<sup>63</sup> DCMS, Creative Britain, p. 29.

For artists the “filter down” effect from this review may have little impact. If it has impact, it may be in the statement of need for flexible provision of training and high quality IAG (Information, Advice and Guidance) and the merging of information and advice services of learndirect and next step providers into a new universal adult careers service in England, working with Jobcentre Plus. The linked employment and skills system involves the new Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) and the Department for Work and Pensions. Skills Accounts are being piloted and they are described as

...a personal account for individuals, held online but also accessible offline and will contain...A virtual voucher of state funding towards learning for adults that provides access initially to all adult learner responsive funded provision through the demand led route...<sup>64</sup>

A portal collating information advice and guidance of skills development will be available linked to a route into the Careers Information Advice Service / Adult Careers Service (AACCS), and a learner’s achievement record and learning statement. These are targetted “towards the workless, offenders and the low/no skilled.”<sup>65</sup>

## **Sector Skills Councils**

Sector Skills Councils have replaced the National Training Organisations in the UK and four exist for the Creative Industries sector:

- Creative & Cultural Skills
- Skillset (covering broadcast, film, video, interactive media and photo imaging)

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<sup>64</sup> Learning Skills Council statement on Skills Accounts at:  
<http://www.lsc.gov.uk/regions/EastMidlands/whatwedo/Skills+Accounts.htm> (accessed 2 March 2009).

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

- Skillfast (covering apparel, footwear, textiles and related businesses)
- Lantra (for environmental and landbased industries).

As employer-led bodies, the Skills Councils are expected to allow employers to drive skills education, and to work in partnership to create a shared comprehensive IAG service and link to national recruitment agencies. They are also expected to modernise national occupational standards and supply data and statistics for the government.

### **Creative and Cultural Skills (CCS) and a National Skills Academy**

Creative and Cultural Skills is the Sector Skills Council for Advertising, Crafts, Cultural Heritage, Design, Music, Performing, Literary and Visual Arts. CCS's work is focused on Creative Apprenticeships; Skills Passports; Creative Choices, an advice line and web support portal; 14-19 Creative & Media Diploma; Creative learning accounts; and the National Skills Academy in the Thames Gateway development area, linked to the Royal Opera House production campus at Thurrock. Creative Learning Accounts are expected to enable freelancers to be able to purchase their own training. CCS significantly feature in the cultural landscape of 2009 and have plans (as yet unsupported by any documentation) to develop their own CPD framework for the UK creative industries sector. The focus is still on an employer / employee relationship and on a chosen, focused career path.<sup>66</sup> A National Skills Academy based in Thurrock, South East, will link to regional partnership hubs across England and a CPD framework. In the South West, for example, CCS are working with Bristol Music Foundation, Plymouth Theatre Royal and Colston Hall in Bristol. The expected partnerships are intended to link

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<sup>66</sup> Creative and Cultural Skills at: [www.ccskills.org.uk](http://www.ccskills.org.uk), (accessed 25 August, 2009).

providers and employers together to form small alliances in order to develop creative apprenticeships, and allow clearer entry level into the cultural sector, to develop and deliver training in industry.

## **Creative Blueprint**

The Creative Blueprint is the Sector Skills Agreement for the Creative & Cultural Industries. The Sector Skills Agreement alters the way skills are perceived and consequently how skills gaps are identified and how skills training is developed and delivered to the creative and cultural sector. It is an action plan that puts employers in control of shaping the industry's future by:

- assessing the short and long term skills needs of workers
- mapping out the factors needed for change in the sector
- reviewing the training that is currently provided
- analysing the main gaps and weaknesses

Detailed blueprints for each of the arts sectors (e.g. Crafts, Visual Arts) were drafted during 2009.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> As this thesis was being completed CCS launched the Visual Arts Blueprint. The Crafts Blueprint is briefly discussed in Chapter Five.

## **Creative Choices**

Creative Choices is the website from CCS launched early in 2008 (creative-choices.co.uk) and it continued to gain content during 2009. Additionally an “Excalibur” search engine and downloadable presentations are available. “Industry insights” provides information on eight sectors: visual arts, literary arts, performing arts, cultural heritage, advertising, music, craft, and design. Each of these sectors has up to date statistics attached. It also has “stories-so-far” from practising professionals. These take the form of small exemplary narratives which in my opinion work well by adding genuine life experiences written by professional themselves (often artists); this adds a qualitative and practical voice to a statistically-biased site.<sup>68</sup>

Creative Britain described the website as

the first industry and user-led online service to fully exploit the potential of social media and give individuals a pathway to shape their own destiny.

...creative choices will seek to establish itself as the market leader for online careers support in advertising, crafts, cultural heritage, music and the arts.<sup>69</sup>

Accessing the “industry insights” tab on Creative Choices on 4 February 2009, I found a new area added in 2009: “the big issues”. CPD is considered to be one of these “big issues”. The overview suggests:

More support is needed to identify funding streams to enable practitioners to access the training needed to succeed in the sector.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Extract from Creative and Cultural Skills website (Creative Choices) at: [http://www.ccskills.org.uk/insight/performing\\_arts.html](http://www.ccskills.org.uk/insight/performing_arts.html) (accessed 4 February 2009).

<sup>69</sup> DCMS, *Creative Britain*, pp. 21-22.

<sup>70</sup> Creative Choices, “Industry insight: The big issues.” at: <http://www.ccskills.org.uk/Industryinsight/Thebigissues/Continuingprofessionaldevelopment/tabid/105/Default.aspx> (accessed 4 February 2009).

Despite the artists' narratives on the website, most of CCS activity concerns creative people who are employed on a long-term basis in a particular sector and therefore their employer is responsible for their CPD. This is not exclusively the case, but enough to render much of the blueprint too broad for individual artists who work on a project by project basis. The website is also largely aimed at those with little experience, not those in "mid-career".

### **NESTA, Demos, and "Mission, Models, Money"**

I have grouped these three organisations together because all three have made creative provocations in the form of documents over the last decade and particularly the last five years.

Mission, Models, Money (MMM) is an independent organisation which since 2004 has been leading a UK-wide action research programme producing documents as provocations for change. They have been working with many leaders and funders from the cultural sector, with a vision to

transform the way the arts use their resources to support the creation and experience of great art in the 21st century.<sup>71</sup>

MMM at the end of 2008 launched phase four entitled "Deft" – Designing for Transition. This phase seeks to find routes through the difficulties confronting:

individual arts and cultural organisations and their funders in developing mission-led organisationally and financially resilient businesses.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Missions Models Money is web-based and is continuously building an online resource. This is their vision statement (accessed 11 February 2009). <http://www.missionmodelsmoney.org.uk/>

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

Alongside NESTA and Demos, MMM challenges the reports and strategies produced by Government.

Demos has produced a number of papers which argue for approaching the challenges of the cultural and creative sectors differently and more radically. In October 2006, it published a provocation paper, Inclusion, innovation and democracy: growing talent for the creative and cultural industries.<sup>73</sup> The paper argues for diversity in the sector to be recognised, and states that in order to gain input from people with diverse talent and skills there is a need to:

Move away from old models of skills supply, identifying gaps or shortages and stimulating the supply of training to fill them. Instead we need to be responsive to the development of a sector that is non-linear, non-institutional and largely not “career” orientated.<sup>74</sup>

This finding is in direct contrast to the need for clear career paths identified in Creative Britain and Creative and Cultural Skills ambitions.

NESTA are also seeking to investigate, provoke and support innovation and new ways of thinking about creative practice. NESTA has recently produced three reports researching innovation including Beyond The Creative Industries.<sup>75</sup> One of its key findings is that no one dataset exists, which I discussed in the introduction to this thesis.

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<sup>73</sup> Simon Parker, Charlie Tims and Shelagh Wright for Demos, Inclusion, innovation and democracy: growing talent for the creative and cultural industries, October 2006.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>75</sup> Peter Higgs, Stuart Cunningham and Hasan Bakhshi, Beyond the Creative Industries: Mapping the creative economy in the United Kingdom. Technical Report: February 2008, p. 34, at: <http://www.nesta.org.uk/beyond-the-creative-industries-pub/> (accessed 2 April 2009).

## Higher Education and ACE

ACE's higher education strategy published in November 2006 discusses how to ensure effective training and CPD for artists throughout their careers.<sup>76</sup> Individual artists and creative practitioners have a dedicated section in the strategy which highlights the complexities of practice-based research, including finding an agreed definition. The strategy goes on to discuss the possibilities for releasing potential through knowledge transfer, and argues for more collaboration between ACE and HE:

It is likely that the higher education sector could play a stronger role in developing and delivering the provision of continuing professional development.<sup>77</sup>

My own PhD funded by a UK research council, is a collaboration between an organisation funded by ACE and an HE institution.

## McMaster Report

In January 2008, the DCMS published Sir Brian McMaster's Supporting Excellence in the Arts.<sup>78</sup> McMaster, as former Director of the Edinburgh International Festival, was asked by James Purnell, then Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, in July 2007, to undertake a review to report on:

- How the system of public sector support for the arts can encourage excellence, risk-taking and innovation;

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<sup>76</sup> Arts Council England, Strategy for Higher Education, November 2006, p. 12.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>78</sup> Sir Brian McMaster for DCMS, Supporting Excellence in the Arts. From Measurement to Judgement, January 2008, p. 14 (CPD section), p. 26 (glossary).

- How artistic excellence can encourage wider and deeper engagement with the arts by audiences;
- How to establish a light touch and non-bureaucratic method to judge the quality of the arts in the future.<sup>79</sup>

The review involved arts organisations, artists, individual directors, curators, producers and administrators from across the country, and from a variety of art forms. Staff from DCMS and Arts Council England supported McMaster's research. A public consultation ran from 1 - 30 November 2007.

CPD features strongly in this report, with its own dedicated section. Interestingly, whilst McMaster feels the need to include "art form", "artist", "museums and galleries" amongst words in his glossary, Continuing Professional Development is not included, perhaps because McMaster's consultees, and the DCMS, as commissioning agency, consider the term to have reached a level of understanding that requires no explanation. One of McMaster's key recommendations emphasises the continuing importance of CPD both as a phrase which has an active and assumed understanding of meaning for the cultural sector, and as a priority for continuing action in artistic skills development at all stages of an artist's journey:

Whilst investment into pre-professional and young talent is crucial, I believe it is important that both artists and practitioners continue to develop their practice throughout their careers...It is hugely important that everyone working in the arts recognises the value to practitioners, throughout their careers, of continuing professional development.

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<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

I recommend that funding bodies, organisations and practitioners prioritise opportunities for continuing professional development throughout careers.<sup>80</sup>

In the executive summary he is more explicit:

...cultural organisations need to embrace *continuing professional development* for their staff. A more strategic approach to mentoring and networking for all practitioners is required, with young practitioners given the opportunity to better experience the work of others *and artists and practitioners able to continue to develop their practice throughout their careers.*<sup>81</sup>

This strong support for artists CPD *throughout* their careers is welcome. Currently, concentration of CPD provision tends to rest with “emergent” artists. The Crafts Council, ACE, and individual training providers such as HEIs (for example, Lancaster University), independent organisations (for example, ArtsMatrix, Hamilton-Palmer Consultants) have all anecdotally acknowledged to me that it is far easier and cheaper “per head” to develop a workshop or training programme for a group of emergent artists than it is to develop a project or professional development opportunity for just one artist in “mid-career”. McMaster has acknowledged anecdotal evidence and observed that:

Many arts organisations devote resource to nurturing practitioners, particularly at the early stages of their career. A few provide the time and space for experimentation. Responses to the consultation have highlighted this vital activity, although I have some concerns about the consistent availability of this support across the country and across art forms.<sup>82</sup>

In his consultation questionnaires to each of the Arts Council’s Regularly Funded Organisations, McMaster defined two career stages: “pre-professional” and “early stage” professional. It is the first policy document I found that actively engages with

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<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7. My emphasis.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

the idea of a continuum of professional development rather than a flow-charted model which can then be utilised to create unnecessary boundaries to artistic practice to suit the needs of training providers and suppliers.

In ACE's CPD report in 2000, Birch suggested four clear ways of prioritising professional development for arts professionals:

- Increase the funds available for individuals
- Support the research and development of CPD provision
- Greater dissemination of better practice
- Increase the arts professional's knowledge and understanding of CPD.<sup>83</sup>

Birch's four recommendations do not identify any difference in stimulation of creative thinking between early-stage creative practitioners, and those on an already experienced and professionally developed journey.

In contrast to Birch, in his CPD section McMaster notes

As individuals develop their careers they are dependent on others to encourage and support them. I have identified four elements that best support talented practitioners:

- Personalised support from mentors;
- Networking and exposure to the work of others at home and abroad;

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<sup>83</sup> Birch, "The Thinking behind CreativePeople", August 2002.

- Time, space and resources to experiment and develop practice, equivalent to research and development in other sectors;
- The funding system actively seeking out and supporting individual artists and producers.<sup>84</sup>

McMaster's report contrasts to Birch's in its emphasis on the individual artist, rather than leadership from the subsidised cultural sector, acknowledging both a continuum and difference of need as an artist develops. McMaster's new set of four "elements" addresses how an individual can place themselves in the best position to develop their practice, and acknowledges the importance of time, space, resources, networks and mentoring to development of professional practice. McMaster argues for "encouraging excellence, innovation and risk-taking."<sup>85</sup> He infers that these factors are important *throughout* a career.

Guardian newspaper theatre critic Lynn Gardner's blog, six months after the publication of McMaster's report eloquently summarises the suspicions of some that:

...in laying down "excellence" as its central plank but failing to define it, McMaster has pulled off a conjuring trick in creating a document that is as fragile as an illusion and can mean all things to all people and also absolutely nothing at all.<sup>86</sup>

The years between Birch and McMaster show a significant shift in thinking and understanding of CPD in the UK cultural sector. Policy initiation moves fast from incubation to strategy development and implementation.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> McMaster, Supporting Excellence in the Arts, 2008, p. 14.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.

<sup>86</sup> Lynn Gardner, blog at: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/stage/theatreblog/2008/jun/17/theewordintheatre>, (accessed 18 June 2008).

<sup>87</sup> One of the recommendations in McMaster, giving free tickets to young people for certain theatre shows, has already been implemented.

## The Arts Debate

The Arts Debate conducted online by ACE in 2007 employed new methods for ACE to interact with its “audience” and also correlate that interaction with the opinions of its staff. The Debate questioned “What is art? What are the arts?” Challenges arose regarding the language, values, approaches and labels of “art” and a separate term “the arts”. It observed that what was defined as art:

ranged from visual art...through a broad range of “traditional” art forms, design disciplines, crafts, artisan and domestic skills... there seemed to be three components to what truly made something a work of art: ...the original creative idea, the skill and effort that goes into executing that idea and transforming it into an end product, and the achievement of a response from an audience...<sup>88</sup>

Conversely, the arts were found to “have a particular meaning that is focused on ‘traditional’, and what are perceived as elitist, art forms.”<sup>89</sup> The report suggested that “the arts” as well as “art”, needed to become fluid and unfixed to create a “flexible receptacle for a changing range of activities – perhaps defined according to the three requirements of the creative idea, effort and skill, and gaining a response.”<sup>90</sup>

Catherine Bunting’s summary of three further workshops with ACE staff suggested the emergence of two broad philosophies: that art is for all, or “that art can never be for a mass market.”<sup>91</sup> Finally, Bunting noted:

...The researchers concluded that both approaches are important for the Arts Council, and that the tensions can be a positive and constructive force.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Creative Research London for Arts Council England, The Arts Debate: Findings of Research among the General Public, 2 February 2007, pp. 1-2.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2. My emphasis.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>91</sup> Catherine Bunting for Arts Council England, The Arts Debate: Stage One Findings and Next Steps, February 2007, p. 9.

The findings from ACE did not enquire directly about artists' needs, however they found that the arts sector needs to incorporate a wide variety of voices including differences within ACE staff themselves. What is interesting is the acknowledgement that these tensions exist, and that a consensus or agreement of terms could be limiting rather than supportive of practice, suggesting that set terms and homogenous commonalities may not be useful or necessary. The report also observed that "the research provides a powerful illustration of the challenges of managing multiple stakeholders".<sup>93</sup>

## **People, Places and Spaces**

This CPD chapter developed over the course of my PhD study, and began in 2006 utilising my previous experience of research and evaluation in the South West region. During that time, Culture South West's People, Places and Spaces strategy published in 2007 was heavily criticised by public feedback in 2007 for the blandness of the document, and the need for inclusion of words such as "art", "theatre", "galleries"; and that the document lacked a sense of a creative ecology or continuum of activity in the South West.<sup>94</sup> People, Places and Spaces has now been updated.<sup>95</sup> The organisation which commissioned it, Culture South West, is now defunct, and a new hierarchy of organisations is responsible for the plan.<sup>96</sup> People, Places and Spaces is indicative of

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<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>94</sup> Jules Channer for Culture South West, People, Places and Spaces. A Cultural Infrastructure Strategy for the South West. Consultation Feedback Report, October 2007, pp.6-7, 11, 12 and 22, at: Culture South West <http://www.culturesouthwest.org.uk/downloads/file.asp?Filename=pps-consultation-feedback.pdf> (accessed 7 November 2007).

<sup>95</sup> Culture South West, People, Places and Spaces A Cultural Infrastructure Development Strategy for the South West of England, September 2008, at: Culture South West <http://www.culturesouthwest.org.uk> (accessed 30 September 2008).

<sup>96</sup> Extract from CSW website: "Culture South West will be closing on 31st March 2009. This follows a review of regional cultural arrangements by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). From

how speedily change in organisations, the people who work within them, and the language of policy, take place.

## **From policy to language to CPD organisation in the South West.**

That policy and strategy has an effect on action can be seen from the initial ACE CPD framework which is discussed above, which spawned eventually both ArtsMatrix, DIY, and the Creative People virtual organisation. What activity is now taking place? Is it relevant and accessible to “mid-career” artists? Is the use of language appropriate or understandable to mid-career artists? A search on ACE website on 14 October 2008 for “continuing professional development” (a search I undertake occasionally) yielded an out of date ArtsMatrix list of contacts, with only two out of seven of the existing names still current, and the contact information two years out of date.

The language of CPD is shifting; major policy documents also use the phrase “skills development”. ArtsMatrix’s website does not use the acronym CPD or the phrase “continuing professional development” in any of their “home” or “about” pages.

Instead, in keeping with 2008 national development of creative economy skills,

ArtsMatrix describe themselves as:

the skills and enterprise development agency for the creative industries in the South West.<sup>97</sup>

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1 April 2009, Arts Council England, Sport England, English Heritage and the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council in the South West will be responsible to DCMS for an action plan for cross cultural sector work building on the strong partnerships that already exist in the region.”at:

<http://www.culturesouthwest.org.uk/news/article.asp?ArticleID=287> (accessed 25 February 2009).

<sup>97</sup> <http://www.artsmatrix.org.uk/About/AboutUs/tabid/61/Default.aspx> (accessed 15 October 2008).

Creative Skills do have “professional development” in their website information but not “continuing”:

Creative Skills is the professional development organisation for all creative industries practitioners in Cornwall.<sup>98</sup>

In April 2008, the posts of the delivery staff of ArtsMatrix, “Professional Development Coordinators” (PDCs) were renamed “Creative Enterprise Specialists”. There were seven PDCs at the end of 2006, each staffing one of seven local offices across the south west: Bristol, Devon, Dorset, Gloucestershire, Plymouth, Somerset and Wiltshire. The head office is in Bristol, staffed by a Director, Project Manager (Skills Development Programme), and Administrator.

## **National CPD provision**

According to Jude Page at Creative Skills:

Recent years have seen a spawning of organisations, projects and schemes.<sup>99</sup>

Access to the internet has enabled specific information about professional development opportunities to be gained easily. Appendix 1 details some of the main national providers and regional providers in the South West. Many organisations send out email bulletins of information, and one can sign up to receive these via the organisation’s website, or can view posted opportunities online, in most cases, free of charge. For general professional development, for example, one could sign up to receive ACE’s

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<sup>98</sup> <http://www.creativeskills.org.uk/AboutUs> (accessed 15 October 2008).

<sup>99</sup> Jude Page, *Professional Development Planning*. A guide to supporting the professional development planning of writers and literature professionals. Leith, literature training, August 2007. Web version available via [www.literaturetraining.com](http://www.literaturetraining.com), p. 7.

own ArtsNews and/or ArtsJobs daily bulletin; these contain both single art form and more generic information. ArtsMatrix's website links to further relevant websites. For more specific enquiries, for example in dance, a dancer working in participatory arts settings could begin with The Foundation for Community Dance's website.

Local Authority arts officers, ACE officers, creative producers and curators situated in organisations in addition to individual arts freelancers will all (with varying degrees of experience and expertise) direct creative practitioners and artists to CPD opportunities. Opportunities may be philanthropic, commissioning or peer-led, or they may be provided by an existing arts organisation. However, signposting and providing information does not inherently constitute advice or accessibility, nor does it necessarily lead to a consideration of needs. Very few providers of CPD particularly target experienced or "mid-career" artists.

## **Cultural Leadership**

A relatively new theme for professional development is the area of Cultural Leadership. City University in London launched its new MA in Cultural Leadership in 2006, offering, in that first year, a female-only MA supported by European funding. The MA is now offered to both women and men. The Clore Leadership Programme for the Cultural Sector developed in January 2002 when the Trustees of the Clore Duffield Foundation established a small task force to consider the ways in which the Foundation could make a significant contribution to cultural leadership training in the United Kingdom. The commissioning of the task force was intended to stimulate fresh thinking around the issue of cultural leadership.

The first Clore Leadership Programme for the cultural sector opened for applications in 2004 under the Directorship of Lord Smith (Chris Smith), with the aim of helping to train and develop a new generation of leaders in the arts in the UK. Annual fellowships are awarded for approximately twenty individuals predominantly from the cultural sector to:

...undertake an individually tailored programme of tuition, research, mentoring and secondment designed to develop their leadership skills, knowledge and experience.<sup>100</sup>

There have been five years of Fellowships offered to date, with one hundred and thirty fellows taking part. Since July 2006, the Programme has also run two-week in duration short courses, for paying participants, partnered by Universities and Business Schools. The short course programme has been provided in the South West of England. There have been few Clore Fellows to date who have been artist leaders. The Cultural Leadership Programme began offering leadership opportunities to artists in 2009. A £7 million programme entitled “Artists taking the Lead” was announced by ACE early in 2009, inviting expressions of interest for twelve “cutting edge” artists’ commissions in twelve contrasting locations across the UK leading to 2012. The programme is linked to the Cultural Olympiad launched in mid March 2009.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Clore Leadership Programme, at: [www.cloreleadership.org](http://www.cloreleadership.org) (accessed 12 April 2009). The acknowledgement of a need for cultural leaders (particularly following the years of national lottery capital building programmes where it was noticeable that few people had the experience to lead such large scale projects, and investment had been significantly in buildings, with little investment in people). The well publicised issues surrounding the management of The Royal Opera House in Convent Garden coupled with other high profile gaps in management also led to a significant rewording; “management” has been replaced with “leadership”.

<sup>101</sup> Artists Taking the Lead, at: [www.artscouncil.org.uk/pressnews/news\\_detail](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/pressnews/news_detail), (accessed 4 February 2009).

The twelve successful commissions were announced by ACE on 21 October 2009. In the South West, artist Alex Hartley will develop “nowhereisland”: “Alex Hartley will bring an island he discovered in the High Arctic in 2004 to the South West of England. The island will navigate the coast accompanied by a travelling embassy, exploring issues of climate change and land ownership”, at: <http://www.artiststakingthelead.org.uk/content/12-arts-commissions-awarded-%C2%A354-million-london-2012-cultural-olympiad>, (accessed 22 October 2009).

The shifts in language to describe opportunities available are partnered by actual shifts in available opportunities, and confusing similarities in the titling of initiatives occurs, for example Creative Skills (Cornwall) is easily confused with Creative and Cultural Skills (National); this amounts to the need for what has been described as “navigating the information jungle”.<sup>102</sup> An artist looking for a CPD opportunity has a plethora of information and advice to navigate on CPD provision. This provision is often sporadic, and not continually offered, with some areas rich in particular skills development, and others having gaps and pockets of provision.<sup>103</sup>

## **CPD provision in the South West**

In accordance with the national picture, research for MusicLeader South West in 2006 suggested that perceived lack of CPD provision may be influenced by access to the most relevant information. The report also noted the need for practitioners to access opportunities to:

work alongside more experienced practitioners...One respondent noted there was no dedicated long-term training and career development support, with short term project based funding “strangling genuine development of workshop practice as a career”.<sup>104</sup>

Arts Council England, South West (ACE SW) contracted ArtsMatrix in March 2007 to research the CPD support currently available to individual creative practitioners in the South West. The report published in July 2007 is the most recent attempt at mapping of

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<sup>102</sup> ArtsMatrix PDC for Plymouth, in interview, 5 December 2006. These interviews are detailed in Chapter Three.

<sup>103</sup> Chapters Two and Three demonstrate these findings within the South West.

<sup>104</sup> Mary Schwarz and Cat Radford for Youth Music and Arts Council England, South West, MusicLeader South West: Report on research and development phase, 20 December 2006, p. 19. This report is detailed and discussed further in Chapter Two.

the CPD sector in the South West.<sup>105</sup> Effectiveness or quality of CPD support provided was not covered. Existing regional evaluations, reports and audits were drawn on, some of which had researched artists and creative practitioners (for example, Connections and Collaborations discussed in this chapter).

The report stated that the South West has a region-wide proliferation of projects and opportunities, across all sub-regions. The report focus was:

... on support that enables practitioners to further their careers and sustain their living in the region. This project aims to begin a process of imagining an effective infrastructure for individual creative practitioner support in the South West to 2020.<sup>106</sup>

One hundred and ten arts organisations funded by ACE SW were identified as those that gave support to individuals. However, as the quotation below explains, there are many more organisations developing CPD activity, and the situation is complex:

“Creative Industry Collaborations” (CIC), the March 2007 report produced by Burns Owens Partnership, identified close to 150 initiatives in the South West. Detailed local research undertaken by The Plymouth Creative Training Database in 2005/06 into support available in Plymouth identifies in the city alone 35 providers offering almost 450 courses.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> ArtsMatrix for ACE. Report on Support for Individual Creative Practitioners in SW England, July 2007. The report is not publicly available, consultation was not open (invitation was to leaders of arts organisations only), and artists or individual creative practitioners were not invited unless they were representing a CPD provider. Although ArtsMatrix is the collaborating partner for this PhD research I was not informed of the research whilst it was being conducted, or the consultation meeting. After finding out through professional colleagues, access to the discussion was denied, however I was allowed access to the final report once it had been accepted by ACE. This report is referred to again in Chapter Two.

<sup>106</sup> ArtsMatrix for ACE: Report on Support for Individual Creative Practitioners in SW England, July 2007, p. 2.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

Specific to Plymouth, this Creative Training Database research mapped existing informal and formal training, aiming to identify gaps. It did not include accredited training.<sup>108</sup> In summary, the main findings were:

- Artists do not want to accredit. (A finding further supported by other south west-wide research).<sup>109</sup>
- Artists need bite sized 'snacks' of opportunity, and do not want to take sustained time out of work undertaking training.
- Training needs be tailored and understanding of pressures, issues and the environment within which artists work; it needs an understanding of the ebb and flow of creative practice.
- Artists do need semi-structured networking opportunities, seen as valuable professional development opportunities. The networking process needs facilitation to catalyse discussion.
- Artists need opportunities to reflect and consolidate, and in some cases be prompted to think bigger or wider.
- A gap in journalism training was identified (no courses currently provided in journalism). The Consultant who undertook the work was however, not arts based,

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<sup>108</sup> Chris Bell and Jan Jones, Audit of creative training opportunities available to people in Plymouth. Produced on behalf of Plymouth Creative Training Partnership, January 2006.

<sup>109</sup> Schwarz and Radford, MusicLeader South West, 20 December 2006, also found that artists do not wish to accredit.

and this title 'journalism' may also mean critical discourse, writing, and a gap in critical discussion of practice.

In Dorset, five seminars in partnership with ArtsMatrix in winter 2006 discussed what artists might want or need. Findings included:

- Information at different levels (marketing, fundraising, basic financial management, time management, proposal writing);
- Packages of information to follow up seminars;
- Peer to peer support.<sup>110</sup>

ArtsMatrix's Professional Development Coordinators (from 2008 known as "Creative Enterprise Specialists") have knowledge of what CPD is taking place, accumulated by their "on the job" experience in addition to experience with which they may have brought to their position. Their knowledge has to change swiftly. Localised and / or one-off opportunities created by the specific interests of a particular person or group of people add to an ebb and flow of provision.<sup>111</sup>

Regionally in the South West, CPD is duplicated heavily in some areas, with gaps in others, and the situation changes swiftly. Regional funding and development initiatives from organisations such as ACE, the now defunct Culture South West, SWRDA, and national funding organisations such as Esmée Fairbairn and Gulbenkian all fund CPD

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<sup>110</sup> Information verbally provided by Keturah Warren, the then Dorset PDC, in interview at PDC's offices in Bournemouth on 18 December 2007.

<sup>111</sup> Chapter Three details interviews with all ArtsMatrix PDCs.

development in a variety of forms with varying durations. Structural support is provided in diverse ways, including via Arts & Business, and various local enterprise networks, such as those in Bristol and Plymouth.<sup>112</sup>

Localised and regional provision is complemented by national opportunities open to South West based artists. More innovative and individual creative providers working at the periphery of the criteria of agencies such as SWRDA, are often funded by one-off initiatives which an artist or artist-led group has managed to fund and initiate. These initiatives tend to be artist and art-form specific. One example is Aune Head Arts' "Look.Listen", a listening retreat designed for artists wanting to build an appreciation of the sonic environment into their work.<sup>113</sup>

It is rare yet possible to find specifically targeted "mid-career" CPD for artists; sometimes this is peer-led or unfunded activity. ArtsMatrix, in February 2008 launched the Contemporary Craft Fellowship Scheme (South West) with a Professional Development Planning Day, inviting applications for five Contemporary Craft Fellowship Bursaries, specifically aimed at mid-career makers. This is discussed in detail in Chapter Five.

More prevalent, however, is the targeting of opportunity to "emerging" artists (i.e. those who have recently graduated from a particular course, or those who have changed career significantly and are therefore early on in their artistic practice). My research with ArtsMatrix PDCs detailed in Chapter Three also anecdotally suggests that good general provision of practical business and organisational support exists in the South West.

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<sup>112</sup> Please see Appendix 1 for information on Arts and Business.

<sup>113</sup> Aune Head Arts (AHA) is a contemporary arts organisation based on Dartmoor, at: [www.auneheadarts.org.uk](http://www.auneheadarts.org.uk), (accessed 24 March 2008).

These courses are not necessarily specifically for artists (for example, courses or workshops include those related to business planning, keeping your accounts, marketing, managing your business, leadership, troubleshooting, visioning, confidence-building, presentation planning and so on).

ArtsMatrix has suggested that the South West has a more “sophisticated” CPD provision than other parts of the UK.<sup>114</sup> It is an unsubstantiated claim, and there are other well developed CPD development agencies in other regions. No evidence exists to show that artists have better access to critical artistic practice development in the South West region. The Reflective Practitioner Scheme is considered by the participants and stakeholders to have been an innovative project in its funding of fourteen artists to develop their practice in a cohort approach. Unfortunately the innovation of that project has not enabled ArtsMatrix (or other organisations) to substantially fund further artist-focused CPD with the exception of two projects: the 2008 mid-career Craft Fellowship scheme supporting five fellows, within the single artform of crafts, and based on the structure of the original Reflective Practitioner project; and the 2006 ArtsMatrix Mentoring scheme supporting twenty-two artists across artforms. ArtsMatrix agrees that “it remains a struggle to fund this kind of support.”<sup>115</sup>

For certain art forms, the South West has pockets of excellent provision, for example: strong geographically networked visual arts sectors particularly in Bristol, Bath, Exeter and some parts of Cornwall (e.g. St Ives), or in University research groups, and in

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<sup>114</sup> ArtsMatrix, *Support for Individual Creative Practitioners in SW England*, July 2007.

<sup>115</sup> Comment made by Annie Warburton, the then ArtsMatrix Project Director during discussion regarding an early stage of this writing in November 2006.

practice-based PhD or MA opportunities. Other national networks such as a-n artist's newsletter and Axis exist virtually and physically, both of which organise networking and debating opportunities regionally in the South West.

Some highly sophisticated specific art form organisations offer professional development to artists situated in geographically diverse places.<sup>116</sup> For example, Live Art Advisory Network (discussed below) comprising of Artsadmin, Live Art Development Agency and New Work Network is considered to be a leader of CPD in the live art and performance sector, and forms one of the most critically developed and artist-led of CPD practice. This is discussed further in Chapter Five. A South West based visual artist may choose to travel to a professional development opportunity outside of the region, or take up a range of opportunities within the region, for example at Spike Island in Bristol, taking advantage of the membership scheme to enable access to the art reference library, critical discussions and the Media Lab, or applying for a bursary. Spike offers a flexible network of association without the pressure of a higher education environment and full or part-time involvement.<sup>117</sup> The same artist may apply for a one-off artist-led opportunity requiring film-making and photography support. They may then seek out, or already be registered on the mailing list for the regional development agencies of, for example, South West Screen and Picture This.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> These are detailed in Appendix 1.

<sup>117</sup> In the first year Associate Membership for Spike Island (2007/8) bursaries were offered, themed around curatorial work, travel, exhibiting, and publishing. The leaflet states: "If you operate as an artist, curator, writer or something in between all of these, then you are eligible to join." Spike Island, Spike Associate Programme. Costs: £12 a month for non Spike Island studio holders. £8 a month for studio holders. No selection criteria exist, no undergraduates. Postgraduates applicable.

<sup>118</sup> Picture This produces visual arts projects harnessing its unique understanding of moving image technology and contemporary culture (at: [www.picture-this.org.uk](http://www.picture-this.org.uk)). South West Screen is the film, television and digital media agency for the South West of England. Main areas of work are business support, locations, creative development, exhibition, training, education and funding (at: <http://www.swscreen.co.uk>).

## Conclusion

Many of the policy documents discussed in this chapter focus on creativity for economic growth. This is new territory for the cultural sector. In Creative Britain, little weight is placed on the intrinsic value of artistic practice, and artistic practice is only of interest when it inhabits the “middle ground” between the cultural sector and the economic creative industries sector. Creative Britain aims to create linearity and clearly defined career paths for the sector, but the sector it discusses covers such a broad area that project by project artists are generally invisible. Demos, NESTA and Mission Models Money challenge a homogenised perception of artists’ career paths and argue for understanding of a non-linear, polyphonic “social soup” of activity. McMaster emphasizes risk-taking, innovation and excellence, and importantly, the *throughout* of a lifetime of artistic practice, but the report is, as Lynn Gardner said, “fragile as an illusion”, and its lightness of touch approach means that what it has to say, together with the voice of ACE, risks being drowned out by the louder voices of Creative and Cultural Skills, DCMS and other economically driven imperatives.

Creative Britain forms an umbrella strategy referencing and driven by many of the recent documents on the creative industries (particularly Leitch and Staying Ahead). None of these reports stray far into the territory of artist’s narratives. They thus lack the wealth, richness (and messiness) that these individual stories may offer, and the potential to imagine better. There are many more think-tanks and organisations producing policy, reviews, reports and strategies simultaneously and often unlinked. Creative Choices, the flagship website of CCS has artist’s stories as vignettes, told by the artists themselves, as discussed above. With the exception of these and McMaster’s

report, experienced artists almost always go unmentioned in Government policy documents.

Lacking wholly in Creative Britain is any emphasis on embedding policy and ability to develop long-term, sensitive provision geared to the needs of experienced artists. The external environment changes fast, and current strategy is short-term and time limited. If there is little time for the full-time CPD agencies such as ArtsMatrix to keep up, it is unsurprising that individual artists are unable to maintain a pace with this vast reinvention of phrases and words related to strategy and funding which shift so rapidly. CPD may also be about being in the right location at the right time to access the right training, or having the right finances. Is CPD at an appropriate quality and level of development? Where “quality” happens, it tends to be in artform specific developments. The Foundation for Community Dance embarked in February 2005 on a strategic approach to CPD in community dance nationally. The Foundation had recognised that there was little shared or common purpose regarding a vision or recognised understanding of a “shape” for CPD for the community dance sector, and sought to address the lack of CPD for dancers.

CPD provision can be mapped and understood in a variety of ways, none of which could ever provide a complete picture. It would have been possible to spend my entire research period attempting to map CPD provision, or contextualise policy documents and their relationship to CPD. In the words of the writer Rebecca Solnit:

A new map of the city of Las Vegas appears every month, because the place grows so fast that delivery people need constant updates on the streets, and this too is a reminder that maps cannot be commensurate with their subject, that even a map accurate down to blades of grass

would fall out of accuracy as soon as that grass was grazed or trampled.<sup>119</sup>

Similar to the need for a re-mapping every month, a huge growth of research, audits, mappings and re-imaginings of the cultural and creative sectors continues to take place, some of which have been described in this chapter. None of these are specific to “mid-career” artists’ provision.

All Ways Learning, the agency for the south east of England supporting professional development, ceased trading in September 2008. An extract from their press release follows:

Extended uncertainty around regional strategy for management skills in the creative sector has created a vacuum in which planning and promotional activity are hindered...it is uneconomic for us to continue in our current form, and we are ceasing trading.

On the basis of detailed research we know what work needs to be done. We are very supportive of the Creative Britain policy. In an environment overwhelmingly characterised by individuals, micro businesses and SMEs, the key agencies – Arts Council, the South East of England Economic Development Agency, Creative and Cultural Skills, BusinessLink and others – will always have a vital role to play in supporting skills and knowledge development...UK plc will increasingly be reliant on creativity and high-level skills in the future.<sup>120</sup>

This press release highlights the issues in the South East that a funded CPD organisation had in bridging the role between artists and the wider creative industry, and evidences how quickly organisations become defunct or change. While some artists have accessed the funding to set up their own artist-led CPD schemes, mainly UK-provision has (with the exception of the artists information company, a-n, and a few others) remained an

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<sup>119</sup> Rebecca Solnit, *A Field Guide to Getting Lost*, Edinburgh, Canongate Books, 2006, p. 162.

<sup>120</sup> All Ways Learning, “Media Statement & Newsletter”. Emailed by info@allwayslearning.org.uk to Karen Smith, 4 September 2008.

agency-led sector (ACE, Sector Skills, HEFCE, etc) where new fledging organisations such as ArtsMatrix could be seen to operate within a commercially viable “business-like” framework, bridging between “creatives” and “business” or “industry”. It appears from my research that outside of formal accredited HE courses there are fewer critical arts practice, or artist-led supported development opportunities for established and experienced artists.

The creative or cultural industries are seen to be driving forward our post-industrial economy with growth demonstrated to be above that for the rest of the economy. Emphasis is placed on “creative capital”,<sup>121</sup> in which artists’ practices are reduced to an economic function. Policy makers continue to emphasise the key role that creative industries play in generating wealth, employment, and particularly in urban regeneration; positive economic, physical and social outcomes. Cities and regions with active creative and cultural sectors are evidenced as more successful than those without. Consequently how artist’s professional development within this key “knowledge economy” and driving force behind growth is perceived is crucial to the opportunities that are then available for artists to negotiate their own pathways or careers. As I discuss in Chapter Two, artists’ voices and the messiness and non-linear *throughoutness* of artists’ working practices appear to be missing in CPD policy and provision. The fluid landscape of policy creation presents challenges to providers, artists and those who need to interpret policies and subsequent funding for their provision or practice. Policies and funding are moving faster than it is possible for people to think them through, and act appropriately.

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<sup>121</sup> I discuss the term “capital” in reference to Pierre Bourdieu in Chapter Four. In this usage, the term is twisted to provide an economic success label, whereas in Bourdieu’s terms, “capital” could allude to different values at play, and not necessarily relate to economic value.

**Chapter Two**  
**Methodologies and Methods**  
**for Researching Artists**

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This chapter discusses how I have researched experienced artists in the South West and positions this research in the context of other studies on artists and CPD, particularly but not exclusively in the South West of England. It explains why I have chosen to focus on particular artists and investigates how my research process has evolved across disciplines and why I have developed a repertoire of research methods that includes talking whilst walking. The introduction to this thesis details my personal experience as a professional arriving at a hypothesis. Chapter One contextualised CPD by tracing its history in the creative industries, and through policy and review documents in England. Throughout this thesis there are interlinking methods and methodologies being discussed:

- The research methodology for the PhD project that this thesis represents;
- The methodology of researchers writing about artists and / or CPD;
- The diagnostic methodology of CPD needs;
- The methods used by artists to explore their own CPD.

These are not mutually exclusive. This chapter demonstrates how they interrelate, and have led to the mixed methods that I have used to research my hypothesis.

## **My research methods**

The methodology described in this chapter was in dialogue with, and generated from, the artists I researched and my experiences. My transfer from MPhil to PhD registration

status was moderated by geographers from University of Exeter; my research is located within a faculty of arts, specifically within a department of theatre and performance; I have a visual and combined arts background; the artist case studies discuss varied art forms. The disciplines referred to in this thesis reflect this interdisciplinary approach and primarily encompass:

- social sciences
- art history and practice
- performance theory
- semiotic theory
- cultural geography
- cultural policy and strategy.

I have generated a repertoire of interlinked research methods which include:

- Semi-structured conversational interviews with arts administrators leading to:
- Semi-structured conversational interviews with artists leading to:
- Facilitated group session with artists leading to:

- Open ended walking and talking collaborative interviews with four artists as case studies leading to:
- Final semi-structured phone conversation and “completion” with each of the four artists.

In addition I have employed:

- Desk-based research, such as
  - Cultural policy documents, strategies and provocations;
  - Literature and policy review;
  - Artists’ writing and their work (physical artefacts).
- Previous data collection from artist and creative practitioner professional development schemes, and CPD providers.
- Observation at a number of artists’ events, schemes and CPD activities. This included attendance at all events for the crafts fellowship scheme detailed in Chapter Five. I also attended a three-day artist-led seminar in Cornwall, and from start-up a monthly artists’ peer critical practice group. I have continued to have informal conversations with artists and other arts administrators about my research.

The attempt to catalogue my methods in a list, implies a linear approach which is slightly misleading. Presented here is a coherent narrative of my research to enable it to make sense within this thesis. However the research process did not chronologically mirror this written thesis.

I came to this research as a freelancer with varied experience, and immersed in the “field” of arts, as a practitioner, administrator, facilitator, mentor and consultant, and with particular experience of the Reflective Practitioner and First Stop Shop CPD Schemes in the South West.<sup>1</sup> The qualitative methods I have used “whilst out in the field” continued to be significant during the gathering of research for this thesis. Additionally, the differences between a Doctorate and a *Collaborative* Doctorate started to emerge. As outlined in the first section of the thesis introduction, my research developed via discussion with ArtsMatrix and University of Plymouth. The process of finding a methodology together with my cumulative experiences to date has evolved and defined through this process. The methods and objectives were not fixed and fed each other. Findings generated in the initial phases of research shifted both the perspective of my questions, and also how I chose to ask those questions, with a responding adaptation of the methods. The methodology worked in practice with the lived experience of the artists whom I was researching. In effect, the process of travelling through the PhD and finding a way through the methods became the methodology itself.

Initially however, the developing research methodology as a PhD student and the methods and philosophy underpinning the way I worked as a facilitator appeared dichotomous. It became slowly clear that rather than throwing away my experience and attempting to start again using “new” processes of research, the “old” familiar skills that I had developed as a facilitator were useful in researching what experienced artists might need. My methods, bespoke to each individual piece of work, have expanded as I have accumulated experience and include creating and “holding” conversations,

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<sup>1</sup> Both schemes are discussed in Chapter One, and also in this chapter.

physically or spatially moving through the themes in discussion, in addition to more usual methods such as questionnaires and structured interviews.

The terms “mid-career”, “CPD”, “South West” and “artist” in the set title implied an already understood and shared meaning. It became apparent that sharing the meaning of words (and the words themselves) between policy-makers, providers of CPD, and artists is in reality still a huge challenge (as it was in the Reflective Practitioner Scheme discussed below). This led me to explore the idea of place and the construct of region, and to interrogate and explode the vocabulary and associated assumptions at the heart of the research title – “the CPD needs of mid-career artists in the South West”. I questioned how language relates to artists, and their ongoing development of a vocabulary of their own practice. Do artists face challenges due to the language of CPD? Language is a key factor in how artists are defined and perceived, and also how opportunities to develop are defined by them, with them and for them.<sup>2</sup>

The skill of being competent at exploring and supporting an artist to identify what “needs” they may have is now a profession in itself. Much of the DNA (Development Needs Analysis) of the original Matrix organisation discussed in Chapter One prioritised delivery based on the consideration and identification of “needs”, accompanied at a later date (with different funding) by a series of training courses only partially catering for some of those identified needs. However the DNA service is still primarily about the *consideration* of need rather than the end process of the need itself and / or meeting that need. The facilitation of asking questions to find a need is different to the facilitation of fulfilling that need once it is found. Indeed it was a source

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<sup>2</sup> Chapter Four explores these issues.

of frustration to PDCs interviewed at the time of FSS (First Stop Shop) Phase One, that meeting identified needs was not funded and therefore largely unfulfilled.<sup>3</sup>

A number of books discussing qualitative research influenced my thinking; I was also trying to find “my voice”.<sup>4</sup> On the one side, I was attempting a new language and way of writing in an academic setting, and on the other attempting to find an integrity that was integrated with the “me” who lives with, in and amongst artists, and that was honest to that life and to those people that inhabit it. In his chapter on research methodology in Interpreting the Field (2000), Gary Armstrong discussed the contradictions and challenges of being both “in a field” and in “another field” at the same time in his writing on football hooliganism in Sheffield.<sup>5</sup> My “fields” are nowhere near as personally risky as Armstrong’s, however for me too, there was a need to “bridge” differing positioning and to understand that as Pierre Bourdieu (discussed in Chapter Four) points out, any “field” is a construct of complex relationalities. My own experience positions me in the arts ecology and, like everyone else, I need to navigate shifting policies and understandings.

According to Morwenna Griffiths, a feminist, social and educational theorist, writing on a feminist theory of practice,

Politics and values must precede epistemology because the analysis begins at that point.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> PDCs (Professional Development Coordinators) are discussed in Chapter One and Chapter Three in relation to Matrix, the precursor organisation to ArtsMatrix.

<sup>4</sup> Dick Hobbs and Tim May (eds), Interpreting the Field. Accounts of Ethnography (1993); Paul Willis, The Ethnographic Imagination (2000); and Morwenna Griffiths, Feminisms and the Self (1995) have been particularly useful.

<sup>5</sup> Gary Armstrong, “Like That Desmond Morris?” Interpreting the Field. Accounts of Ethnography. Dick Hobbs and Tim May (eds), Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1993, pp. 5-43.

<sup>6</sup> Morwenna Griffiths, Feminisms and the Self. The Web of Identity, London, Routledge, 1995, p. 45.

I am passionate about finding the most imaginative and appropriate conditions to work with artists to enable them to develop to the best of their needs and potential, and the above comment was helpful. It is impossible to write my experience and feelings out of the thesis text, although I have attempted to build in a level of objectivity and reflexivity, especially by inviting all participating artists to respond to my written work, and not using friends as case studies.

### **Ethical research protocol**

I sought ethical research clearance from the University of Plymouth Faculty Research Ethics Committee at the beginning of my PhD, and received an emailed letter on 29 March 2007 to confirm that my application for ethical approval had been approved by the Committee. My ethical approval application form is attached as Appendix 3. My research conforms to the ethical protocol of the University of Plymouth's "Principles for Research Involving Human Participants", and addresses each of the principles including: "Informed Consent", "Openness and Honesty", and "Right to Withdraw". Interviews were recorded via voice recorder and transcribed afterwards. Where appropriate I provided an information sheet which detailed my research objectives, approximate estimation of the duration of interview, and an agreement to send a first draft for comment to all contributors.

With the artists detailed in Chapter Six, editing down the significant amount of walking and talking transcripts (approximately 200,000 words) plus additional materials created a methodological issue that had an impact on the writing of Chapter Six. Even though the four artists discussed in Chapter Six were aware that they were being recorded, the

ease of walking and talking meant that their words were less carefully considered than they may have been elsewhere in different contexts. The methodological choices I made regarding my research methods were an attempt to create such an ease, which much of the research described in this chapter, by others, did not do, and yet this created a challenge in itself. During the writing up process, before I sent work to my supervisors, I discussed the relevant draft sections with each artist. Following their comments, I made their suggested edits or additions before I completed Chapter Six. Chapter Six is consequently a narrative chapter which tells the story through the artists' own words, and attempts to embody momentum, the nature of language and my theoretical positioning rather than explicitly referencing it. I made a decision to keep in this flow of narrative where possible as I felt it better represented the theoretical points I am making and paralleled the "continuing" of an artists' practice, in addition to the idea of practice "throughout" an artist's life.

I now want to share an experience which has shaped my life and influenced my methodology. In Summer 2004, I visited Tate St Ives to see the sculptor David Nash's exhibition.<sup>7</sup> A main feature of that exhibition was writing by Nash on Wooden Boulder (1978-), and the premiere of a film by Pete Telfer, Boulder, (2004) about Nash's work.

Nash hewed Wooden Boulder from an old fallen oak tree which had come down in 1978 above the Ffestiniog Valley in North Wales. He placed Wooden Boulder in the river in order to transport it most efficiently back to his studio, however it got wedged in a waterfall. Nash liked its position there, and decided to leave it. Eventually it washed

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<sup>7</sup> David Nash: Making and Placing. Abstract Sculpture 1978-2004, Tate St Ives, Cornwall, 20 May to 26 September 2004.

free, and its journey down river began. For twenty five years he documented its trajectory through time and space via water. In 2004 Nash wrote:

For 25 years I have followed its engagement with the weather, gravity and the seasons. It became a stepping-stone into the drama of physical geography ...initially I helped it to move, but after a few years I observed it only intervening when absolutely necessary ...

The drawing maps the journey of 25 years 1978-2003. At any given moment the boulder is a mark in time. During the first 24 years it moved down stream nine times remaining static for months and years. ...I did not expect it to move into the Dwyryd River in my lifetime.

Then in November 2002 it was gone. The "goneness" was palpable...

The wooden boulder was last seen in June 2003 on a sandbank near Ynys Giftan. All creeks and marshes have been searched so it can only be assumed it has made its way to the sea. It is not lost. It is wherever it is.<sup>8</sup>



Figure 2. David Nash Wooden Boulder drawing (1978-).

<sup>8</sup> Words and drawing reproduced by kind permission of David Nash. From David Nash, Making and Placing, Abstract Sculpture 1978-2004, Exhibition Catalogue, Tate St Ives, Cornwall, 20 May to 26 September 2004.

“It is not lost it is wherever it is”. Reading these final lines was a profound experience, which had a huge impact on my understanding of my own presence, position, momentum and continuum. The phrase has become my personal mantra. I use the word “momentum” to suggest a continuing practice which has varying rhythms and pace and has an ongoing quality which is suggested by the word “continuum”.

The boulder had both a physical and theoretical impact on Nash. Richard Cork wrote:

If Wooden Boulder (1978 -) has indeed gone irretrievably, Nash might take a long time to accept the loss...He regards it as a stepping-stone into the land, and his protracted relationship with the boulder has undoubtedly been a liberating force. It taught him how to look at his work in space and time, travelling through the landscape that has nourished him...<sup>9</sup>

In 2006, I was walking and thinking about the beginnings of research for this thesis and I realised that my understanding of Wooden Boulder could be used as a metaphor for an artist’s continuum or career path. Wooden Boulder draws into relief some of the ideas that I wanted to explore. It is located by its momentum and its unfixity, moving through place at unpredictable speed, and remaining still for unpredictable amounts of time. Nash drew or mapped the boulder’s trajectory afterwards, at certain points in time.

Linked to my understanding of Wooden Boulder was my own experience that it is not always possible to plot how and when one arrives at particular points which may alter one’s “path” or trajectory. Nor is it necessarily appropriate to attempt to plan the unplannable, and many factors can affect an artist’s career “path”. Being “lost” or lacking a route map for artistic action, in my view, was not necessarily negative; you may be just where you are, allowing ideas, reaction and / or proaction to lead you. How

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<sup>9</sup> Richard Cork, “Inside / Outside: The Art of David Nash.” David Nash, Making and Placing. Abstract Sculpture 1978-2004, Tate, 2004, p. 11. The boulder has subsequently reappeared in the estuary.

do artists articulate and make explicit their own tacit knowledge, and how have their needs been understood? From an initial exploration of artists' individual stories,<sup>10</sup> my thesis required that I further explore how artists related to the South West, and I wanted to know more about how the land and presence of the South West, conceptually and physically affected artists' own positioning and choice of opportunity.

## **Research about artists in South West England**

This section begins by highlighting the methodological approaches of two pieces of South West based research with artists and creative practitioners within the environments of CPD consultation, and ends with three pieces of my own South West based research.

Connections and Collaborations (circa 2005) is discussed in Chapter One. The research team included Mary Schwarz (from Dartington College of Arts, and previously one of the key people in the South West CreativePeople hub, and a member of the network which set up the Reflective Practitioner Scheme) and Cat Radford (Research Assistant at Dartington, and previously one of the original Reflective Practitioners on the Reflective Practitioner Scheme). Connections and Collaborations methods included gathering primary source material from practitioner questionnaires, face to face interviews with representatives of the Higher Education institutions, backed up with desk research.

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<sup>10</sup> These are detailed in Chapter Three.

After Connections and Collaborations, in July of the following year, Schwarz and Radford were commissioned by Youth Music and Arts Council England, South West to undertake research and development to establish a MusicLeader South West (MLSW) network.<sup>11</sup> The ensuing report, MusicLeader South West: Report on research and development phase, was published at the end of 2006.<sup>12</sup> The report was addressed to the Advisory Group, and Schwarz and Radford worked directly to a Steering Group comprising four representatives from the research funders. The research brief for MLSW network comprised the undertaking of a needs analysis of CPD; a supply analysis of CPD; and asked for a comparison of identified CPD needs with availability of provision, followed by identification and evaluation of delivery options (including management): and to present those four tasks in a written report.

The report clearly details the methods used.<sup>13</sup> In addition, a CPD survey questionnaire sent out to providers known to the consultants received twenty four responses. One to one interviews were held, and a consultation meeting with the MLSW Advisory Group was attended by seven people. Four regional consultation events took place in Plymouth, Poole, Bristol and Truro attended by a total of fifty three people.

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<sup>11</sup> MusicLeader is a national programme funded by Youth Music comprising a central web-based information resource and on-the-ground regional networks, (see the CPD providers Appendix 1 for further information).

<sup>12</sup> Mary Schwarz and Cat Radford for Youth Music and Arts Council England, South West, MusicLeader South West Report on research and development phase, 20 December 2006. This report is also discussed in Chapter One.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6. An initial contacts database was supplied by the Steering Group to the consultants, then supplemented by information from the Advisory Group, internet and directory searches, reports and individual referrals. Two consultation questionnaires were sent out for music leaders and for providers/purchasers respectively to “approximately 350 contacts”. They were also posted on websites (e.g. MusicLeader, ArtsMatrix); and circulated by some key agencies. Initial response to the original deadline was felt to be poor, so a second deadline was set with new questionnaires mailed out, leading to twice as many respondents (ninety three completed questionnaires). The responses were represented equally from music providers and music leaders. It was noted that “the research experience evidenced quite a high degree of inaccuracy of contact details” (p.6).

The evidence from this research, which acknowledged that different practitioners needed different training at different times, influenced my own thinking on the research for this PhD. Significantly, the report also found that practitioners desired funding to be given within a broader context of money for “practice”, instead of “training”, observing that practitioners responded to the consultation with exclamations such as, “oh no, not another training initiative.” The report identified differing awareness levels of CPD needs and variance in practitioners’ ability to identify current or desired provision:

The research has unearthed a wide range of CPD programmes that, when taken together, *appear* to meet the majority of demands in terms of content, format, timing and marketing approaches. In reality these opportunities are very localised... Despite the South West being well served in CPD and business support for the creative industries (although some would say over- and confusingly-served) ... Independent freelancers in particular, do not seem to be accessing that support.<sup>14</sup>

...

There are some very effective CPD programmes running in the region, although activity appears to be isolated and fragmented, with a tendency to “look inwards” rather than an ambition to “share outwards”.<sup>15</sup>

Together, the Connections and Collaborations and MLSW reports make fascinating reading regarding the methods applied and their findings on CPD provision for artists in the South West. Both suggest that there are appropriate levels of CPD activity in the region, yet do not evidence that the region is appropriately served. Chapter One of this thesis discusses a number of CPD-orientated policy research reports, and I considered whether another audit of CPD needs which looked at a percentage of artists by either institution (e.g. HEI led) or art form (e.g. music led) in the South West was necessary.

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<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 42. Emphasis in the original.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 47.

The comment above that CPD in the region has “a tendency to ‘look inwards’” is still a relevant one; as ArtsMatrix became independent, it needed to become a business, looking after its own staff, funding and investments. It could therefore be perceived by others as becoming “territorial”, bounded by the need to generate income.<sup>16</sup> In 2007, I experienced an example of this territorialism in relation to ArtsMatrix’s Report on Support for Individual Creative Practitioners in SW England, July 2007. This is discussed in Chapter One.<sup>17</sup>

The ArtsMatrix consultation focused on auditing CPD provision and mapped the “official” view of the sector. It asked the question which had originally been a general focus for my research: “What support for individual creative practitioners is available in South West England?” I felt another audit of CPD support was not useful, and my research could therefore concentrate on the narratives of individual experienced artists. The above example also suggests that consultation processes for CPD reports can become tightly controlled within their own environments and attempt to address multiple roles, for example, to achieve a further phase of funding or to satisfy previous funding requirements.

### **My prior research methodologies for South West CPD schemes**

The two South West based CPD schemes run by Matrix (the precursor to ArtsMatrix), Reflective Practitioner Scheme and First Stop Shop (FSS), are reflected on throughout

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<sup>16</sup> I do not necessarily subscribe to this view, but appreciate as a freelancer, and having worked as a salaried member of staff for a number of art organisations, that salaried staff in any institution (no matter how small) can appear inaccessible and territorial at times.

<sup>17</sup> ArtsMatrix research and report allowed me to re-consider the parameters and methods of my own research.

this thesis, and are outlined in the introduction. Here, I discuss the methods I used to evaluate both schemes, and how the methods and findings have impacted on the methodology for this PhD research. The research process for both these evaluations was bespoke, leading from conversations with the originating stakeholders of Matrix.

In order to write On Reflection, my 2003 evaluation of The Reflective Practitioner Scheme, my research methods included desk research, one to one semi-structured interviews (three times with each individual artist, and three times with each representative of the host organisation) during the duration of the Reflective Practitioner (two of those interviews took the form of walks). I also facilitated group discussions and other creative processes – for example, by asking each host / practitioner to draw or map their journey between the start of the Reflective Practitioner scheme and the end. I analysed transcripts of interviews with representatives from the eight host art organisations and the fourteen artists, as well as other stakeholders and collaborators, and undertook comparator interviews with regional and national artist training or CPD initiatives. Appendix 4 is an extract of comparator interview findings.

As a distinct part of the evaluation of the Scheme, I was separately contracted by Dartington College of Arts to “develop a language that gives a validity to CPD for arts and crafts practitioners, employers and funders of training and development.”<sup>18</sup> The realisation of the impossibility of that aim, coupled with a growing understanding that vocabulary constantly evolves, later led me to focus my PhD research on exploring (rather than developing) the language of professional development, its different usages and hierarchies. During the Reflective Practitioner Scheme I facilitated peer group

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<sup>18</sup> This is a quotation from my original contract for the evaluation of the Scheme.

discussions and one to one interviews discussing the language of CPD. I wondered how an artist can discuss their experiences, and present or narrate their work in a language which is both “true” to their experience and work, and yet frames their work in a way which is accepted by potential funders, commissioners, agents, buyers, and so on.

The significance of language was demonstrated whilst we were discussing the word “development” within the context of CPD and reflective practice. An experienced arts professional offered the following observation:

*development* implies a linear and upwardly spiralling ideal that doesn't value people's crises / mistakes or major changes or recognise that people's working patterns are in a period of considerable change. The whole language and framework has a danger of trying to quantify something that's a bit like an eel. In literature, things that aid development are often simple, e.g. a room to work. Some of the language loses sight of that and how artists see themselves.<sup>19</sup>

Within the scheme, those people who were party to dialogues took new meanings from the words. For instance, understanding of “reflective practice” changed as peer discussion and presentations took place, as relationships evolved with hosts, each other and in the evaluation process. The ways in which we talked about our practice changed via the process. Hence the word *reflection* to this group of people meant something different to those outside the group. I wrote at the time:

Language emerges through dialogue, language moves on. It is never determined, agreed or fixed, dialogue both develops language and communicates it...

...Language itself creates value. How your work is promoted and talked about is important, you do have to be valued as an artist / practitioner. You have to be *talked* about. Those that have an understanding of art and artists have to make the terminology explicit, so that it is clear that we are talking about individuals who are often

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<sup>19</sup> Karen Smith for Matrix, *On Reflection*, 2003, Appendix B, Transcripts of conversational interviews with CPD artists providers, p. 29. Emphasis in the original.

freelance, or sole traders or artists with portfolio careers that work in a creative practice, and not “workforce” or “employees”.<sup>20</sup>

I observed from the Scheme that the way meaning is communicated can unintentionally exclude people; as the people involved in Reflective Practitioner evolved as a group, so did their vocabulary. Language mediated the narratives of all those involved.

Comments from artists also observed that the wording of the Scheme may suggest that artists were not previously “reflective” until this Scheme deemed them so, and perceived the suggestion as patronising that artists are not aware of their own needs until a “professional” is able to narrate those needs for them. Despite these feelings, all artists perceived the scheme as successful. The process demonstrated Raymond William’s concept that language is always subject to problems of information and problems of theory. It also demonstrated that language is powerful. Chapter Four explores language in more detail.

In 2005, I was asked by the newly appointed Director of ArtsMatrix to follow up the original Reflective Practitioners and write an advocacy publication for ArtsMatrix to attempt further funding in order to repeat the Scheme. Via conversations with the original artists and research into their ongoing practices, we re-considered the Scheme’s impact. I also returned to those involved at ACE, and some of the host organisations. This research became a small advocacy booklet called The Reflective Practitioner Project (2005).

The methods for evaluation of First Stop Shop, Phase One<sup>21</sup> (FSS) during 2005 followed a similar process of evaluation to the Reflective Practitioner Scheme; I

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<sup>20</sup> Karen Smith for Matrix, On Reflection 2003, pp. 37-41.

undertook data analysis of *all* the participants (five hundred and ninety three), and developed detailed case study research of sixty of the participants. This included observation of the actual methods of one to one DNA (Development Needs Analysis) conducted by Matrix and interviews with all staff of organisations partaking in FSS.<sup>22</sup>

Within the FSS Phase One evaluation report I summarised the most dominant and re-occurring skills development needs cited by the participating creative practitioners.

Many factors of the one to one service had a beneficial effect on practitioners, and how they perceived their own value and validity, which in turn enhanced confidence building and professional operation.<sup>23</sup> These were almost identical to findings in Phase Two regarding feeling confident, having “permission” to practice, overcoming feelings of isolation, improving motivation and finding support strategies to practice.<sup>24</sup> However these were needs related to practitioners across a wide range of experiences and were already known.<sup>25</sup>

Because FSS was funded by European money, targets were set on age groups.

Corresponding with the later Connections and Collaborations research, FSS based an understanding of career on age. In the final Phase One analysis of FSS, there were more people defined as mid-career than expected, with almost sixty eight percent of

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<sup>21</sup> First Stop Shop was an artists’ development needs and analysis service provided by the precursor network of organisations to ArtsMatrix (known as Matrix and detailed in Chapter One). Professional Development Coordinators were established in the South West providing information, advice and guidance to creative practitioners. I evaluated the first stage of this service in May 2005: Karen Smith, ArtsMatrix First Stop Shop (Phase 1): Final Evaluation Report, May 2005; Nicola Hutcheson of Platform 3 Consultants undertook a similar evaluation for the second Phase of First Stop Shop: Nicola Hutcheson, Platform3 on behalf of ACT Ltd. (Cornwall Arts Centre Trust Ltd.), ArtsMatrix Final Report, December 2006.

<sup>22</sup> For example, Matrix Professional Development Coordinators and ACE Officers.

<sup>23</sup> Smith, ArtsMatrix First Stop Shop (Phase 1), pp. 11-17.

<sup>24</sup> Hutcheson, Platform3 on behalf of ACT Ltd. ArtsMatrix Final Report, p. 16.

<sup>25</sup> Part of the one to one service could be advisor support to work through a planning application to build a new studio in a listed building; or to create a development plan for a particular area of dance practice; or discussion to set a daily rate for artistic work.

beneficiaries falling into this age group (twenty-five to forty-nine years of age). In addition, the number of beneficiaries of fifty plus years were twice as high as expected, very few beneficiaries had less than six years in practice.

In the sixty detailed case studies, a larger than expected proportion of people were in their late forties or early fifties but were only six to seven years in practice having undertaken a significant career change – for example, moving from one arts discipline to a completely different one.<sup>26</sup> Some of the people featured in the case studies aimed to earn all their income from their artistic practice and discontinue subsidiary activities; most had a diverse portfolio of activity.<sup>27</sup> Many of these practising mid-career artists were also part-time lecturers at some of the region’s HE and FE institutions, and many had MAs in creative subjects. Later research also supports this information.<sup>28</sup>

## **The research process: evolving a methodology**

Returning in 2007 to these previous evaluations and case studies to consider how to define research subjects for my PhD prompted some deeper thinking on criteria, definitions and myths that prevailed in my own work; for example, did my own assumptions affect previous evaluations? I noted that the term “mid-career” is not always useful. I also observed that a standardised form of practice (i.e. three sessions over a period of time with one generic Matrix advisor) may not be of benefit to more experienced artists who may need specific, long-term and individualised support.

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<sup>26</sup> Smith, *ArtsMatrix First Stop Shop (Phase 1)*. Appendix, Case Studies, p. 82 and p. 30. For example, Case Study 36 moved from “Art Director, Film” to “Folk music singer”; Case Study 8 an experienced “Graphic Designer” became a “Dancer / Choreographer”.

<sup>27</sup> Almost half were visual artists, with an even spread across the other half of administrators, dancers, performers, writers, and designer-makers. Some practitioners were inter-disciplinary however the original FSS database did not allow for this description.

<sup>28</sup> Hutcheson, Platform3 on behalf of ACT Ltd., *ArtsMatrix Final Report*, p. 16.

CPD research and evaluation in the South West region, as well as operating within particular relationships of people and their practices, has developed certain languages which people take with them into their next positions. I wondered how big a divide was being created between the “business of CPD” and the actuality of working as an artist, and whether artists recognise what they are doing when it is represented in the language of CPD providers, and how artists who are experienced perceive the CPD sector and their own needs, and what kind of language they used to discuss their needs.

The description of methods and methodologies for the reports discussed above are very similar, usually involving steering group discussion, questionnaire design and consultation meetings. Some of these reports investigated artists throughout their careers, and therefore encompassed experienced artists. Where CPD was the main area of research, it was usually investigated on behalf of providers working from supply-side using questionnaires and / or interviews. The South West based approaches have been market-led. No research has been uncovered which specifically focuses on mid-career or experienced artists in the South West. The function of previous research has been to test out, map or audit an area of CPD provision and recommend action for the future, or evaluate a “pilot” scheme and again provide recommendations for the future.

Whilst acknowledging the existence of a multitude of markets for artists, I wanted to conduct applied research from demand-side, without a particular provider or market focus, and which utilised my own experience.

## Writing about artists and their environments

Hans Abbing's Why are Artist's Poor? (2002) and Becker's Art Worlds (1982) both discuss a world of social connections and collaborations, where artists' opportunities are connected to or mediated through others working within or without the arts ecology. These studies provide an alternative methodological approach to those described above by writing about artists' environments outside of a CPD provider's agenda, and supported my methodological challenge of defining and understanding the subjects of my research and the environments in which they operate. Abbing, a visual artist and economist, argues that how powerful a say one has in defining art depends on one's social grouping, and that the arts have an atypical and extraordinary economy. He furthered this argument in a later paper on the importance of understanding art as politics. This paper, written with Sacha Kagan in 2006,<sup>29</sup> developed Becker's ideas (discussed below) on the tensions of producing art work.

Contrary to Abbing's finding that most artists are poor, research undertaken by ACE and Euclid (European and International Information Services for Arts and Culture) suggest a more complex situation, where

not all artists and creatives are poor...but some artists and creatives are poor, some of the time...Instead they are poor and have low incomes at particular times – when they are young, and when they are old. In order to mitigate against the second – third age poverty – many artists cease working as creatives prior to the age of forty.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Hans Abbing and Sacha Kagan, "Polity Conventions in Art Worlds", 6 July 2006 at The Conference on Social Theory, Politics and the Arts (STP&A), Vienna 2006, at: [www.culture.info](http://www.culture.info) (accessed 8 June 2009).

<sup>30</sup> Keith Hackett, The Future of Creative Workspaces Seminar, 10 November 2006, Tate Modern, London.

The complexity of ACE's research led to Euclid working in partnership with ACE to run seminars for artists about pensions.<sup>31</sup> "Why are artists poor?" a conference held in 2006, stated in the conference findings:

We need not only to develop some kind of standard definitions describing artists but also to acknowledge that artists are usually, though not necessarily, self-employed and need to benefit from tax relief schemes as well as maintain artistic independence.<sup>32</sup>

Their findings revealed artists operating in Europe in a "very elastic" legal framework: "artists find themselves subject to the whims of administrative and legal interpretation effecting their ability to access state aid and to even be considered an artist."<sup>33</sup>

Becker's Art Worlds discusses research undertaken with a network of people with different skills and jobs partaking in the production of art and artists' careers. Becker's worlds are practical ones, viewed as social organisational groupings, not aesthetic ones. They are porous, changing, unlimited and fluid. He observes the "cooperative" careers of these organisational groupings, not as those of individual artists, a realisation not lost in his own writing: "I have perhaps overemphasized the collective character of making and consuming art, to see what could be seen from that vantage point".<sup>34</sup> Becker's art worlds are American ones and, related to what could be considered a dated view of the production of art, he problematises the idea of a "core" artistic activity, and does not write directly about skills development.

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<sup>31</sup> Euclid ran a series of "Pensions for Artists" Seminars during 2007 and 2008. I attended Pensions for Artists on 10 April 2007 at Armada House, Bristol.

<sup>32</sup> UNI-MEI, the global union for skills and services and International intelligence on culture, "Why are artists poor?" 12-13 November, at: <http://www.intelCULTURE.org>. No year is stated on the website, however the conference was held in November 2006. (accessed 24 November 2007).

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> Howard S. Becker, Art Worlds. The University of California Press, Ltd., London, England, 1982, p. 351.

However, Becker's notion of change and fluidity is still pertinent to artists' support in the UK when availability of public funding is tied to governmental initiatives, often brokered by "external sources" before filtering through to artists:

Art worlds change continuously – sometimes gradually, sometimes quite dramatically. New worlds come into existence, old ones disappear. No art world can protect itself fully or for long against all the impulses for change, whether they arise from external sources or internal tensions.<sup>35</sup>

Becker, a sociologist and musician, reveals how the momentum, plans and developments of others affect artistic practice. He considers the collective production of art in collaboration with others (many of whom are artists) in his (collective) book, Art from Start to Finish (2006).<sup>36</sup> Here, Becker and his collaborators delve into the microcosm of individual artists' working processes to produce artwork, and understandings of what art is, rather than the macrocosm of art worlds. "Artist" is used as a catch-all for many different art forms; the book is written by artists and academics (not mutually exclusive) and predominantly observes those working in literature, jazz, and visual arts.

Art from Start to Finish outlines the methods used to glean information about how artists produce work via a problematisation of the "start" and "finish" of the production. Becker and his collaborators posit three ideas when outlining their methods to gather data: 1) "art is not an individual product", the same idea as explored in Art Worlds and that the process of making evolves into an "end" form which was not necessarily intended or originally envisaged; 2) evolving from the first idea and using examples from the book by working artists, they suggest that the artwork itself "is one of the

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<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 300.

<sup>36</sup> Howard S. Becker, Robert R. Faulkner, and Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Art from Start to Finish: Jazz, Painting, Writing and Other Improvisations. The University of Chicago Press, Ltd., London, 2006.

actors involved in the drama of its own making"; and 3) that during the process, nothing fully or immediately happens. It is a process of increments.<sup>37</sup>

Within this discussion of methods to explore the conceptualisation of the production of art over time by a collective of people, the second idea that an artwork has its own "career" leads Becker and his collaborators to suggest that analysis of "the story of any artwork" enables a visualisation of

...forking paths, ways the work might have gone differently, would have gone differently *if* something had happened differently, *if* someone or something had behaved differently. That *if* is a crucial point of study, telling us where the interactions of artists and others provided alternatives to what in the end actually did happen, making clear the contingent, rather than inevitable character of the artwork we're trying to understand.<sup>38</sup>

The description used above, borrowed from a study of people's career occupations, recognises what seems fundamental to me: that there will always be something unplannable in artists' "career" paths, and that this is inseparable from the making of artwork. Becker's emphasis is on the travel of an artwork between "start" and "finish", with the conclusion that art is never finished and is always ongoing. My emphasis is on the "mid", researching artists' careers and career progression, not the career of the artwork. The commonality in our methodologies is the focus on the *momentum*. Becker highlights that artistic production is the outcome of collective action; for my research, how artists' lives are perceived by providers and their actions affects decisions around skills development and what is therefore available. My methods trace an interpretation of the continuum of an *artist's* career, Becker's trace the continuum of an *art work*.

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<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 2-3.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5. Emphasis in the original.

The methods Becker and colleagues used to explore artists producing artwork are described as “observation in the field”, “interviews”, “autobiographical stories”, “historical and archival materials.”<sup>39</sup> Considering the detail of the everyday of individual artists’ practice rather than the finished text that accompanies final shows or performances, for example, led to the presentation of maverick cases which Becker called “anomalous”. The anomalies forced a need to devise a way of “turning the oddity into a norm”. They described the approach of analysing differences as “counterfactual and counterintuitive”, and later as a

somewhat unconventional way of finding common ground among various perspectives on the study of the arts.<sup>40</sup>

It is suggested that this is more akin to how artists do things: “Methodologically, this encourages us to work like artists, to improvise, to think against the grain, and to embrace the unpredictable.”<sup>41</sup>

I will now discuss three pieces of research that exemplify the complexity and contradictions inherent in choosing any sample of artists for research purposes. Two of the studies that follow are based in economic disciplines, and one is interdisciplinary, and investigate the arts worlds that artists occupy via organisational definition and economics. CPD is not mentioned specifically in any of them, however the studies show that the definitions used have impact on how artists’ labour is valued.

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<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 17 and 20.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

Donnell Butler's Studies of Artists: An Annotated Directory (2000), with an updateable online version, researches surveys on artists, audits, and methodologies, illustrating the significance of definitions and the complexities of language. Butler writes:

There are many ways to define an artist. Moreover, how one defines an artist will invariably affect how one identifies the population from which a sample is drawn.<sup>42</sup>

Butler argues that a clear definition of "artist" is necessary within any given research, as well as a clear acknowledgement of both the intention and limitations of any research approach. The study also points out:

In contrast to defining the artist, identifying artists is less a philosophical issue than a technical challenge. The problem lies in the unknown size and boundaries of the population... The ambiguous nature of artists as a population makes it difficult to identify a population of artists from which to draw a sample.

Rhys Davies and Robert Lindley in Artists in Figures (2003) unsurprisingly found that those occupying cultural positions generally earn less than those in equivalent positions elsewhere in the same Standard Occupation Classification. Davies and Lindley also conclude like Butler that:

the main point is that whichever definition is used, it is bound to produce different research findings... present data are a poor basis for the analysis of artistic labour markets.<sup>43</sup>

Frey and Pommerehne's Muses and Markets. Explorations in the Economics of the Arts (1990) lists eight criteria to identify populations of artists that "might be applied in order to determine who is an artist" and as an occupation:

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<sup>42</sup> Donnell Butler. Studies of Artists: An Annotated Directory, Summer 2000, Princeton University Centre for Arts and Cultural Policy Studies, at: <http://www.princeton.edu/~artspol/workpap12.html>, p. (iii) (accessed 19 February 2007).

<sup>43</sup> Rhys Davies and Robert Lindley, ACE Research Report, Artists in Figures. A statistical portrait of cultural occupations, 31 August 2003. Warwick Institute for Employment Research and Centre for Educational Development Appraisal and Research, University of Warwick, p. 2.

- a. the amount of time spent on artistic work;
- b. the amount of income derived from artistic activities;
- c. the reputation as an artist among the general public;
- d. the recognition among other artists;
- e. the quality of artistic work produced (which means that artistic 'quality' must be defined somehow);
- f. membership in a professional artists' group or association;
- g. professional qualifications (graduation in art schools);
- h. the subjective self-evaluation of being an artist.<sup>44</sup>

This list is used by both Butler and Davies and Lindley in their studies. Frey and Pommerehne concluded that understanding of artists shifts and major variation exists between studies. They also concluded that: "Even more important, the interpretation of the descriptive statistics presented may be seriously misleading".<sup>45</sup>

Frey and Pommerehne's economic approach is broadly in agreement with Becker's view in Art Worlds: that is, that the behaviour of people within a frame of reference together with the availability of resources dictates the artwork produced. This could therefore impact on what CPD is available, how experienced artists are defined, and what funding provision is to be made available.

### **The methods used by artists to explore their own CPD**

There are fewer artist-led studies on artists, on making a living as an artist, or on CPD. I found one artist-led project specifically concerned with mid-career by Peter Petralia (a

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<sup>44</sup> Bruno S. Frey and Werner W. Pommerehne, Muses and Markets. Explorations in the Economics of the Arts, Oxford, Basil Blackwell Ltd, 1990, pp. 146-147.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 155.

practicing writer and theatre director from New York) who received a funding grant from the New Work Network Activator initiative to research the situation of “mid-career” artists in the North West of England and propose a programme that might address some of their needs. Petralia left behind “ten years of making work” to undertake an MA in Theatre Studies in the UK, noting that lurking beneath apparent success in New York was “a growing sense of dread and exhaustion that resulted from spending so long in what I would call my ‘mid-career’”. In addition Petralia felt: “my ‘career’ as an artist was not financially supporting my life as a human” and simultaneously he wished to generate further funding to develop more ambitious artistic work. He found that New York’s artistic terrain had programmes to support emerging artists but no major support for mid-career artists, and found “a UK correlate to the ‘mid-career’ dilemma I experienced in New York”.<sup>46</sup>

Petralia’s study was short in duration. Between March and April 2008 he interviewed nineteen artists and programmers in person and conducted an online survey of twenty one artists based primarily in the North West of England, asking them for specific details regarding how they make work and what gaps they perceive in their networks or in resources to support more ambitious work. Petralia located himself as “mid-career”. Unlike my research, in which I filtered out those who self-defined as mid-career if I felt they were not experienced enough, Petralia’s respondents were entirely self-selecting. Consequently he received information from people who had a “massive” difference in range of years of experiences: “the shortest amount of time that was reported was three years and the longest was twenty-five years.” The range and number of projects his respondents had engaged in also ranged from a few to more than one hundred.

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<sup>46</sup> Peter Petralia, “Activator North West Research, Summary of Findings”, pp. 1-2. Email from the author, 1 August 2008.

Petralia and I also differ in our understanding of mid-career; he views “mid-career” as distinct from “established” whereas in formative stages of my study I suspected that if “mid-career” is used at all it is used interchangeably with “established”. The challenges Petralia faced in his data collection correlated with those identified in the four studies detailed above, that how one defines the terms, and therefore the subjects of the research, affects the data collected.

Petralia discovered a number of issues: The majority of artists interviewed spent over half of their time each week on work unrelated “to their practice as artists”, with many working in “some type of educational setting – either at a university or as a workshop facilitator”.<sup>47</sup> Money (funding) was discussed as a fundamental obstacle, as well as the difficulty of gaining funding to fit artistic desires, against a “funding system” of set outcomes:

The funding system also prefers work which can tour extensively, which is difficult for artists making site-responsive work or process-oriented performances where there is no clear outcome from the beginning.<sup>48</sup>

Petralia reported that “nearly all of the respondents noted a desire for more supportive networks (either in terms of a community of artists or in terms of support organisations that provide services)”. And yet Petralia identified that “only a few” were members of the identifiable key network organisations (such as New Work Network). A respondent who was already well networked felt that “there were plenty of support networks but that none of them provided artistic mentoring.”<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 2-3.

Petralia also uncovered the debilitating effect a lack of confidence can have on artists, and concluded that:

The underlying principle in the sentiments I heard is that these artists have a fundamental desire to be able to work as an artist, to be able to find the finances, space and other resources necessary to make work, and to have venues/audiences interested in seeing what they have made.<sup>50</sup>

Petralia's findings suggest that income-generation or "sustainability" of artists' work is the key issue and that funding has a short-term project-specific focus, which does not support sustained approaches to making work. The three requirements of "creative idea", "effort and skill" and "gaining a response" found in ACE's Arts Debate, discussed in Chapter One, make an interesting comparison to Petralia's findings of "desire" to work, find resources and gain an audience.

Petralia's research did not discover common needs between subjects except with regard to income, sustainability and their individuality. He offered a semi-solution to the issues discovered: to create a regular Sunday lunch club which travelled to different theatres in the North West, providing opportunities to discuss and reflect on practice in a peer to peer cohort session. Lunch clubs were held at Nuffield Theatre, Lancaster; Greenroom, Manchester; Bluecoat Arts Centre, Liverpool and Creation Centre, Ulverston. As a mid-career artist looking at mid-career artists it is notable that Petralia's research has a refreshing lack of "CPD" terminology, and is intuitive rather than epistemological in approach. However his research methods followed traditional consultation techniques.

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<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

In July 2009 I was contacted by an ex-colleague and friend, Helen Parrott. Unbeknown to me, since last talking to Helen about my research in early 2008, Helen had successfully applied in early 2009 to ACE Yorkshire for funding to explore her own “mid-career” as a visual artist via a series of nine “Challenging Conversations”. She asked me if I would be the ninth and final conversation, led in whatever way I wished. Our discourse included two hours of walking and talking, and Helen asked me to summarise our day in writing (she had also asked the other eight participants to do the same).

When summarising our conversation, it struck me that the *frame* of the conversations *in total* had created possibilities for Helen to reflect on the intertwining of many strands of her life both personal and professional, in a way that may have slipped by in conventional approaches to professional development or just “getting on with it”. It had enabled an individual philosophical questioning and reflection at a deeper level than everyday activity tends to allow. Interestingly, Helen had used the word “challenging” in her funding application; familiarity with ACE (she was previously a Visual Arts Officer at ACE) led her to trust that the word “challenging” would more likely gain funding than, for example, “professional development” or “collaborative” conversations.

The book Art, Not Chance (2001) discussed in this thesis introduction, prompted by Gulbenkian Foundation’s “Time to Experiment” grants programme, also discusses the power of words in our culture, and represents a different methodology to reveal artists’ development. According to Sian Ede, the Arts Director of Gulbenkian, the programme aimed to:

set aside time simply to test new concepts...Periods of research and development are regarded as essential in science and industry. In the arts they are often seen as self-indulgent or time-wasting.<sup>51</sup>

What Ede suggests has been learnt from “Time to Experiment” is that routes to artistic “success” are personal and that set rules of language need to be forgotten. For example, the words that are expected to be written when artists submit a funding bid to describe their idea and working progress, are often not the language that the artist would comfortably use in their practice. Ede observes:

Certainly not one of the nine artists uses the word “creativity”. Nor do they speak of “aims and objectives” or “targets and outcomes”. They make no false promises about “quality assurance”, “evaluation” or “exit strategies”. We live in a culture where the production of art is increasingly described in such eviscerating language while in reality it defies analysis.<sup>52</sup>

The book used diaries written by the artists as the main method of representing their everyday practice. The editor Paul Allen felt this represented deeper insights than those possible in more formal interviews. In addition, because the artists are writing in *their* language (albeit mediated and edited by Paul Allen), the book is polyphonic. The nine artists were experienced and from many disciplines, including musician Joanna MacGregor, performance artist Bobby Baker, and choreographer Shobana Jeyasingh. The diaries develop a narrative highlighting the challenges for artists of simultaneously progressing their craft and vision. Ede wrote that “the prevailing theme of the art of our times...is no single version of reality, no straightforward interpretation of events, no fixed image, no clear identity.”<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Sian Ede, “Foreword”, Art, not chance. Nine artists’ diaries, Paul Allen (ed.), London, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 2001, p. 1.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1-3.

In an endnote to her essay in Shifting Horizons: Women's Landscape Photography Now (2000), Liz Wells observes that in the one-way process of artist to curator when projects are being discussed and developed:

...it is quite normal for the curator to visit the artist at her studio, select work, and discuss ways of contextualising the work – statements, titles and so on. Thus the curator may learn a lot about the creative process of the artist. This is not a situation of mutuality. In my experience artists ask about the proposed book or show, especially, who else is to be included and where will it tour. Rarely does the artist ask for the curator's c.v. or interrogate her about her work.<sup>54</sup>

Wells draws attention to a certain positioning, framed by language, in which the artist's narrative is developed from the curator's perspective and control.

Debra Savage's research with a-n (artist's newsletter), Making a living as an artist (2006), discussed in this thesis introduction, observed the working lives of ten artists. Similarly to Paul Allen, Savage worked with the artist's own descriptions of their practice within the research framework. Savage's final paragraph states that "a large part of being an artist is being adaptable and entrepreneurial. Unlike other professionals, the driving force behind this entrepreneurial attitude may not be financial, but to seek other, non-materialistic rewards such as freedom, creativity and personal satisfaction."<sup>55</sup>

In the varied methodologies and observations between the individual projects discussed above, there is a lack of commonality; what Becker perceived as odd or "anomalous" is at the heart of my thesis. Petralia's research found more anomalies than commonalities

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<sup>54</sup> Liz Wells, "Envisioning: Process and Practices", Shifting Horizons: Women's Landscape Photography Now. Liz Wells, Kate Newton and Catherine Fehily (eds), I.B.Tauris & Co Ltd, 2000, p. 139.

<sup>55</sup> Debra Savage, Making a living as an artist, a-n The Artists Information Company, Newcastle Upon Tyne, 2006, p. 7.

in the needs of his subjects. The individual responses detailed in Chapter Three, and the application of the theories discussed in Chapter Four, led me to believe that I would not find large areas of commonality across the research. It also appeared false to attempt to separate out artists' CPD from the rest of their practice, and I was aware of the prevalence of comments regarding the different understanding of words.

During the winter of 2006, in the first term of my PhD research, I began by engaging in one to one semi-structured interviews with ArtsMatrix staff; it felt appropriate to start with the collaborating partner of the PhD. These interviews questioned the definition of artist and "mid-career"; being in the South West; and opinions around CPD in general. Appendix 6 details those interviewed and the questions asked.<sup>56</sup> Simultaneously I was attending the University of Plymouth (also a provider of CPD) and talking to artists undertaking practice-based PhDs. The PhD by practice could be viewed as a longitudinal and exceptionally time-intensive process of CPD in which artists seek to develop their practice in a supportive academic framework. In addition, many of my peers and close friends are artists who have been practising for many years, and I had informal conversations with them about my research.

The interviews with ArtsMatrix staff and the ongoing conversations with artists suggested that there were still differences in how providers and artists may view the need for CPD.<sup>57</sup> As a direct result of these interviews, and a growing understanding of the self-reinforcing nature of the CPD sector, I chose to concentrate the remainder of primary research time on artists' voices and made the decision to evolve an approach which focused on professionally practising artists because of the lack of demand-side

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<sup>56</sup> Chapter Three provides analysis of these interviews.

<sup>57</sup> These interviews are discussed in Chapter Three.

focused research, and additionally because the administrators and providers already interviewed were confident that they thought they knew what “mid-career” was, and what experienced artists wanted and yet this was based on assumptions from within their own particular agendas of provision and from a salaried institutionalised position. I could have chosen to continue to interview policy makers, funders, administrators and those who “coach” or advise artists (some of whom are of course, artists). However, if I was to look at CPD needs *for* ‘mid-career’ artists, I wanted to research it *with* those artists, making artists’ voices the dominant filter to map against current and potential provision.

### **Choosing the subjects of my research**

Following the interviews with ArtsMatrix staff, I needed to decide who *were* the research subjects for this thesis; if not providers, then which artists should I focus on? A large scale audit of a percentage of “mid-career” artists in the South West seemed inappropriate, for the reasons already outlined in this chapter. In summary these reasons were: a lack of a shared and meaningful definition of “mid-career” and “artist” or creative practitioner; problems of data collection for the sector;<sup>58</sup> a lack of research on experienced artists practising from the South West; a lack of heterogeneous narratives from an artist’s perspective on CPD; and an already existing plethora of homogenous CPD research in the South West which was provider-focused.

Initially in the first stage of my research I felt it was important to establish a “working definition” of artist and I pulled together understandings from the research discussed in

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<sup>58</sup> In addition to the evidence in the reports detailed in this chapter regarding the difficulties of datasets, this thesis introduction and Chapter One also discuss the issue in relation to CPD provision.

this chapter. The result was a four column by eight row table (See Appendix 5) which I decided was too constraining, because it created limiting categorisation and fell into the failings of data collection discussed above. The table did, however, highlight the methodological challenge of defining who the subjects of my research were. I concluded that to be a “mid-career” artist one must be immersed in their practice, continuing to enquire about their practice, and have a duration of experience as an artist of no less than seven years.

Later, I began to use the word “experienced” instead of “mid-career” when referring to the artists discussed in my project. The word “experienced” offers a less linear understanding compared to “mid-career”. Esther Leslie, a critical and cultural theorist, notes in Synthetic Worlds (2005) that “experience” and “experiment” share a linguistic root through the Latin *experiri* – to try thoroughly. “Expert” also shares this root.<sup>59</sup> The sense of continuing to experience, to test, and to keep on testing, suggests not a standing still, not only a “mid”, it actively posits the idea of being expert, yet alive to the process of continuing to experiment and experience.

Focusing down on one artform, such as visual arts and crafts, or theatre, or on one geographic area such as Stroud, St Ives, Bristol, or Penzance which imposed a boundary concerning a particular “market” or “markets” did not seem appropriate either. I have a background in combined and interdisciplinary arts practice; a familiar place for me to locate myself is in between disciplines and within collaborations of disciplines. I have also maintained an interest in practices located in the land (or sea, or air), outside of built structures, not necessarily located in one place and not necessarily permanent. I

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<sup>59</sup> Esther Leslie, Synthetic Worlds: Nature, Art and the Chemical Industry, London, Reaktion, 2005, p. 24.

did not want to limit myself to a research structure and methodology or to a particular art form that might cut out something exceptional merely because I could not yet imagine it. I also wanted to metaphorically look “outside” as well as literally work “outside”.

Via a walking / thinking exercise in my then local park in Bristol, it struck me (whilst walking from one tree and back to another tree until I worked out what it was that I could do) that if I focused the research down into discourse-specific practice (land, site, topography, geography) rather than artform-specific practice I might achieve an albeit tangential but productive approach to artists’ CPD needs. I could retain a diversity of artform practice and interdisciplinarity without losing the specificity of the South West, or the detailed focus on a smaller number of artists.

Artistic practices relating to land, site, topography or geography have been called “land-art” or “public art”. Previously “public art” tended to mean visual art and sculpture. It now has a much wider meaning and is more likely to be called “art in the public realm”.

I am using the term land / water as developed by the University of Plymouth Land/Water and the Visual Arts research group, which focuses on visual arts practice, but is becoming increasingly interdisciplinary. This is the most relevant description for my choice of artists in this thesis, and I use “land-based” as a shortcut term to describe any artist that works within, with or from the landscape of the South West in any discipline or disciplines.

The subjects for this research, therefore, became experienced artists practising in any artform, or across artforms, whose work was based in the discourse of a land or water-based practice in some way, often outside of the boundaries of white box (gallery),

black box (theatre), and often quite literally outside. There was one exception: When I began the PhD there had been for some time a desire within ArtsMatrix and ACE to re-create a Reflective Practitioner Scheme. However, funding and administrative constraints meant that it took six years from the initiation of the first scheme to attempt to develop a new scheme. This new scheme ended up being for the crafts sector only (because of funding constraints and a particular individual's motivations) and the Contemporary Crafts Fellowship Scheme for mid-career crafts artists (CCFS) was developed during the timescale of this PhD. I chose to observe the CCFS because of its emphasis on "mid-career" and its direct relationship to the precursor Reflective Practitioner Scheme as well as its administrative partner, ArtsMatrix. The CCFS supported five crafts professionals. Serendipitously four out of the five successful craft artists had a land or public art based working process. This Scheme is explored in Chapter Five alongside a three-day artist-led seminar which I attended in Cornwall in September 2008 entitled "The artist as cultural agent: DIY (people, places and spaces)".

To formally compare the initial set of interviews with providers, and attempt to evidence my instinct that I needed to focus on artists' voices, I then interviewed nineteen "experienced" artists from a range of backgrounds and art forms including fine art, live art, movement and film whose work encompassed working in, with or on the land or landscape of the South West and also nationally and internationally. This analysis is alongside provider responses in Chapter Three. Again I used semi-structured conversational interviews, using a questionnaire as the starting point with thirteen individual artists, and then facilitated and documented a workshop session of three hours with a group of six individual artists. Appendix 6 details these. The questions attempted to glean artists' responses about living and working in the South West as an

artist, and what the South West meant to those artists. It questioned artists about their “career” and their practice. The workshop session with six artists was organised specifically for my research by the ArtsMatrix PDC for Somerset prompted by my presentation to ArtsMatrix staff in June 2007. The PDC felt it would be mutually beneficial for me to work with a group of artists who did not know each other previously.

Two of ArtsMatrix PDCs, both practising artists, felt that interviewing artists was important, and gave me additional confidence to direct my research away from salaried administrators and policy makers. From interviews with artists, it seemed more appropriate to discuss a *continuum* of and an *experience* in practice, rather than a *mid* point in a career.

The other artists interviewed were found by discussion particularly with my PhD supervisors. I was very aware that it would have been possible to work with my friends and peers, many of whom fit the description “experienced” artist working in a land or “site” based way; however I avoided this mostly because I felt that our friendships may become compromised, and in addition, that my immersion in the subject would become too self-reinforcing. I ended up with a diverse list of artists most of whom were not previously known to me, some of whom worked in academic settings and some whom did not. This provided me with an opportunity to compare different strategies for CPD with different types of artists.

Following these interviews with nineteen artists, the process of interrogating the initial terms and comparing artists answers’ with providers’ answers, changed the focus of my questioning, and the way I considered the research; I felt I wanted to go into more

detail, and follow fewer artists over a longer duration of time. The semi-structured interviews felt too static, too limiting, lacked space for possibility, and I felt by their nature of being placed in cafés or in an arts establishment, or in a workspace, or on the phone, they represented an already institutionalised form of questioning. I wanted to evolve methods which could be as open-ended as possible. It led me to question how I make sense of the world, how I solve issues, and it is by walking, a kinaesthetic activity. As previously mentioned, in my professional facilitative practice, I use movement where appropriate.

Walking was the last part of my research methodologically. Linking why I walk to thinking about experienced artists momentum throughout their lifetimes, and how that trajectory of practice might best be excavated to understand their possible needs (and how to some extent and in some cases, walking in itself might be a solution to those needs) led to thinking about how over much of my freelance practice, I've been excavating how we navigate, negotiate and tell our stories, and how using metaphors associated with land, momentum, travelling, mapping, itineraries supports deeper understanding of place, location and travelling through one's own life or "career". Given that one area of my research was about specific location in the South West and that I had also decided to focus on artists whose work is of and in the "land", conversations and walking coalesced. It made sense to research CPD by linking my own separate practices of walking and facilitation to the practice of PhD research and using that to investigate the CPD practices and possible needs of "experienced" artists. I believed that provision should work *with* artists not *for* artists, appreciating their own continuum of practice, and I wanted to question CPD with artists using methods that retained as much as possible, a spontaneity, movement and ownership with the artist,

outside of any institutional space or meeting room. My research methods and methodology would therefore be metaphorically and physically linked to the subject of my research: artistic career journeys and navigation.

## **Metaphorical notion and physical motion**

Two books are discussed in this thesis by Rebecca Solnit: A Field Guide to Getting Lost (2006) and Wanderlust (2002). Wanderlust is a detailed study of the practice of walking, and in it Solnit states that our everyday language contains a plethora of metaphors and references to movement:

Embedded in English are innumerable movement metaphors: steering straight, moving toward the goal, going for the distance, getting ahead. Things get in our way, set us back, help us find our way, give us a head start... Walking appears in many more common phrases: set the pace, make great strides, a great step forward...<sup>60</sup>

Solnit adds that “the metaphor of walking becomes literal again when we really walk”. She uses the example of a Greek “memory palace” where one would aid recollection by imagining the physical location of thoughts in an actual place, because “what has location can be approached.”<sup>61</sup> In Chapter Four I further discuss A Field Guide in relation to artists’ metaphorical and physical travel through time, space and place in their practices.

The idea of walking and talking to contemplate alternative possibilities and to gain different perspectives is not a new one. Writers as diverse as the cultural geographer David Harvey and Mark Cocker, a nature writer (author of Birds Britannica and Crow

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<sup>60</sup> Rebecca Solnit, Wanderlust, UK, Verso, paperback edition, 2002, p. 73.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 77.

Country), have written about walking and thinking, walking and talking and about pace and rhythm. Mark Cocker told me he perceives that he walks and thinks in iambic pentameter. The rhythm of his walking creates a rhythm for his thinking.<sup>62</sup> Solnit calls it “the mind at three miles an hour,”<sup>63</sup> and points out that:

A new thought often seems like a feature of the landscape that was there all along, as though thinking were travelling rather than making.<sup>64</sup>

In Wistman’s Wood on Dartmoor is a tree to which I return again and again. The tree locates memories I have layered over time. The walk itself to the tree has significant meaning for me and has often been a great source of reflection and thinking.

Jon Anderson’s paper, “Talking whilst walking: a geographical archaeology of knowledge” (2004), discusses the method of walking and talking suggesting that:

it is explicitly premised upon and seeks to harness the relationship between humans and place to uncover meanings and understandings of the life world.<sup>65</sup>

In addition, Anderson observes that talking whilst walking produces:

not a conventional interrogative encounter, but a collage of collaboration: an unstructured dialogue where all actors participate in a conversational, geographical and informational pathway creation.<sup>66</sup>

Anderson states that walking is a form of knowledge making, of locating knowledge differently, and of bringing understanding into being:

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<sup>62</sup> In conversation with Mark Cocker after a reading at Bath literature festival in 2008.

<sup>63</sup> Solnit, *Wanderlust*, p. 14.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5-6. E S Casey in *The Fate of Place* notes that the Romans said “*Solvitur ambulando!*” (solve it by walking), and David Harvey discusses gaining different perspectives on the world by walking in *Spaces of Hope*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2000, p.199.

<sup>65</sup> Jon Anderson, “Talking whilst walking: a geographical archaeology of knowledge.” *Area*, 2004 Volume 36.3, p. 255.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 259

through talking whilst walking, by conversing and traversing pathways through an environment, we are able to create worlds of knowledge (or pathways of knowledge through the world) by talking meanings and understandings into existence.<sup>67</sup>

This method of walking and talking, has been labelled “walking as ethnographic practice”.<sup>68</sup> Also it could be called the performance of research.

Donald Schon problematised the relationship between “being” and “doing” when writing about the professionalisation of practice and a “crisis of confidence” in professional knowledge in Reflective Practitioner (1983). He stated that:

competent practitioners usually know more than they can say. They exhibit a kind of knowing-in-practice, most of which is tacit.<sup>69</sup>

I wondered to what extent artists’ “tacit” knowledge, or their key skills and unconscious competences, may be difficult to articulate in word-based language, and whether the act of travelling through land, of walking, may trigger an alternative articulation of this knowledge using an informal method rather than a “professionalised” CPD analysis.

The definition of peripatetic in my Chamber’s Dictionary (100<sup>th</sup> Edition) is “walking about; itinerant” and gives the example of a teacher *travelling* from one establishment to another. My experience has led me to believe that most experienced artists work peripatetically in some way.

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<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 260.

<sup>68</sup> For example, the text from Roam, on 15 to 17 March 2008 at Loughborough University read: “Walking as ethnographic practice. A weekend of Walking. Three days of artist-led walks and events across Loughborough.”

<sup>69</sup> D.A Schon, The Reflective Practitioner; How Professionals think in Action, London, Temple Smith, 1983, p. viii.

Within “traditional” DNA face-to-face sessions, the CPD “advisor” always leads, often as an interrogator rather than a collaborator. Walking and talking was one way that the artist and I could together explore possibilities, using the conviviality of paced conversation. I felt my approach had to be about imagining CPD provision better, or not at all. I wanted to *move*, and explicitly wanted to explore the difference that “getting away from the desk” had on both myself and the artists. I face the same way as the artist I am walking with. I had an instinct that a different kind of knowledge connected to moving and speaking might be found if I interviewed artists in momentum; being here, being present, whilst locating and moving through place. In turn, that may itself suggest potential ways of developing CPD with artists.

I asked four artists to walk with me. Two of the four artists came through from the nineteen artist interviews described in Chapter Three, and two from new leads and discussions. I wanted to focus on these four artists over a longer period of time to investigate what they thought about CPD and what might come up for them relating to their professional needs within this longitudinal approach. All four are experienced artists who work project by project and live in the South West. Detailed information about and analysis of the artists is written in Chapter Six. I have walked with each artist, two or three times, on South West based walks over the period of a year from March 2008 to April 2009. It has been the artist’s choice where we walked and for how long (with one artist the walks were improvised). The artists I walked with three times were the two artists who were new to me at this final stage in the research. The other two artists had already worked with me in the earlier stage, and therefore we undertook one less walk. I also attended talks, readings, performances and workshops led by the artists where possible and appropriate. These are detailed in Appendix 7.

Originally in the first walk I had a pencilled in framework of questions, however I was prepared not to follow them, and as our walks have evolved, I have preferred an open-ended approach. By the final walks, there were no fixed questions; I let the walks evolve, recorded them, and transcribed them afterwards. I asked the artists to choose or improvise where we walked, and for how long. I did send optional reading information to the artist beforehand, based on my thoughts at the time of the walk. Appendix 7 also details the dates of the walks and information sent before the first walks.

## **Happenstance**

Wooden Boulder has underpinned my thinking *throughout* this thesis. I have used Nash's art work as both a metaphorical and literal representation of attempting to think differently about the assumed trajectory of artists' careers if we think of career more as a life in momentum, open to happenstance. The idea of using journeys and landscape *metaphorically* to discuss travelling through a career is not a new one; many facilitators use mapping as a tool in communicating planning techniques and in visioning ideas. In previous bespoke work from 1991 onwards, I asked artists or arts managers or the staff and board of organisations to "map" their metaphorical artistic terrains, to set their perceived position within it and then envision how that may look or what journey they may take with stages on the way to set "goals" or "objectives". This "route-planning" is contrary to the message I receive from Wooden Boulder; where there is a *travelling through, a momentum* which is not explained by "route-mapping". I have become aware that funding, support and many types of provision to artists can attempt to foresee the impossible, to map out the terrain before artists have arrived there, or had the opportunity to survey or explore where they might *feel* they could go.

The momentum of Wooden Boulder and topography are not only convenient metaphors for my research. Due to my own personal trajectory, I wanted to find a methodology to follow through artists' stories and site my research from an artist's perspective, through physical motion and metaphorical notion, and this underpins the theories and methodology of the research. My understanding that an experienced South West-based artist is in momentum, travelling throughout a "career" as well as through the place and space of the South West positioned my research away from an audit of CPD needs at a particular point in time to a particular defined set of artists.

Becker observes that art works are connected to place, to what is offered where, to how it is accessed, as well as timing, location and finance, and less tangible things which might be called coincidence. CPD can be perceived similarly. The diagram in *Figure 3* is my visualising of the inextricable linking of an artist's life, their experience and ideas, with wider cultural and social structures. I perceive a DNA helix-like structure with two intricately connected strands: One strand is the artist, who they are, their life, passions, rigour and skills, and the opportunities that they are able to pro-actively make happen; and the connected strand is "others", the opportunities that someone else is creating that link to the artist, or that are there at the time that one is looking. So, for example, a commission is awarded to another person, or an ACE grant or international residency or Directorship of a lifetime that fits to the artist's work, *does* come to them.

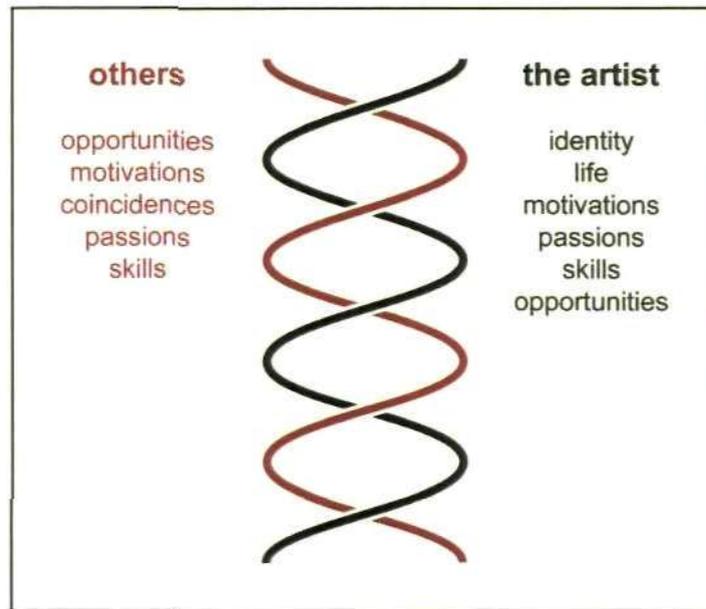


Figure 3. Diagram of connectivity between “others” and “the artist”.

Within the intertwining is the possibility to be in the right time, right place, and equally wrong time, wrong place. These connected strands create a need in artists to combine steely commitment to artistic practice with the ability to go with the flow.

Early on in my research with artists I discussed with them my understanding of Nash’s boulder and this Helix diagram (I had also presented and facilitated a discussion to all ArtsMatrix staff using the boulder and the ideas written here on 7 June 2007).

Interestingly, ArtsMatrix’s own postcards used to advertise and market their services from 2008, borrowed the metaphor of navigation to produce their marketing “route planning” postcard in 2008 (see Appendix 8). The discussion generated by this research developed conversations within ArtsMatrix. In the chapters that follow, I explore the role of language, place and space, accumulation of experience, progression, choice, orientation and happenstance in South West artists’ “career” paths. How we choose to partake in a walk mirrors, methodologically and metaphorically, the process of travelling through a peripatetic artistic continuum, how we navigate, negotiate and

narrate our practices. A key theme is the ability to embrace the unpredictable and to understand how to keep going within a practice.

**Chapter Three**  
**Listening to Artists and CPD Providers**  
**in the South West**

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Based on primary research during the first and second terms of my PhD in 2006-2007, this chapter maps the correspondence and differences between the perspectives of freelance artists and salaried CPD providers in a specific period of time, and moves between artists' voices and administrators' voices. I interviewed a range of people from each group, listening to individual understandings of the four key themes – living and working as an artist in the South West; the idea of a career; and CPD – in order to explore and evaluate whether the opinions of providers align with those of artists, and whether the vibrancy and variety of artists' voices appear to be adequately accommodated in voices representing CPD provision.<sup>1</sup> How this research impacted on my evolving methodology was described in Chapter Two and the findings lead into the theoretical discussions in Chapter Four.

The voices reproduced here are representative of key CPD providers in the South West (mainly ArtsMatrix staff), and experienced artists across all art forms. Whilst the two sets of voices are not always mutually exclusive, the opinions of administrators did sometimes jar with those of artists, and there were many anomalies. As individuals, those interviewed do not necessarily represent the opinions of *all* artists or *all* administrators, or my opinion. Appendix 6 details the interviews and sets of questions. Additionally I informally discussed these themes with other artists and arts professionals, including artists at the University of Plymouth.

Over half of the artists formally interviewed wished to be unnamed, and some artists were concerned that their comments might adversely affect future funding, support, or personal relationships in the region. I have therefore chosen to refer to all the artists

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<sup>1</sup> The thesis introduction also explored understandings of the term "artist", CPD and South West.

interviewed at this stage by a letter, for example, "Artist A". The group of artists I worked with are referred to with a letter and as "Group Artist".

The ArtsMatrix staff team changed significantly between 2006 and 2009, when the final version of this chapter was written; this was shortly before ArtsMatrix went into receivership and the company is therefore discussed here in the present tense. The introduction to this thesis notes the changes in personnel and title at the top tier of ArtsMatrix. There were also many changes to personnel in the local offices of ArtsMatrix, an additional three members of staff to the head office, and a partial relocation. In the local offices, "Professional Development Coordinators" (PDCs) of ArtsMatrix, became "Creative Enterprise Specialists" (CESs) following a name change in 2008. Somerset and Wiltshire merged creating six local offices rather than seven. The Bristol PDC / CES changed four times in three years, and there were three out of seven PDCs remaining in 2009 amongst the CES staff team from 2007, and one head office person remaining. The early snapshot represented here therefore gives a different collection of individual staff views than might be represented at the time of writing.

The following sections contrast artists' and CPD providers' descriptions of the terms artist / creative practitioner, mid-career and South West, and what they felt may be required for CPD provision. The interviews revealed that the language of CPD is complicated by different understandings and demonstrate a symbolic struggle between the economic imperatives of CPD providers which appear to be driving the terminology of CPD rather than the creative imperatives of artists.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> This difference of understanding is explored throughout this chapter. This difference is introduced in the thesis introduction.

## **Artist or Creative Practitioner?**

There is a difference in understanding between the artists and particularly ArtsMatrix staff regarding the terms “artist” and “creative practitioner”. When asked how they would like to be described for this research, eleven of the nineteen artists interviewed chose “artist” followed by a more specific defining term such as “performance” “photographer” or “lecturer”. Two did not want a description. For Artist D, the challenge of being simultaneously an artist and a curator with responsibility for an arts space, created difficulties regarding understandings of artist and understandings of career:

Because I don't profile myself as an artist within the city in a straightforward way, I am not seen like that... people prefer to see me identified. I have to be clearly defined one way or the other which is really annoying... I am still doing lots of practices, using teaching and curating as a way of living as an artist, enriching my way of working as an artist. I need a range of experiences. I am not an artist in a garret the whole time, nor am I teaching the whole time, the activities are interlinked. I learn a lot from them (students) as they do from me.

“Creative practitioner” is used by ArtsMatrix staff sometimes in preference to “artist” and sometimes interchangeably. Following DCMS guidelines, the term “creative practitioner” includes arts professionals (administrators, curators, heads of services, freelance facilitators, developers), as well as artists, writers, designers, makers and advertising copywriters. ArtsMatrix say they use it because it allows a wider understanding of people working in the creative industries sector, and aligns with policy makers' language discussed in Chapter One, whilst simultaneously bridging and translating into a language that ACE and other agencies can understand. Whilst there is a shared company usage and understanding of “creative practitioner”, my question to

ArtsMatrix staff, "What does 'artist' mean to you?", provoked highly individualised opinions regarding the theory and the practice of being an "artist":

It is a problematic term...It used to mean beret, pallet, oils and frock, visual arts...Now it means they perform something creative... I don't see the connection between "arts" and "artists". I stick to "creative practitioner" for everything...or use "beneficiaries", that's non-specific, non-denominatory...With the RDA<sup>3</sup> it is about...creative practice in a business link. We need non-limiting terms. (Director – ArtsMatrix)

Some of ArtsMatrix staff defined "artist" as a state of mind or intention, as much as what an artist may create; others felt "artist" meant someone who creates an end product. ArtsMatrix Project Director described an "artist" as "someone whose main work is creative production".

Understandings of how "creative practitioners" are part of the economic industry were embedded in many of the statements given by ArtsMatrix staff about "artists". Some were controversial. Success was understood by some as financially orientated; in contrast, Gloucester's PDC suggested:

If money is the most important thing then you are not an artist... You don't choose to be an artist. It's not a lucrative practice.

The PDC for Bristol (who had previously been PDC for Wiltshire) noted that:

In particular Wiltshire people described themselves by activity – e.g. illustrator, community artist etc...it is very rare for anyone to say "I am an artist". People in Wiltshire...see artist as a term for someone living in London who is incredibly successful. There is modesty about their own achievements. If they are not a visual artist, they feel excluded by the term...

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<sup>3</sup> Regional Development Agency (RDA).

The PDC for Gloucester felt her job is *not* to think from an artist's perspective, but to "provide a reality checkpoint, to sometimes talk about economics."

In direct contrast, none of the artists interviewed chose to use the term "creative practitioner". To those interviewed, "artist" can encompass all contemporary art forms, and can be applied equally to a jeweller, performance artist, writer, lighting designer, live art practitioner and so on, as to a visual artist. These sub-category labels are often used by practitioners and administrators alike to imply a more specific skill base than the less specific term "artist". An artistic director of a theatre company is unlikely to call themselves an "artist"; s/he is "artistic director". Puppeteers and animators tend to describe themselves as "puppeteer", "animator", not as "artists". Generally the term "artist" is used by those who have the confidence of knowing that this title has a value to themselves, and may be meaningful to others:

I have come to a way of thinking that "artist" really is genuinely a type of person almost, and I've accepted that. There's a slight sense of yes, I'm an artist, what am I going to do with it now? (Artist M)

Artist T suggested:

Personally I try – not always successfully – to make art with the kind of integrity I'm talking about...Ultimately for me art has to move my soul in some way – either through beauty or by being challenged or provoked. It's life enhancing. If the result is greater than the sum of the conscious efforts of the creator then perhaps it comes from a true artist.<sup>4</sup>

Most artists were concerned that their practice could speak for them (by looking at the work produced) rather than a description of their "title". Artist K observed:

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<sup>4</sup> Email to the author, 21 December 2006.

ArtsMatrix's language and set of terms is delivering to them in their language. We're always talking in their language, but we develop language through practice...it is a real difficulty of definitions. They are working with precedents laid down by funding bodies, the lottery etc; and have audit sheets, and make responses to social inclusion or economic regeneration agendas.

## Mid-career

I'm uncomfortable with the terms "mid-career", "cpd". I feel that it is attempting to define the ineffable. (Artist N)

ArtsMatrix staff used the term, and found it difficult to describe exactly what they meant, but most felt they "knew 'mid-career' when they saw it."

The PDC for Plymouth described mid-career in terms of years of practice and experience, yet lack of confidence:

They might have a certain type of experience under their belt, and have taken certain risks and journeys in their work and met the market. They are not necessarily confident; they have a huge lack of confidence about the changes they want to make.

Dorset's PDC conversely described someone who has achieved a significant amount of their goals and is comfortable and confident about what they are doing and where they are situated. Gloucestershire's PDC described someone who is earning a living at least part-time from their practice, and has a profile. Notions of mid-career were linked by ArtsMatrix staff to creative success as defined in some way through scale or number of contracts, commissions, performances, collaborations, work sold, work undertaken, etc. They have built a *body of experience* and are not a beginner, or emergent. Whilst very few artists or administrators felt that age had anything to do with mid-career, at least five to ten years in practice with an "established" body of work was a common statement of what was considered mid-career.

Who decides what “established” means, or how often one has worked on one’s practice during those five to ten years is more difficult to define. The PDC for Wiltshire thought “established” was past mid-career. ArtsMatrix Project Director said:

Some careers are abruptly cut short (Keats, Rimbaud) and the length of the career itself defines what is “mid-career”...artists, once established, are almost always “mid-career”.

Most people described a state of continuing to question, explore and practise, of not starting from the beginning, of having transferable skills, experience and success.

Bristol’s PDC noted that the term mid-career is “used by people like us rather than practising artists.” Plymouth’s PDC found it relatively straightforward to list people she considered to be mid-career South West based artists.

In the visual arts, BVAC’s Project Manager suggested that

“Established artist” describes a small group of people who are commercially or professionally successful and have an established exhibition record... The YBAs (Young British Artists) are a good example of those becoming established before 40 years of age. Often in the 25-30 year age group artists are just out of graduate school...and become established between the ages of 40 and 50.

A visual artist’s exhibition record may suggest where they are in their career trajectory.

A move into more “established” spaces may evidence a shift in their practice. The (visual) art ecology is interesting in that it may still use this kind of measurement to size up “success”. One staff member of ArtsMatrix had noted that some visual artists tend to be “gallery obsessed”. Perhaps this is not surprising given the level of significance that a major show can have on a career. BVAC’s Project Manager makes the point:

In the visual arts an artist may have had a consistent body of work, and be respected and recognised for that work in what are considered to be “serious spaces” – e.g. Whitechapel, Serpentine, Arnolfini,

Camden Arts. It is clear that many people won't end up at the age of 70 having had a retrospective at the Tate.

The PDC for Devon commented:

Different practices call for different mid-careers; it is very dependent on art forms. Theatre Directors never get past mid-career. There is never a "post" bit, every production is totally different...they are always going to be in mid-career...In the corporate world...you start as a minion with everything to learn, and characters and personalities to navigate, then you aim to climb the ladder. How does that relate to the art world if at all? Your career is as a journey and it is difficult to define that from an economic perspective.

This PDC, no longer working for ArtsMatrix, also practised as an artist and was prompted by my request for interview with her to re-contact three artists who she felt were mid-career, and who had been to see her in her PDC capacity. She then put them in contact with me. One of those artists was Artist T, who noted:

My definition changes as I get older. I feel I am probably in mid-career (it will be thirty years of potting in two years time) but am not sure when I got there. I also think I may still be "mid-career" when I'm in my seventies! For some this is more of a talent issue than an age one. I think, if pressed, it could be the point at which an artist is recognised as being well established in their field of expertise. Some though, never come to light so maybe it's more to do with feeling mature enough to be able to make the art we want to - the point at which outside influence becomes less important than one's own personal artistic direction...I haven't convinced myself with either of those definitions.

Many artists described their practices in terms of momentum, rather than a career progression upwards. Artist E said:

What's going to terminate mid career? You always think that you are beginning, reinventing yourself. Work changes, and you develop new techniques. I'm not an abject beginner, I have been working for twenty years or so, but how do you judge where you are? How can you say that you are mid career? I can't imagine how you can say it...I can see it denotes a maturity, you've been around doing it,

therefore it is to have some ideas about what you're doing, a mature attitude towards it.

Artist J said "I never really feel 'mid-career' as new things are always starting".

Only Artist M answered with a categorical "yes" to the question "Are you mid-career?" and then expanded with:

I have been creating skies and weather for ten years now. It has been growing and developing and changing slightly. I have had two solo shows in London, one very recently, and I'm getting some sense of closure on that subject matter that I have been working with for the last ten years. I chose to go to Stroud and do a HND in Fine Art. However that was discontinued after the first year, and I have been put on a Foundation degree instead... I can't go on forward. I feel like going into a bit of a reflective phase; the next phase of my career is coming up, but I don't know what it's going to be. Not me as a painter of weather. It feels a bit like a mid life crisis, but it's not a crisis, it's far more exciting, far more open than a crisis. But it is an evaluation, flitting around the research, learning; taking in time, rather than giving out time.

This artist who had been working for at least ten years (but as an arts officer not as a full time artist) had seen a need to apply for a HND in Fine Art, linked to a perceived self defined need to reflect and learn, and a clear sense of being in a "mid" place. On prompting, the artist said that the Foundation degree was disappointing. They wanted feedback on their practice:

I feel over experienced to be a student in some ways. I got a lot out of it in the first term, but then the second and third term they moved the building and it has been very disruptive, and I need to feel that I am getting the input that I signed up for.

Whilst some ArtsMatrix staff felt that mid-career was a comfortable place, for most of the artists interviewed it was "continually uncomfortable", as Artist H described it:

I live with the notion of being continually uncomfortable, there is nowhere to get. There are places to go (career wise) but they're not

necessarily any better.... In terms of my practice, I feel comfortable with it. But it's constantly changing and I don't want not to be challenged. I am always challenging myself in that...

Artist D discussed ten year cycles of change:

I was at the beginning ten years ago. It has come full cycle. I am re-starting to look at my career now. I belong to a different art world which is not the one around a few years ago. I am prepared to start again... It's re-inventing yourself. Mid-career is a total construct. Career goes through all sorts of phases, depending on where you're at. Life has a tremendous ability to trip you up...it is not a progression. That goes against what it is really about...The purpose of being an artist.

Most artists interviewed had difficulty with the concept of one "career", explaining that if any career was in evidence at all they were unsure of where they may be in it, but knew it was not at the beginning.

I have been in a series of careers, sometimes they overlap and cross fertilise. Sometimes I'm almost forced to keep them separate. (Artist A)

One artist felt they had entered a far more stable "place" in their practice, becoming in their own terms "an elder". This "stable place" included mentoring work with the next generation of artists. Artist F said:

I am very clear about who I am and where I am. I am clearer than I've ever been. There has been a consistent thread even though I am maverick and have worked outside systems. See my body of work, and whether you like my work or not, you can't argue with the weight of it... there is something quite gratifying about realising you've got that weight in your 50's. A sense of entering a phase of your life and taking responsibility, of being an "elder", the responsibility of that.

Notions of success were also linked to career; for example, when success is achieved, the safety of being unknown disappears and is replaced with another kind of

unknowingness, an uncertainty of where one might go next. Artist B, a published writer, said:

I can't see around the bends. It is like a blind jump on a horse. I am perpetually terrified, and fear has become my companion. There is no more safety; being unknown was safe, now I'm out in the world.

Artist H discussed the idea of "making *it*" (achieving some kind of success), and then realising that "it's not *it*," so "you just keep going".

My career started again almost from scratch; ten years ago...I gave up painting after I moved here (Stroud). Being older, I felt that I didn't have this naïve idea of what a career might be, which follows that path of: emerge, be discovered, get famous...etc. By the time I had "re-invented" my career, I realised there's no such thing as "making it". I had been selling work in galleries in London for £4-5,000 a piece. I went through that...The notion of a career ladder doesn't have any meaning for me, and even if you appear to have "made it", it doesn't work like that anyway, because you're always aware of what you want or need to do next. You never get to a point where you have just "made it". So the notion of being "mid-way" is a red herring...Thinking about it makes me think of being "middle-aged" and I try to avoid that! (Artist H)

Three artists (H, D and M) marked ten years, and Artist E, twenty years, as a significant amount of time within their practice. Artist K said they felt like a part-time artist:

...because I do other things, but not associated with my practice. I am less than half-time, it goes in fits and starts, it is not half my income.

Artist K had also worked on the organisation of a South West based arts project where artists were invited to apply either as an "emergent artist" or "established artist".

Someone whom they knew applied and even though they "had practiced as a photographer for years" had applied as an *emergent* artist and was asked to reapply as an *established* one. The necessity of having a certain confidence in your practice is alluded to directly and indirectly by artists and administrators throughout this research.

In summary, it appears that a mid-career artist is someone who has been working on their practice or practices on a regular basis for some time. They are experienced, they might have already started mentoring others, or are involved in other networks and cohorts. They have a burgeoning collection of skills and expertise and may be lecturing or teaching others in artistic practice. They probably earn at least half of their living from their artistic practice and have done so for quite some time: seven to ten years, maybe fifteen years, maybe thirty. They may have had a career break, but they are practising, they are immersed in their practice; it has duration. In other words, they are in momentum and continuum, but not necessarily one constituting a straightforward and upward trajectory. Success for experienced artists is an ongoing journey, not an "I've made it". Success might be read differently if one of your books won the Man Booker Prize, or your CD was nominated for the Mercury Music Prize, but these are still only pivotal markers in a complex continuum of being metaphorically on an artist's journey.

Mid-career is something that perhaps can be defined in retrospect, when it is irreversible. Changes take place in life, in ambition, and in pace. A move from a location where structures, resources and organisations of support are familiar to one in which they are unfamiliar, can make a huge difference on career both positively and negatively. Women (and some men) have chosen to have a career break and look after children, or their motivations have changed. For example, some artists may wish to gain, or pay off, a mortgage, or their children have reached university age, and the motivation to earn money at a more predictable, continuous and higher level takes priority. This is a prevailing issue for most self-employed people without the benefits of employer support. As I suspected prior to these interviews, if "mid-career" was used, it was often used interchangeably with "established".

## **The South West**

I interviewed artists and providers, questioning them on the idea of a South West.

Responses were varied and individual, combining experiences gained through working practices with those of personal circumstances. Both sets of interviews cited the South West as somewhere where choice regarding creativity and lifestyle may take precedent over financial gain.

### **Artists speaking about the South West**

I asked artists whether they were from the South West originally. Three of the nineteen artists interviewed were born in the South West, over half have stayed for ten years or more, with seven residing in the region for over twenty years. Those not born in the South West were connected through family living in the region, or an embedded practice of annual family holidays to the region, or had attended college or university in the South West (for example, moving to undertake an MA at Bath Spa University, or a BA at Bristol University). One artist moved to the area because of Dartington College of Arts. Conversely some had moved away in order to undertake a BA or MA, and then returned. For example:

I was constantly moving house due to rented accommodation. I moved away when I was 23 from Portsmouth, to go back to college again, then away to Nottingham for an Arts Degree, then back for holidays to work, then away to Holland for two years, then back to Notts, then Brighton, London, East Sussex, and back to Glastonbury for the last five years. (Group Artist)

Some have remained rooted:

I studied in Bristol from being eighteen. Then I didn't move from there until about ten to twelve years ago when I moved to Exeter. So

all my adult life I have lived somewhere that's called the South West.  
(Artist A)

When asked why they had moved to where they are living now, the reasons (personal, artistic, practical or other) were often a mix. Artist G suggested it was for artistic reasons, observing: "Commissions, the artists' community and later working at university has 'kept me' here." Artist M responded:

A bit of all of them. Personal and practical. I bought a house for the first time... My partner is from this area. Also artistic reasons; I became a full time artist for the first time last year, when I moved to Stroud. I had a job as an arts coordinator in prisons in London that had come to a natural end. I felt that Stroud was a supportive community to be an artist; I know a lot of people out there are making a living out of their art, and are not caught up in the city rat race.

Perception of what the South West means resonated at a high pitch of individuality, dependent on artistic practice and sense of place in the region:

It's home. I know where I am. (Artist E)

I have work in Cardiff, and a lot of my work is made in the place I am working in. It might be Tel-Aviv, Armenia, Melbourne, Penzance. A lot of my recent work has been done specifically in relation to a context I'm working with. (Artist D)

Working upstairs at home, walking to the studio, practising at sites near their home, or further afield, the artists all had differing opinions on what the South West offered them, dependent on their location and working practices. Some felt a move to the South West had supported them to reinvent themselves, to change direction and pace, or that their family located them in a "place" where they have put down strong roots. For a few, it is "just where I have always been." For one, it was a "gateway" enabling possibilities to create temporary spaces all over the world. For another it was potentially

limiting, with a fantastic support system for when they were starting out as an artist, but now, a lack of support because they are no longer “new”.

When asked whether there is “a South West influence to your work”, some artists talked poetically and practically about specific distinctive places. Many of the artists were engaging directly with their localities but not exclusively so. Twelve of the artists felt that there was a South West influence, two did not, with another commenting “not yet”. One felt strongly that the South West was the *root* of all their work, not only the influence. Artist H did not know but felt that key themes shaping their practice were locality, place, interpretations, and identity through place, yet said “my work isn’t dependent on being here”. Artist H added:

My practice is shaped by place and locality, but not the South West... I’m involved in ALIAS as well, which has a South West region based remit.<sup>5</sup> It’s completely arbitrary. My practice has developed in Barcelona and Croatia in the last few years. It becomes harder and harder to even think in regional terms. Localities...are almost globally connected together. Personally and in terms of practice, how I view notions of community that I might be part of, I could say the same about my connections / affinity with Penzance / Cornwall as I could about my connections / affinity with Barcelona.

Artist A who felt an absence of South West influence explained:

So all my adult life I have lived somewhere that’s called the South West. But there is no vision of it as a region, or any legitimacy as a region. I have lots of close and detailed connections with local places and detailed and localised connections to relatively far flung places. For example, I regularly visit Munich. But almost never visit Barnstaple. I’m not sure I’m able to recognise the regional effect on me nor particularly able to feel the regional placing myself. On the other hand, I’m working on a project at the moment ...in the little bit of South Devon where I do this I do have an identity. People recognise me.

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<sup>5</sup> Please see Appendix 1 CPD providers for a description of ALIAS.

For some, the proximity to the sea, or the colour or texture of the earth evidenced topophilia. Four artists noted the colour of the earth. Artist T said: "There is room for me... I like the fact that many of the materials I use are dug up only a few miles away."

Artist M said:

River Severn Mud is my particular thing, my particular material.  
Living down here, I began to use it ...

Artist E said:

I can't imagine living anywhere else in Britain. It's the red earth around me... I feel totally at home.

Both Artist F and Artist C felt that their work "belongs to this place", while Artist E saw the South West as incidental. Group Artist M talked about their "sphere of influence" being international. Artist J said:

I don't think that one can make the same kind of informed site-related work about a place unless you have deep roots into that place. This is not to say that one can't make excellent, very interesting site-related work in other places and we do this. But there is a different kind of quality to that work. It doesn't draw on that close relationship and so has to acknowledge that there isn't the same intimate knowledge of the place.

Artist H said

I find it hard to talk about the notion of the South West. Moving to Stroud was a major influence. I re-invented my whole practice from here, a complete change of context. It was a lot to do with time and place and getting involved with SVA artspace. I had been living in Hackney...doing paintings. I had a studio with SPACE studios, and was doing o.k., but I didn't engage with the art scene at all. I moved here, and then over three or four years I was getting interested in critical practice... Previously on my graduation I had been selected for a show at the Serpentine. Such a sad experience, I stopped working after that for five years, and went travelling. Then I started painting again, after travelling. So I had a conventional painting career in the middle of all this.

A sense of a scarcity of networks or community in the South West was discussed often: Artist E noted good exhibition spaces are somewhat thin on the ground. Artist F said colleagues in the region had been hard to find and were much needed. Artist D (living in Bristol) felt the region was “incredibly competitive” (from the perspective of Bristol as an “urban cultural centre”, in contrast to those artists who live in rural areas which has a different impact on the experience of isolation and competitiveness). Artist K bemoaned the “limiting factor” of the dearth of a critical mass of people to come and see things outside of Bristol, and a lack of suitable buildings and resources. Artist M visited London for “a buzz”, and a challenge to practice better. Artist F felt the South West needed more “creative exchange” in their specific areas of dance and movement practice. Artist D said:

The South West is on a bit of a limb. It is incredibly competitive. Rural artists are going on about city based artists. Lecturers are trying to increase research points by trying to show wherever they can. It is also inward looking in that sense... Consultants are being paid by ACE to advise the same people across the South West on the same funds that everyone knows about and is going for anyway. It is a peculiar set up.

Artist H questioned:

Is it any harder in London? Being based in the South West area does affect me and my practice. And although all the arts funding is now supposed to be homogenised, it is hard to tell whether the grass is greener on the other side of the fence. Looking at opportunities in other regions a few years back, fairly consistently it seemed to me there was more going on. I'm not sure now, it's changed. In terms of it not hampering things, it comes down to those specific bodies and personalities that are encompassed by the construct of a South West region.

For many, the South West starts at Devon. One artist commented: “What’s Bournemouth and Dorset about? I don’t get it. They’re somewhere else.” Or Devon was perceived as a place passed through in order to get to Cornwall.

Artist H discussed the word “regional”, citing Cornwall as an example of a place reinventing itself using the concept of “peripheral” positively.<sup>6</sup> Artist H had heard a speech by Sir Nicholas Serota with Cornwall Arts Marketing at Realising Creative Cornwall, and observed:<sup>7</sup>

Cornwall is very successfully pushing the notion of peripheral identity, and using the notion of political peripheries as a positive marketing strategy... For example: “we are different because we are so on the edge geographically and creatively”... And it works. Because of the geography.

By contrast, Artist H’s description of Gloucestershire

is closer to the centre of England, but in a fashionable or marketable sense it is even more peripheral. It can’t even identify itself with that notion of being geographically, i.e. *really*, peripheral....

I like to think of this as the “Inner Periphery”, which becomes actually more peripheral because of its relative proximity to a notional centre. Just not been peripheral enough, we can’t even exploit our selves as being an exotic other.

Significantly Artist H saw Gloucestershire as “phenomenally badly served”, and yet saw a flipside represented in Stroud Valleys Artspace (SVA), a building-based artist-led organisation located in Gloucestershire which is the northernmost sub-region within ACE South West geographical area. SVA organise an annual “site” festival with open studios and associated contemporary arts events and, since 2005, a discussion series titled “In Negotiation”.

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<sup>6</sup> In 2008 Cornwall also launched a bid to be European Regional Capital of Culture.

<sup>7</sup> Nicholas Serota, Director of Tate, “Realising Creative Cornwall”, 7 July 2007. A conversation between cultural leaders, policy makers and artists, seeking to provide a national context for Cornwall’s developing understanding of the use of culture as a social and economic driver at the heart of the Convergence Programme. Peter Boyden, Chair of Culture South West also spoke.

In the introductory discussion to site06, an initial attempt was made to define what makes the Stroud district so accommodating to so many artists. To sustain the situation SVA asserted that:

...it is essential to promote arts activities that not only acknowledge a plurality of positions, but also encourage an environment where debate between those positions can flourish.<sup>8</sup>

Artist H perceived that their location in Stroud affected their identity as an artist.

I am personally in a position where I can invent...with other people. It's a small pond thing with average sized fish. I am primarily interested in the primary audience for my work, and working with other people rather than a career path move. I can't do any better than working in a place like this. I've got direct contact with a broad audience of people...but working in a small place...I have to travel a lot.

Artist G, located in Plymouth, felt:

The South West has a slower pace and feels less dynamic in comparison to big cities with more arts infrastructure and perhaps less geographically remote cities.

Two artists felt that they inhabit locations in which the pace is slower, but not all artists agreed. Artist G clarified that the South West is not necessarily slow by default, but:

compared to cities like London, Amsterdam, Barcelona etc; where things happen quickly and it is "easier" to arrange meetings, meet other colleagues in the arts (there are more venues), perhaps because more is going on, or people have a "speedier" attitude to get on with things.

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<sup>8</sup> Colin Glen and Dominic Thomas "In Negotiation" site06. Stroud Valley Artspace were founded in 1997 to promote and support artists working in the area. Based on John Street in Stroud, in 2008 they completed a major redesign to become a contemporary arts resource offering space, facilities and support. website: [sva.org.uk](http://sva.org.uk)

## **Providers speaking about the South West**

Many of the providers offered similar sentiments to the artists. Bristol's PDC said:

South West doesn't mean a great deal to people in Wiltshire.  
Swindon associates to the East: Oxford, Hampshire, London.  
Wiltshire people would come West to Bristol, but only as far as that.  
Wiltshire feels on the edge, forgotten about. It is on the periphery of  
decision making.

BVAC's Project Manager noted the disconnection of the region:

It is a very arbitrarily geographically defined area...a problematic and  
unwieldy region...with huge issues for travel, and which doesn't look  
for a relationship to the West e.g. Swansea / Cardiff – they are not on  
the radar.

Providers and artists both stressed the wide variation of transport provision in the  
region. For example, Bristol and Stroud were perceived as strongly geographically  
placed with good transport links to London, the Midlands, the North, and Wales.

Devon was perceived as sprawling with challenges to access. Dorset's PDC remarked:  
"Communities are so different county to county it makes it difficult for ArtsMatrix to  
have general consensus."

The two major cities of Bristol and Plymouth were perceived differently. Bristol is seen  
by BVAC to have a tremendous potential as the regional centre for visual arts. The  
proximity to London is a real pull:

You can live here and have a London profile...It is affordable and  
liveable. The quality of life is quite good (and is a draw for artists),  
and there are good quality people working down here.

Providers generally suggested that the status of markets for artists in the region was  
widely diverse, with a marked variation in needs in different art forms. This led to

diverse opinions on whether the region supported practice (or not). For example: in Plymouth the PDC observed a developed Live Art scene demonstrating a high quality of work. Another PDC discussed the difficulties of comparing artists with one another given their diverse locations. Bristol's PDC felt that whilst artists may perceive a "parochial" South West:

You can make things happen in this city that perhaps you couldn't in London...

Yet, Bristol's PDC also felt that artists did not look "outwards":

There is a lack of interest in what goes on in other regions. Instead of looking outwards elsewhere, they (artists) think it should be made possible to sell work in their own places. It is a challenge to get people to think regionally, but movement is necessary in the region.

Gloucester's PDC also perceived a parochial South West, citing the Forest of Dean in Gloucestershire as an example and criticising artists in general for a lack of aspiration:

It is part of its charm...Forest of Dean artists can see travelling to Gloucester as difficult, therefore how are they ever going to get work out?...They very rarely think about London or abroad. International is out of the picture.

This point of view markedly contrasts with Artist H's opinion of Gloucestershire described above.

There was little evidence of need for ArtsMatrix PDC advice sessions in Wiltshire and Gloucester. Wiltshire was described as "struggling"; the number of creative practitioners booking sessions in Wiltshire had fallen since the initial set up of First Stop Shop PDCs in 2003. Conversely, critical mass around Bristol and Plymouth, particularly in Bristol, was evidenced by waiting lists for the same advice service (but conducted by a different PDC). A number of contemporary arts organisations situated

in Bristol were cited as positively affecting the dynamism of the city, and a critical mass of arts practitioners. Those mentioned were Bristol Community Development Partnership, Theatre Bristol, Dance Bristol, and BVAC; other organisations such as Spike Island, Arnolfini, Situations, and Picture This, were seen to be pushing the boundaries of practice, as organisations which were “ambitious” on a national and international level.<sup>9</sup>

## **Artists and providers discussing Higher Education and Local Authorities**

Both artists and PDCs remarked on the effect that good pro-active, dynamic and experienced Local Authority Arts Officers can have on provision to artists.

The support of Higher and Further Education institutions and Local Authorities for artists in different parts of the region was perceived to be diverse, with each institution operating with different policies and priorities creating different levels and types of support for different practices. In Dorset the PDC suggested that artist-led practice was scarce, with artists reliant on Local Authority Officers to develop networking initiatives.

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<sup>9</sup> **Bristol Cultural Development Partnership** promotes new artistic and cultural developments of national significance in Bristol. It runs conferences, research projects and initiatives that celebrate the creative potential of Bristol, including the Creative Bristol programme.  
**Theatre Bristol** is a partnership with a member-based website, open to any individual or organisation partaking in any aspect of theatre activity in Greater Bristol. It aims to ensure that the “theatre ecology” of Bristol is as healthy as it can be.  
**Dance Bristol** supports and develops all types of dance at all levels across Bristol.  
**Spike Island** in Bristol is a national centre for the production and exhibition of contemporary visual art.  
**Situations** is a Bristol based research and commissioning programme devised to investigate the significance of place and context in the commissioning and production of contemporary art.  
**Picture This** is a moving image project agency that commissions contemporary visual arts works and produces exhibitions, publications and touring initiatives.

With the exception of a few “incubator” initiatives in the South West, PDCs commented on an apparent lack of support to artists once they graduated. PDCs also observed that no information provided was “mid-career” specific. Staff suggested that some Higher Education Institutions might potentially create uninspired and ill-prepared graduates; some suggested training may not have been experiential enough or facilitated well enough. In the artists’ interviews, those who discussed HEIs did so in a number of ways; some lecture in those institutions, and feel that their University supports their practice; some perceived lecturing as a necessity, which took time away from their practice; a few had gone back to thinking about attending a University course (such as an MA or PhD); and to some, HEIs were not felt to be particularly relevant to their practice.

In the midst of this stage of research, a number of informal conversations with experienced artists yielded anecdotal comments on HEIs, for example:

I’m mid-career, I’m thinking about doing an MA. That’s such a mid-career thing to do.<sup>10</sup>

Considering “doing an MA” came at a time when this artist was also applying for international residencies, and had been mentoring other artists for some time. This artist felt that they had reached a point where they wanted to formally develop their practice via an MA, which is a recognised language or code of expertise. However, three recent conversations with friends who were all in 2007 in the middle of MAs (collaborative practice, creative writing and photography respectively) showed all three to be deeply unhappy with the quality of the provision, and levels of experience of their peers doing

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<sup>10</sup> Talking to two artists at “I am your worst nightmare”, a platform for regional Live Art practitioners organised at the Arnolfini, Bristol, 17-18 March 2007. One artist was already enrolled on an MA, and the other one is quoted.

the same MA (for example, the person undertaking collaborative practice had over ten years experience as a national and international artist, and was in a cohort with new graduates. The course leaders had not developed sufficient individualised provision to support the various levels of knowledge in the cohort). Despite, in all cases, thorough research from the artists, none of the MAs were delivering at the level expected. It seems that a lack of confidence in their own ability as artists (and in one case they felt they had been given poor professional development advice) led to an inability to perceive the quality or level of their own bodies of experience, before entering the MA, and were unable to compare their level of expertise with others. The ideal of the MA offered them permission, space and resources to practice, time to spend experimenting on work that they did not previously give themselves permission to do, in addition to peer and supervisor critical feedback. These artists who chose MAs admit now that their dissatisfaction is possibly to do with their “post MA level status”; they have more practical and “life” experience than they expected.<sup>11</sup>

The leader of an in-development MA at Lancaster University, where the course is aimed at mid-career artists, told me that take up from this area is proving difficult.<sup>12</sup> Recent graduates are applying, not those with the ten years plus experience that they hoped to recruit.

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<sup>11</sup> Schon’s work on “knowing-in-practice” is discussed in Chapter Two, and is linked to these findings.

<sup>12</sup> In conversation with Matthew Fenton at “Creativity and Employability”, LIPA (Liverpool Institute of Performing Arts), 27-29 March 2008.

## Finding space

Whilst discussing CPD and the South West, finding and negotiating affordable, flexible, working space in the region was cited by PDCs as a key issue for some artists as was a lack of access to equipment and resources for making. This is also a major issue for those in other regions.<sup>13</sup> PDCs commented on ethical and sustainable building practices and planning laws for listed buildings as further challenges for South West based artists considering workspace. In Wiltshire, despite a proliferation of emerging networks set up by the Arts Development Officer, the PDC highlighted a lack of infrastructure as the key challenge. For example, Swindon Dance was felt to be an excellent resource, but an equivalent to Spike Island, or Mivart Street Studios did not exist (both are Bristol based studio spaces for artists; Spike includes a significant gallery space and contemporary exhibition programme).

ArtsMatrix staff particularly perceived an aspirant South West art ecology, with a wealth of talented people sparking creativity, and home to organisations with strong environmental values.<sup>14</sup> Some staff considered the landscape as “beautiful”, “attractive”, “inspirational”, where “like minded” people live, and perceived a greater tolerance for artists amongst non-practitioners, a nurturing and understanding (some suggested “respectful”) environment, and a slower pace of living compared to London.

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<sup>13</sup> Keith Hackett, *The Future of Creative Workspaces Seminar*, 10 November 2006, Tate Modern, London. This seminar discussed the complexities of workspaces for artists, evidencing London as a case study.

<sup>14</sup> For example, Bristol is the headquarters for Wildscreen, the Soil Association, and Sustrans, as well as the BBC wildlife unit. The headquarters for Schumacher College are further south in Devon. Sustrans is the UK's leading sustainable transport charity, and has a vision for a world in which people can choose to travel in ways that benefit their health and the environment. The Wildscreen Festival is the world's largest, most prestigious and influential event for the wildlife and environmental filmmaking industry, and celebrated its 25th anniversary in 2007. The soil association is an environmental charity promoting sustainable, organic farming and championing human health. Schumacher College is an international centre for ecological studies based in Devon, and in 2007 offered various courses including an MSc in Holistic Science.

Localised perceptions, myopia, and the idea of a parochial South West were commented on by some artists and providers. The ongoing tendency to divide the South West into “rural” and “urban” was a thread running through the interviews.

Stroud and St Ives were both cited as exceptional pockets for drawing in artists with strong perceived artist communities, and a significant part of the economy deriving from cultural tourism. Various individual developments such as the Steiner School in Stroud were noted as forces bringing in new residents and contributing to positive places for artists to be. However, BVAC’s Project Manager described the negative side effects of this, using St Ives as an example:

The long St Ives arts tradition has led to a feeling that it has engendered a culture of artists that haven’t moved on. There is a tension between urban and rural (for example, Bristol and St Ives) ... This is a complicated and contentious issue. People get angry about that, but artists in St Ives can make a good living.

It was noted that it is probably easier to be a certain type of artist (for example, a visual artist, designer or maker) in the South West, but more challenging, for example, to be a dancer or choreographer.

PDCs discussed the impact of geographical location on artists’ ambition. Dorset’s PDC suggested that in Dorset people were unambitious: “there are lots of mid-career mediocre people” and perceived that staying in Dorset could be frustrating for those with more ambition. She also suggested:

...most people need basic time management, marketing principles, contextualising themselves, gaining a broader opinion of where they are at. Most people I see fit in that category and are 40 plus years. They tick by, make a living, but are not particularly ambitious. Others who are in a more ambitious mould tend to be younger.

Since August 2006 when Gloucestershire's PDC took up post, she had seen a strong visual arts bias, and only a few people who had "always been artists":

These few had websites, and were set up. They had sold some work and were talking like any expert in their field would. They were not super ambitious, but they had been around, and they understand what's realistic, and what's not achievable.

ArtsMatrix Project Director suggested that the region "might foster a little bit of flabbiness" around one's craft, that aspiration and ambition may be curtailed:

Choosing to move here, it may mean by definition that you are less ambitious in a worldly sense. If you really wanted to make it (economically) and had burning ambition you would move to somewhere like London...If you have already made it, you can come here and continue to pursue your career at a high level (e.g. Dawn French). If you grew up in the region and want to make it, you feel you have to leave to make contacts and establish networks. You can emerge here, and can end your career here once established, but in the middle, it is really hard to be here if you want a high flying career.

It became clear to me that ArtsMatrix staff's own perception of artists' ambition or their imagining of possible successes for artists corresponded with their own experiences, and their ability to receive and give advice regarding what is achievable. There were times during the interviews when I disagreed with the observations. For example, the above quote regarding a need to move to London does not correspond with some of the artists' interview comments regarding how they perceive London. In addition, Richard Long, who attended art college at St. Martins in London and has a "high flying" career as a land-based artist, returned to near Bristol and continues to be successfully based in the region.

## **Artists and providers discussing the South West and London**

The subject of London appeared repeatedly in interviews. Some artists talked about ignoring London, others looked to London, whilst some looked provocatively away from London building relationships with other regions, and internationally. Artist H had moved to Stroud from London:

I started setting up projects and things here, stating categorically that I was going to bypass London. I go Stroud to international. My work is really Malmo, Barcelona, Zagreb, Portugal, France. London is close and easy to get to; Bristol is difficult for public transport. I am making a conscious decision not to compete there [London]; there is no point.

Artist G and E, both photographers, looked to London. Artist G said:

I do feel a stronger need to get more work out to international exhibitions, make publications and aspire to a “higher” profile. At the moment, the South West is a good region to be in, but I also need to put effort into travelling to London and other cities for networking and exhibition opportunities.

The PDC for Dorset revealed that visual artists, as a client group, dominated her work and tended to look more to London:

The visual artists are tending to work in an abstract / conceptual way that doesn't have a market in Bournemouth. They are in a catch 22. London is then assumed to be the next place to go, but it is much bigger, and is not necessarily the right direction.

BVAC's Project Manager discussed the British Art Show which came to Bristol in 2006:

London has a London-centric approach, and is one of the centres for the art market. The message from the British Art Show could still be understood as: “Here is *London*, we get this stuff all the time, so we don't need to show it in here in London. We can just take it out *to* the regions and show them British art.”

Artist H did acknowledge, however, that people travelled from London to see his recent show.

## CPD

As observed in Chapter One, ArtsMatrix continuously maps CPD provision, and yet providing information on provision does not necessarily fill the need for supply of provision itself. Each ArtsMatrix PDC detailed their knowledge in their local areas. They considered provision to be inconsistent at both local and regional level, and inconsistent in content and subject matter. Yet ArtsMatrix Project Director suggested that the UK as a whole had good CPD provision: “We don’t want to create it here when we can send people elsewhere”. The PDC for Devon stated:

Professional development is not well sold as a necessity. ArtsMatrix have defined it as a necessity, telling artists they need it. But it has become an *us* and *them* situation. *Us*, selling services, a subsidiary of the “real thing”; *Them*, the artist. There is a real misconnection and disconnection between the two. Of course it is up to the individual as well. Some try to access it, but we need to empower a person to take responsibility for themselves... You’ve recognised a skills gap, you go away and do it if you want to take responsibility for your own career... it is a DIY career path. Sometimes I think ArtsMatrix work is coaching rather than (providing) advice and guidance.

In my discussions with artists, professional development was discussed throughout.

Artist M’s experience of embarking on an HND, described above, provides an example, yet Artist M did not necessarily call this “CPD”. Artist K did *name* CPD and said:

The CPD on offer isn’t what artists necessarily respond to. What they do respond to is that they see CPD as important. Artists want...to earn more, be networked etc., but we don’t want to be seen as a “beneficiary”, and how much money was created in a two-hour business surgery... Opportunities like ArtsMatrix, and others, they are all about enterprise, all about economic gain. It is a real issue.

Artist T pointed out the difficulties of freeing up time for development:

Those of us who have to survive through our art are all working our socks off just to be able to keep going and put food on the table. It's then very difficult to find good amounts of development time, freer of financial worries... Other professions in this country have mid-career sabbatical periods or can get research grants or university professorships etc. All these things would help mid-career artists and keep art "vital".

Artist A felt that what was "desperately needed" was agency-led work such as that provided by Artsadmin:<sup>15</sup>

ArtsMatrix stuff is lots of teaching type events. We don't need these. We really need help to develop work... I need someone who can put in twenty days a year... on certain key things, on the bits I leave. A project doesn't collapse if you don't do the publicity right, whereas if you don't do the budget it will collapse. I am aware that I am often playing to twenty people in intimate positions which is special. But I could be doing ten, fifteen or twenty of those shows instead. I could tap into resources. I have a lot of University teaching, writing papers, going to conferences, I arrive and talk and stay and hear the rest of it, so I don't lose the "critical discourse" side of things. I have that, but I don't have the arts admin support... the bits that move you from existing (just surviving, existing) to really taking off.

For this particular artist, an HE network provided critical discourse, but solid administrative support was lacking. Many experienced artists have anecdotally commented that they do not consider advice or training in management, or learning how to improve their own administration, particularly useful. Instead, support for experienced professionals with complementary skills such as accounts or marketing could supplement their own skills, in order to concentrate on their artwork.<sup>16</sup>

Artist N described their practice, predominantly led by mischief making and tinkering, and underpinned with their skills, integrity and awareness of their own cognitive

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<sup>15</sup> Please see Appendix 1: CPD providers.

<sup>16</sup> This is explored further in Chapters Five and Six.

processes whilst creating. This artist discussed working dynamically with created accidents and quirks, allowing an ongoing reflection. Their ability to be adept at using their knowledge to create outside of a standard “pattern”, often ending up with something very different to what was originally intended, was described as their own process of creating. Only when they were within this momentum for each creative process did they feel they could comment on what their needs might be.

The role of ArtsMatrix PDCs, and ArtsMatrix itself, is a challenging one. PDCs do not have a critiquing role, nor do they enter into discussions about the quality of an artist’s practice:

ArtsMatrix does not give feedback on creative work, because this would change the relationship and PDCs are not qualified to do this.  
(Plymouth PDC)

The critical feedback role has previously been provided by external partnership projects; in some cases by mentors, and by schemes such as Reflective Practitioner, but not by PDCs, who, working across all disciplines cannot be expected to be omniscient, nor have experiential knowledge of professional experienced artistic practice. PDCs provide support on artist’s business and advise on issues such as confidence, isolation, motivation and support strategies, not on artistic practice.

It was pointed out by PDCs that many projects and organisations external to ArtsMatrix may provide opportunities to give critical feedback, such as LADA (Live Art Development Agency), or visual arts portfolio days arranged by BVAC in a partnership approach.<sup>17</sup> One PDC thought artists found it difficult to gain good critical feedback, an

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<sup>17</sup> Please see Appendix 1 CPD providers. LADA also suggested that the language which funders may consider appropriate could be constraining to an artist’s understanding. LADA wrote: “Conventional

essential component for ongoing professional development, adding that an equally essential ability of those who do give feedback is to give it well. It was felt this skill can be underdeveloped at “high levels”: “Curators and academics...aren’t always able to give good feedback.”

PDCs discussed the wealth of information that exists on professional development, potentially leading to artists feeling overwhelmed and bombarded. Devon’s PDC noticed:

There are lots of different companies doing similar stuff, and similar overlay. It becomes confusing...Then information, advice and guidance stops and people need practical help, but that’s often not there.

A plethora of available information, advice and guidance on audience development and marketing was noted by PDCs, particularly from SWAM (South West Arts Marketing).<sup>18</sup> Only one artist (Artist A) mentioned marketing; they identified a need for professional marketing, but had not been able to identify how to pay for it.

The Data Protection Act was commented upon as impacting on data sharing issues, thwarting some cross-agency working. Coupled with a lack of time from staff, this was perceived to have created a landscape where PDCs particularly felt there were some geographical areas demonstrating good partnership working, but generally across the South West, agencies were not working together well:

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ideas of training, research and career development are often unable to effectively address how artists are supported in their artistic and professional development where process is not only critical but also inherent”. LADA: “Why a Live Art development agency?” at <<http://www.thisisliveart.co.uk>> (accessed 9 January 2007).

<sup>18</sup> SWAM rebranded in 2009 as Audiences South West.

Agencies do not seem to have a great sense of referral between each other when they are working with organisations and the arts. People are going over and over the same ground. An individual makes a call and the agency doesn't know that that person may have had the same discussion with another agency. (Bristol PDC)

I asked ArtsMatrix staff whether they tried to think from an artist's perspective, and what might be missing for mid-career artists. Key suggestions were that uneven awareness amongst artists of what CPD means created a lack of understanding of what was available to them. In parallel, they felt ArtsMatrix could be clearer about what is on offer, ensuring seminars and opportunities are couched in the right language. Many of ArtsMatrix staff recognised the challenges of being simultaneously part of the problem and the solution. The PDC for Dorset said:

Seminars may not be pitched quite right for the kind of people artists are. Is it relevant for them?

Some staff suggested that seminars are too generic, whereas mentoring and reflective practice schemes respond to the individual. The PDC for Devon felt only a small minority of artists in the South West were attending seminars and echoed the South West CPD reports detailed in Chapter Two:

There is currently blurring and confusion in what we are supposed to offer, and more specifics are needed. Skills can be accessed, but the different services around cause confusion. On the whole it is difficult to know where to go. Business links and mentoring (non arts) are still inaccessible to artists because they are not speaking the same language. (Devon PDC)

The challenge for ArtsMatrix according to the Project Director was both to “develop a culture of CPD, and to support freelancers to price work and plan time to provide adequate resources for training and development.” Staff pointed out the challenges of balancing perceived artists' needs with those needs that may concern organisational or

structural development and funders' priorities. Courses during 2006-2008 offered by ArtsMatrix Skills Development Programme focused on business practice, directed by a particular funding stream from SWRDA. BVAC's Project Manager, based at SWAM, argued that not all art could be or should be made into a business:

Entrepreneurship is great but it doesn't always support practice. The emphasis is too much on entrepreneurship. Thinking about practice as business can inhibit creativity in the name of commerce.

She also perceived an imbalance of provision particularly for those artists who are experienced:

There is a lot of practical marketing stuff, and not so much about development of practice, mentoring, and different forms of doing.

ArtsMatrix do promote a wider range of publicly available opportunities, however funding for business development has tended to be prioritised by funders (such as the RDA) instead of funding for arts practice. This is because business development and generic courses can be more readily counted as "hard" objectives rather than "soft" individualised arts development. For example, most ArtsMatrix staff were interested in professional development activity supporting artists to take risks,<sup>19</sup> yet ArtsMatrix Project Manager (SDP) noted that RDA criteria for skills development are very rigid: "Support to take risks is missing... Without being able to risk, people only value the short term. We need a more long term approach."

ArtsMatrix Project Manager observed that successful AMA (Arts Marketing Association) post-dinner "hangouts" after the main conference were more productive than the 9am – 5pm sessions, because the relaxed informality produced opportunities to

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<sup>19</sup> It is acknowledged that risk depends on the context one is in.

prompt thinking. They reflected that the incidental “sideways” outcomes in professional development courses often created a “thinking big moment” which had more impact on the participant’s experience than the course itself. Other PDCs noted Microsoft’s recognition of the value of time to tinker and try out new ideas by giving their employees twenty percent of their time free to experiment. The completed Reflective Practitioner Scheme attempted to replicate a laboratory-type environment and was cited as a model of good practice by many PDCs. Subsequently, ArtsMatrix have taken action on cohort and peer-to-peer discussion-based development of practice, such as the ESF (European Social Fund) funded Mentoring Scheme in 2005 – 2006. Both the PDCs for Plymouth and Bristol commented that this was “ArtsMatrix’s jewel in the crown”. Most of the artists involved in this mentoring scheme (mentors and mentees) were experienced artists who wanted to push their practice further.

Mentoring schemes have been developed in many professions such as occupational training, as a flexible, viable, inspirational means to develop ideas, generate change and aspiration, gain work, or develop trust, confidence and respect: in other words, “do” CPD. Many additional mutual benefits are associated with mentoring, such as spin-off projects, and new partnerships. Nicola Hutcheson stressed the importance of ArtsMatrix Mentoring Scheme.<sup>20</sup> Demand far exceeded ability to supply; in the second round of applications, two thirds of those who applied to ArtsMatrix were disappointed. The scheme enabled specific individualised arts practice development, led by artists’ own decisions on what they might need. It offered two one-off opportunities for ArtsMatrix to provide alternative support to artists, using artist professionals from outside the

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<sup>20</sup> Hutcheson, ArtsMatrix Final Report, 2006, pp. 22-25.

organisation. Mentees identified the most suitable mentor for themselves, creating a proactive and artist-led scheme. Hutcheson stated that the scheme:

offers the opportunity for creative practitioners to work in depth with an established, experienced practitioner in their field to develop their skills and extend their knowledge...The scheme funded 22 mentoring relationships of up to 50 hours contact time each year (for 2005 and 2006).<sup>21</sup>

Networking, artist-led developments, and cohorts for experimentation were recognised by interviewees as CPD opportunities, yet actual provision was in short supply. Some PDCs commented on lack of access to information technology support. It was noted that salaried employees can access training, resources and equipment in their jobs, whereas self-employed people (most artists) generally cannot.

One PDC argued that some artists showed “apathy” about learning to use the internet as a form of communication. PDCs email information out on “last minute” opportunities to creative practitioners, and are aware of issues regarding how information is received, and the quantity of information sent out.<sup>22</sup> Sensitivity to differing needs was demonstrated (for example, considering those with dyslexia). Some PDCs observed that a large number of creative people are considered to be dyslexic, and many improvements could still be made. A form-laden funding culture (for example, that represented by Regeneration Agency or European funding) was seen to exacerbate communication issues.

At the time of these interviews, ArtsMatrix had recently become an independent company (following the changes detailed in Chapter One). European funding had paid

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<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>22</sup> ArtsMatrix have become increasingly web-based for their information on CPD provision and stopped mailing out a hard copy of their bulletin during 2008.

for much of the early development work such as First Stop Shop (the one to one advice sessions), and partly for the Reflective Practitioner Scheme and the later Mentoring Scheme. The PDCs had just completed paperwork for these schemes, which had emphasised a need to accredit ongoing learning, and was consequently “in mind” in discussions. All agreed with evidence in various reports that most practitioners are not interested in accreditation.<sup>23</sup> Staff felt some artists would like to “badge” or have their knowledge recognised, and suggested setting up codes of practice in preference to formal qualifications, and questioned whether recognition of practice should be linked to written assignments. The ArtsMatrix-led ILM Creative Management course was a struggle for some artists.<sup>24</sup> The challenge of finding creative methods to engage artists whilst maintaining the need to satisfy “dry” funding requirements to support CPD was again acknowledged by ArtsMatrix.

In summary, ArtsMatrix staff talked easily about CPD, about the *business* of CPD, the business of careers. It is what they do. Artists did not use the term so easily, neither did they differentiate CPD as being separate to the rest of their practice. Consequently this section on CPD largely represents the voices of providers. CPD is not an easy bundle of words for these artists and appears from these initial findings to be a professional business construct. The one artist who did talk about CPD easily (Artist K), also works as an administrator of two artist-led companies in the South West, and consequently uses the language of CPD more frequently with funding providers. As an anecdotal observation, whenever I see a particular friend and professional artist of more than

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<sup>23</sup> On Reflection, First Stop Shop, Music Leader South West investigations, and Connections and Collaborations, detailed in Chapter One and Two, all evidenced a lack of interest in formal accreditation.

<sup>24</sup> Platform 3 interim report FSS, June 2006, p.18, and Final Report, December 06, p. 24. Many artists were not comfortable with the amount of writing required, and wanted the opportunity to express themselves more creatively. I also undertook this course in 2005 in Bristol.

twenty year's experience, and she asks me how my PhD is going, she always asks the same question: "What's CPD again, what is it?" And yet, she and the artists interviewed already know what their professional development means to them, to their practice, even if they do not use language of CPD. Whilst business models may not speak the "same language" as artists, it appears the language of CPD also becomes "lost in translation".

## **Conclusion**

The research for this chapter opened up discussion around mid-career, artist, CPD and South West. I have collated, edited and analysed a large amount of primary research transcript information from artists, ArtsMatrix staff and others, collected over a nine-month period in 2006-2007. The interviews with providers and with artists highlighted a tension between what is being provided to *all* artists, and what South West based *experienced* artists might feel that they need.

The research demonstrated polyphony on the topics of place and practice. From the artist whose "bubble" is Glastonbury, to the artist whose relation to the South West is mainly "the weather forecast", there is a living, breathing, *evolving* sense of the South West. The findings demonstrate the unfixity of the South West region, which exists more as a "speech act" or imagined and reimagined territory rather than an act of parliament or governance. It seems everyone had different ideas on where it ends and begins whilst acknowledging the received administrative "construct" of what ACE or the RDA mean by South West, defined by language. The polyphony of artists and administrators residing in the South West show widely differing ideas, meanings and

activities attributed to place, space and to the idea of region; of a South West. What the South West really *means* to an artist or provider at any one time in any given place is heterogeneous and complex. Having a home in the South West as an artist influences what the South West is and is constantly becoming, but may not influence an artist's practice. There is no one "essential" South West. It is a region in momentum, not stasis; an open, non-boundaried space for those whose artistic practice is based *from* here, and yet, not necessarily *of* here.

I came to a conclusion that there is a wealth of information, advice, and guidance on CPD, structure, policy, and change, taking place. This overlaps with artistic practice: the ideas, the doing. The South West is a region of huge division; local distinctiveness creates pockets of opportunity for certain artists working in certain art forms. Excellent partnerships appeared to be working well in some places, and are lacking in others. A lack of critical feedback on practice for all art forms is anecdotally evident, as are shortages of individualised funded opportunities outside of formal education for experienced artists to take risks or network with experienced peers.

My interviews assumed that the artists researched are professional practising artists who already recognise the need to work appropriately hard, and do not show a neglect or lack of understanding of the need for baseline skills. These interviews proved my initial hypothesis that experienced artists will navigate towards professional development if and when they feel they need it. It seemed to me from these initial interviews that artists continually reinvent, reimagine, and produce notions of the South West as they narrate their practices. Providers too form a maverick collection of "knowledge" which further influence what the South West is.

The languages of CPD, and the terms “mid-career” and “South West” are contested, all representing certain kinds of fiction or understandings. Opinions on what constitutes an artist are highly individual. Following this phase of research, I chose to use the word “mid-career” cautiously, preferring the term “experienced artist” as this appears to be more meaningful to some artists than “mid-career”. The vocabulary of CPD providers is embedded within an economically biased model which may miss artists’ understandings of professional development, and how they may choose to narrate that. Chapter Four explores the linguistic debate between artistic imperative and economic imperative in more detail.

**Chapter Four**  
**Place, Space, Continuum and**  
**Languages of Economy / Ecology**

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This chapter discusses the theories, approaches and concepts relevant to my research project and its methodology. In order to consider CPD, my methodology, and the concepts of mid-career and region further, I explore theories of space, place, continuum and language via the disciplinary filters of sociology, cultural geography, artistic practices and cultural theory. I will discuss the premise that there is no “essential” South West region, and consider the affect a contested view of region, place and space may have on the professional relationships and careers of artists and CPD providers.

Chapter Three drew attention to some of the ways in which language is a significant factor in how artists are perceived, and how they frame their practices. The artists I discussed were struggling to make sense of their identities as artists within the constructs of “CPD,” “mid-career” and “the South West”. The language used appeared to be defined and negotiated by providers and seemed to be less meaningful to artists; CPD may be perceived as a *business* and *economic* support mechanism and consequently disconnected from artists and their processes of making artwork. In Chapter Three, CPD providers appeared to suggest that they frame and narrate artists’ stories to suit the available planning and development agendas, in order to gain funding for CPD provision and also to survive as a CPD business. In this chapter I will be exploring the role of language, particularly the languages of economy and ecology, in the context of language as a source of power, and how it is used to articulate artists’ practices.

## Space / place

In this first section, I discuss theories that explore the notion of *region* and sense of *place* in order to problematise the idea of a singular and coherently identifiable region. The work of cultural geographers Doreen Massey, Gillian Rose, Mike Crang and Nigel Thrift, and E.S. Casey in addition to Jon Anderson, who is writing from the city and regional planning department of Cardiff University, have been particularly useful. These theorists explore the concepts of regionality, career and human relationships in relation to place, space and region.

Geographer Tim Cresswell writes that “no-one quite knows what they are talking about when they are talking about place”, describing place as both “simple and complicated,” having a “common-sense” understanding in everyday language, and yet a great complexity.<sup>1</sup> Jody Berland in New Keywords reveals that place “is one of the most anxiety-ridden concepts today”.<sup>2</sup>

The first definition for place in my Chamber's Dictionary (100<sup>th</sup> Edition) is “a portion of *space*”, and one of the definitions for space is “an open or empty *place*”. The complexity that Cresswell writes about is evident even in these dictionary exchanges of space and place. The way we view or think about place or space is inlaid with both external perceptions of geography and an internal geography, or as the geographer Mike Crang would describe it, “the geography inside people's heads”.<sup>3</sup> Mike Crang and Nigel Thrift in Thinking Space introduce “species of spaces” – for example, “spaces of

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<sup>1</sup> Tim Cresswell, Place: a short introduction, UK, Blackwell publishing Ltd, 2004, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Tony Bennett, Lawrence Grossberg and Meaghan Morris (eds), New Keywords, Oxford, Blackwell Publishing 2005, p. 257.

<sup>3</sup> Mike Crang, Cultural Geography, London, Routledge, 1998, reprinted 2004, p. 11.

language”, “spaces of place” – to convey their understandings of how geographical theories of space are evident in many layers of philosophy and the social here and now. Describing “*space as process and in process*”,<sup>4</sup> Crang and Thrift conclude in their introduction to the concepts of space that

...the “where” is now joining the “who”, the “what” and the “why” of philosophy and social theory on roughly equal terms...distribution may not be all, but all is distribution.<sup>5</sup>

This is an idiographic approach, one which seeks to explain how things come together in potentially unique patterns. It is about lived connections. Crang suggests spaces become places as they become “time-thickened”.<sup>6</sup>

Doreen Massey argues in For Space that assigning meaning to *space* and thereby conceptualising it as *place* is counterproductive and therefore “reinforces a space / place counterposition”.<sup>7</sup> For Massey, space is imagined as a “simultaneity of stories-so-far”, “the dimension of a multiplicity of durations” or “the contemporaneous existence of a plurality of trajectories”.<sup>8</sup> In effect, she observes that everything is on the move, in momentum, and that place itself is elusive. She argues that we need to imagine the complexities of multiple, coeval and plural positions of all areas of space, and in application to place. Her earlier work in 1998 with John Allen and Allan Cochrane on the South East of England, entitled Rethinking the Region, used these developing theories to argue for a reframing of the conceptual understanding of “region”: “We

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<sup>4</sup> Mike Crang and Nigel Thrift (eds), Thinking Space, Oxon, Routledge, 2000, Reprinted 2007, p. 3. Emphasis in the original.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>6</sup> Crang, Cultural Geography, p. 103.

<sup>7</sup> Doreen Massey, For Space, London, Sage Publications Ltd, 2005, p. 184.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 3, 12 and 24.

begin from the proposition that 'regions' (more generally 'places') only take shape in particular contexts and from specific perspectives."<sup>9</sup>

Massey's work with Allen and Cochrane argued the need to really think about how we conceptualise key terms such as space, place, region and identity, demonstrating that how we perceive them shapes our understanding of the social world, and consequently how subsequent change or development may happen. They used the metaphor of a doiley to describe the patterns of gaps and developments in the South East and argued that place is unique in its constellations of social networks, but that as a whole, the South East region has no "'essential place' which exists in its real authenticity waiting to be discovered by the researcher."<sup>10</sup>

For Allen, Massey and Cochrane, place is continually shifting: "There will always be multiple, coexisting, characterizations of particular spaces / places".<sup>11</sup> Social groups that inform these spaces / places may have contradictory or opposing views further layered with identities from other political, economic, or cultural discourses. So, our conceptualisations and understandings of a particular place, space and time are not neutral and those understandings may always be open to contestation. The words "place" and "space" have meanings constructed from each of our individual understandings, experiences, social investigations and discourses. They are stitched into and made up of social interactions, creating the uniqueness of now (that is, the present moment). What happens in the now is layered upon what happened before. My feelings on place and space are entirely personal; for me place is already full with

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<sup>9</sup> John Allen, Doreen Massey and Allan Cochrane, Rethinking the Region, London, Routledge 1998, p. 34.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

memories, identities and happenings, and is a particular point on a particular day in a particular context; it is time-based. Space for me is somewhere that has a yet as unknown potential, a fluid temporality. The artist Francesco Careri in Walkscapes (2002) discusses moving through a place, as both phenomenological and also imbued with personal and individual meaning.<sup>12</sup> However, he interprets the “space” or temporality of “the city” as having “interstices, voids, solids, gaps and thicknesses”.<sup>13</sup> Similarly to Massey’s “uniqueness of now”, he interprets space – in this case, the city – as flexible, shifting and unevenly distributed. Here, place / space or space / place are descriptions that acknowledge the “now” and the heterogeneity of different understandings of what “now” is.

Allen, Massey and Cochrane noted that space is as important to the production of these social worlds as time is, that space does not equal stasis and that time does not necessarily mean or lead to change, but that space and time are intertwined. This creates an understanding of “region” which is

open, discontinuous, relational and internally diverse...a construction in space-time: a product of a particular combination and articulation of social relationships stretched over space.<sup>14</sup>

Rethinking the Region concluded with a suggestion that to comprehend a region and its subsequent developments rests on ability to understand this complexity; that to see regions “as anything less, is to settle for an inadequate understanding of contemporary regional geographies.”<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Francesco Careri, Walkscapes: walking as an aesthetic practice, Barcelona, Gustavo Gili, 2002, p. 10.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24.

<sup>14</sup> Allen, Massey and Cochrane, Rethinking the Region, p. 143.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 143.

Applying these theories further, in 2003 Massey and Gillian Rose discussed the development of public policy intervention within a programme of public art in Milton Keynes. Massey and Rose demonstrated the importance of understanding the complexity of individuals in social networks in addition to the complexity of individual identities, all of which influence understanding of place and space:

This raises difficult questions in relation to any kind of public policy intervention for it will often be difficult to know in advance which lines of identification will be significant in any particular situation... We can, for instance, argue that: it will not just be an insertion *into* a space/place; it will help produce that space, and it may do this both as a material object (if it is such) and as a set of practices.<sup>16</sup>

By directly applying theories of place and space to artistic practice, policy development and provision, Massey and Rose demonstrate the relevance of considering artists' relationship to place and space, and how artists' practice in addition to wider individual and institutional interventions continually change conceptual understanding and production of place and space. In Chapter Three, it was demonstrated that one "place" representing the essence of the South West did not exist; those interviewed demonstrated that the idea of South West is different depending on individual experience and circumstance. Region is a co-existence of places and spaces which is dynamically altered through the tangible actions (work of art) or set of practices (ideas, policy developments) embodied by artists and CPD providers which inflect their relationships and practices in the region.<sup>17</sup>

In The Fate of Place, E.S. Casey argues that:

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<sup>16</sup> Doreen Massey and Gillian Rose, Personal Views: Public Art Research Project, The Open University, Social Sciences Faculty, 2003, p. 11. Emphasis in the original.

<sup>17</sup> Indeed *Cornwall* announced in 2009 that it was applying to become the first ever European *Region of Culture*. Cornwall therefore is seen as a separate "region" to the South West "region" which it is part of. <http://www.cornwallculture.co.uk/blog.php?id=16>, (accessed 3 September 2009).

...places become the “indicators” of regions even as they are eclipsed by them: we need particular places to guide us into regions and to situate us there. In contrast, *regions* are essential to being-in-the-world as the pregiven publicly shared parts of any enviroing world...<sup>18</sup>

Casey argues that we need both places and regions in order to grasp an orientation or sense of presence. Jon Anderson builds on Casey’s arguments to reveal a “co-ingredience of people and place”.<sup>19</sup> Anderson argues that being present, or being a consciously thinking human being, is to be in a “profoundly spatial, or indeed *patial* [sic]” condition. Linked to Heidegger’s argument that *dwelling* was fundamental to human existence, places interrelate with spaces, and are not “passive stages on which actions occur, rather they are the medium that impinge on, structure and facilitate these processes.”<sup>20</sup>

Massey argues that space and place need to be “mutually constituted”, and that perceived opposition of place to space, local to global or concrete to abstract are not helpful to full understandings of space.<sup>21</sup> She observes that our “strongest” and individual “evocations of place” are associated with “grounding ourselves again in ‘nature’” and yet this is “a natural world that will not stay still”.<sup>22</sup> To illustrate this unfixity, Massey describes the mountain Skiddaw in England’s Lake District as

*Immigrant rocks... just passing through here, like my sister and me only rather more slowly, and changing all the while...we can’t go “back” home, in the sense that it will have moved on from where we*

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<sup>18</sup> E.S. Casey, *The Fate of Place*, London, University of California Press, 1997, p. 251. Emphasis in the original.

<sup>19</sup> Jon Anderson is discussed in Chapter Two in relation to my research method of walking.

<sup>20</sup> Jon Anderson, “Talking whilst walking: a geographical archaeology of knowledge,” *Area*, Volume 36.3, 2004 pp. 254-261. Emphasis in the original.

<sup>21</sup> Massey, *For Space*, p. 184.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 131.

left it, then no more, and in the same sense, can we, on a weekend in the country, go back to nature. It too is moving on.<sup>23</sup>

Massey suggests that going “back to nature” or back to place, to lean towards fixity, is an imagined assumption; place is not stable, and that using place to ground us contains the danger of reifying place. She asks, “And yet, if everything is moving where is here?”<sup>24</sup> Perhaps one way such coherence is made is through the concept of “home”. In 1992, Angelika Bammer guest edited an issue of New Formations that explored “A question of Home”. Bammer’s editorial suggested that home could be “the imaginary point where here and there – where we are and where we come from – are momentarily grounded.”<sup>25</sup>

Writing on his performance practice and on many cultural geographers and theorists, Mike Pearson in “In Comes I”: Performance, Memory and Landscape (2006) demonstrates a love of his home and “resolutely rural” “region” of north Lincolnshire.<sup>26</sup> In order to capture the fluidity of landscape he suggests a move from the “*optic* to the *haptic*”,<sup>27</sup> observing that this shift becomes more about the performer in the landscape than the audience. Pearson brings his experience lived and accumulated whilst *away* from north Lincolnshire back into place (in this case, the place where he grew up), performing this *particular* land. He describes the uniquely lived locations of his childhood as “mystory”: a meeting place of memory and experience. For Pearson, “place is a relational concept”.<sup>28</sup> Using Casey’s Fate of Place Pearson reveals his idea of

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<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 137. Emphasis in the original.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 138.

<sup>25</sup> Angelika Bammer. “Editorial”. New Formations: The Question of ‘Home’. A journal of culture/theory/politics. Cambridge: University Press, Number 17, Summer 1992. Page ix.

<sup>26</sup> Mike Pearson, “In Comes I”: Performance, Memory and Landscape, University of Exeter Press, 2006, p. 4 and p. 3.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11. Emphasis in the original.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

“region” as in flux, yet grounded by its real or imagined presence in each individual’s identity:

There is a temporal dimension here: the region is composed of the complex interweaving of concurrent rhythms and cycles, present even within the one body.<sup>29</sup>

Pearson, as an artist, aims to “concentrate on all that might turn space into place and occupancy into identity”.<sup>30</sup> He suggests space becomes place via the person and that identity exists in the connection; place is “a trope for situating the human subject within landscape”.<sup>31</sup>

Pearson’s emphasis on the emotional context of place, and Bammer’s description of place as “imaginary” and negotiated, reinforce Massey’s warning of reification of place. If this multiplicity of understandings is applied to the South West it unfixes the conception of the region as a grounded and stable base for research, and draws into question its application to artists based in the region. The framing of “home” could be crucial to how CPD providers consider artists’ practice through a regional lens.

To summarise, in this thesis, informed by the current discourses briefly outlined above, a region is considered to be conceptually in momentum, as an open, non-boundaried space anchored by unfixity, and as a construct of administrative convenience defined by language. According to discussions in Chapter Three, different imaginings of “place” occur “inside people’s heads” (Crang) as well as in the wider social practices of individuals and institutions. The importance of place differs from individual to individual and place is sometimes reified, which can lead to assumptions of what may

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<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

be available to, or possible for, an artist who is located in a particular region. The intertwined effect of artists' momentum and a "region" in momentum affects how institutional policies and the funding of artists' skills development provision could be considered.

The next section continues with the theme of momentum; I discuss the work of Rebecca Solnit, Nicholas Bourriaud, Miwon Kwon, Claire Doherty and Brian Massumi, to explore the idea of continuum in relation to time, the connection of momentum to language, and the peripatetic working lives of artists.

## **Continuum and momentum: Travelling through**

Berland in New Keywords writes: "Space and time are simultaneously physical phenomena, social practices, and symbolic ideas".<sup>32</sup> Berland's description locates or triangulates being, doing and thinking. I have already discussed why understandings of "mid-career" that imply a linear projection or traditional perception of time (with career relating and running parallel to age, and as a progression with a beginning, middle and an end) are problematic. The idea of CPD in "mid-career" indicates that this is different from what is required at any other time in a "career", and yet artists need development support *throughout* their careers. As explored in Chapter Two, my methodology uses walking to research artists' navigation and continuum of practice, the peripatetic nature of artists' careers in duration and in momentum, and investigates the relationship of language, time, space and place to practice; I use the concept of travelling through metaphorically and literally.

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<sup>32</sup> Bennett, Grossberg and Morris, New Keywords, 2005, p. 331.

In 2009, Nicholas Bourriaud curated Altermodern, the fourth Tate Britain Triennial exhibition (3 February – 26 April 2009) “celebrating current trends in British art”.<sup>33</sup>

The introductory signage board to the exhibition contained the following paragraph written by Bourriaud:

Altermodern presents the artist as a traveller whose passage through time, space and between mediums reflects a contemporary experience of mobility. The work often explores trajectories rather than destinations, expressing a course of wandering rather than a fixed location.

In the guide to Altermodern, Bourriaud claims that this new word, “altermodern”:

suggests a multitude of possibilities, of alternatives to a single route... (it) arises out of negotiations between agents from different cultures and geographical locations. Stripped of a centre, it can only be polyglot.<sup>34</sup>

Bourriaud also suggests that the “constellation” (an echo of Massey perhaps) and the “cluster” are representative models of altermodern. He suggests that the artist is “*homo viator*, a traveller” whose unfixed passage traces through space and time.

Bourriaud appears to be presenting his definition as a new direction for art. However, artists have always explored and travelled, and the intertwining of metaphorical notion and physical motion creates perhaps a new definition of mobility but not necessarily of art. Artists could be considered to be metaphorically travelling, project to project, contract to contract, navigating and negotiating through a plurality of positioning, networks, institutions and a quite dazzling array of complexity. Some, in addition may be physically travelling (nationally and internationally), creating work which demands

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<sup>33</sup> Kirsteen McSwein and Fiona Gaskin (eds.) Guide, *Altermodern* at Tate Triennial 2009, Tate, 2009.

<sup>34</sup> Nicholas Bourriaud, in Guide, *Altermodern*, Kirsteen McSwein and Fiona Gaskin (eds), n.p, Tate, 2009.

they live temporarily in diverse locations. They may in extreme cases be always travelling.<sup>35</sup> To understand this pronounced unfixity may help with understanding their development needs.

Claire Doherty, a Bristol-based curator who writes about artists engaged in site-specific practices, is concerned with:

the emergence of a new terminology which acknowledges place as a shifting and fragmented entity, and furthermore a complicity with that unstable location as the defining mode of artists' engagement...<sup>36</sup>

Doherty could here in 2004 have been describing the term Bourriaud coined in 2009. However, Doherty is actually alluding to place reimagined as a *situation*, understood fluidly to variously include a grouping of people, a particular locus, a collection of stories, or a socially motivated project within which an artist is working. In other words, place is not necessarily a geographical site, but nor is it a limitless constellation of possibilities of imagined terrains. It is, as Bammer suggests, "where here and there...are momentarily grounded", and held by the grouping, locus or network in the current time of the work. As artists have embraced other disciplines, and investigated other possibilities for practice in collaboration and by expanding into literature, archaeology, psychology, and philosophy, so "our understanding of site has shifted from a fixed, physical location to somewhere or something constituted through social, economic, cultural and political processes".<sup>37</sup> The work, like the artist, is in momentum. Doherty cites Miwon Kwon's One Place after Another (2002) to illustrate her case for a plurality of positioning for site-specific practice and a locating of identity.

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<sup>35</sup> Or located but "stateless", as in the case of one German-born artist in Altermodern. Gustav Metzger. Metzger has since 1938, been without a state, having been evacuated because of Nazi occupation.

<sup>36</sup> Claire Doherty, "Location Location" published in Art Monthly, November 2004, at: [http://www.situations.org.uk/research\\_resource\\_published\\_articles.html](http://www.situations.org.uk/research_resource_published_articles.html) (accessed 19 May 2007), p. 1.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

In One Place after Another Kwon discusses the site-specific art practices of the 1970s and 1980s, raising the issue of itinerant and nomadic impulses in artistic practice, and how a lack of sustained relationship with one place could result in a lack of construction of identity in relation to a community in a specific place or location. Here, whilst her argument is specifically about visual art practices, she is also engaging with the issues raised by Casey of distinctiveness, of *losing place*. Whilst championing the itinerant, the peripatetic, the nomadic, the continuously evolving situation, often characterised by having no fixed “job” and many locations of work, Kwon acknowledges that there is a “vulnerability” of working one place after another. She is more wary, however, of the opposite position, of reification of place, citing Lucy Lippard’s Lure of the Local (1997) and arguing that Lippard leans towards a nostalgia of place. According to Kwon, Lippard echoes Casey’s argument that:

Place brings with it the very elements sheared off in the planiformity of site: identity, character, nuance, history.<sup>38</sup>

Kwon suggests that we have to find ways of being both sited and itinerant, thereby preventing a situation where sites become “genericized into an undifferentiated serialization, one place after another”. She concludes by suggesting a parallel positioning more like Massey’s “doiley”, of everything “*next to another*”.<sup>39</sup>

The conceptual shifts that Kwon articulates locate artists’ work in a space / place, as open and fluid. She is aware that there is a luxury of mobility for artists who can travel project to project, site to site. For those who are displaced or dispossessed (e.g. a migrant or refugee), then the distance between one side of a checkpoint and the other is

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<sup>38</sup> E.S. Casey, The Fate of Place, London, University of California Press, 1997, p. xiii.

<sup>39</sup> Miwon Kwon, One Place after Another: Site-specific Art and Locational Identity, London, MIT Press, 2004, p. 166. Emphasis in the original.

potentially further than any long-distance journey. Kwon quotes Homi Bhabha's observation that "The globe shrinks for those who own it."<sup>40</sup> The artist Kwon discusses work from a privileged position of being able and eager to physically travel long distance.

In A Field Guide to Getting Lost (2006), a short discursive book of essays ranging from a discussion on the artist Yves Klein to walking alone, Rebecca Solnit challenges the need to live with certainty, using a multitude of examples to explore being lost; one such example is from the historian Aaron Sachs, who suggests that the skill in "being lost" is to be confident, via one's skills and experience, that a way will be found:

Explorers... were always lost, because they'd never been to these places before... Yet, at the same time, many of them knew their instruments pretty well and understood their trajectories within a reasonable degree of accuracy. In my opinion, their most important skill was simply a sense of optimism about surviving and finding their way.<sup>41</sup>

In A Field Guide, Solnit describes contemporary artist-nomadic practices, as "both possessor of an enchanted vastness and profoundly alienated."<sup>42</sup> Referencing both metaphorical and actual spaces, the book is almost overwhelmed with metaphors related to the idea of knowing how to travel. Being de-situated, the alienation of being without locality, moving from project to project, about which Solnit writes has been discussed by many artists and cultural commentators. Iain Biggs in his presentation to the Land / Water Symposium in 2005 articulated this usage of metaphor by observing: "we have our place in the world, in a certain sense, on the basis of the metaphors through which

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<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 166.

<sup>41</sup> Rebecca Solnit, A Field Guide to Getting Lost, Edinburgh, Canongate Books, 2006, p. 14.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 120.

we locate ourselves in the landscape.”<sup>43</sup> Moving from project to project subverts a traditional idea of career time and trajectory, and the confidence to practice in this way demands experience, and skill in working with the certainty of unknowingness. Like Nash’s boulder drawing discussed in Chapter Two, mapping and recollection aids understanding of a trajectory, but this happens *afterwards* when the extent of the trajectory is finally known and is located, “in place”.

### **Language and movement: metaphor to embodiment**

In Shanks’s Pony, a book on walking written by Morris Marples in 1959, the author quotes William Wordsworth: “every man has his hobby horse and I ride mine when I walk on foot”.<sup>44</sup> “Travelling through” is not only a convenient metaphorical concept demonstrated by my use of Wooden Boulder to inform my methodology in Chapter Two, it is a way to understand fully the idea of “being present” where all the complexity and fluidity of time, space and place coalesce into the here and now. The philosopher Brian Massumi observes:

...our experiences aren’t objects. They’re us, they’re what we’re made of. We *are* our situations, we *are* our moving through them. We are our *participation* – not some abstract entity that is somehow outside looking in at it all.<sup>45</sup>

Massumi embraces the idea of “walking as controlled falling...the ability to move forward and to transit through life”, and suggests that walking, moving forward, is

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<sup>43</sup> Iain Biggs, “Unearthing other voices – a polytheistic” approach to landscape.” Liz Wells and Simon Standing (eds), Surface. Land / Water and the Visual Arts. Bristol, University of Plymouth Press in association with Intellect Books, 2005, p. 25.

<sup>44</sup> Morris Marples, Shanks’s Pony: A study of walking, London, The Country Book Club, 1960, p. 79. Marples attributes this quotation to Wordsworth.

<sup>45</sup> Brian Massumi interview, “navigating moments”, 2002, p. 11 at: [www.brainmassumi.com/interviews](http://www.brainmassumi.com/interviews) (accessed 5 August 2009). Emphasis in the original.

achieved by “playing with the constraints, not avoiding them”. Significantly Massumi perceives that language revolves around a similar exchange: “a play between constraint and room to manoeuvre”.<sup>46</sup>

What Massumi describes as a “play” of language, Raymond Williams in Keywords (1976), observes as “problems of information, problems of theory”, identifying the challenge of information and theory as one grounded in the evolution and subsequent understanding of words. Williams identified that some words may have an “accurate written record” which makes their meanings adequate (for example, *psychology*), and others have an active meaning that is made via ongoing conversations (for example, *job*). According to Williams, language is in momentum: “we have soon to recognize that the real developments of meaning, at each stage, must have occurred in everyday speech well before they entered the written record.”<sup>47</sup> This is also reflected in the description of “being” (or the theory of words) as opposed to the description of “doing” (or the practice of continued exchange of the information of words).

Bennett, Grossberg and Morris reworked Williams’s original book in New Keywords (2005).<sup>48</sup> In using these two works, I aim to demonstrate the continuous evolution of critical vocabularies, and explore the reasons why understandings of artist, career, region, and CPD are subject to the “problems” of information and theory. As demonstrated in the two previous chapters, artists and CPD providers have different kinds of meanings and definitions attached to the same words. These problems arose both in understanding an artist’s needs and how the language of CPD is described and

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<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.

<sup>47</sup> Williams, Keywords, revised edition, 1983, p. 19.

<sup>48</sup> Both Keywords and New Keywords are first mentioned in the introduction to this thesis in relation to “career” and “work”.

acted upon. For example, as demonstrated in my introduction and Chapter One, the fluidity of the commissioning of agencies to write policy reports published one on top of the other, continue to reframe CPD provision. The subsequent take up by delivery agencies to implement policy leads to new initiatives being “piloted” by recycling old initiatives and resetting them in a slightly different language. Shifting policy created a perceived need by ArtsMatrix to rename their “Professional Development Coordinators” as “Enterprise Development Specialists”. One of the challenges of language as demonstrated by Williams lies in creating shared and understood meaning at any given time, while taking into account the evolution of vocabulary. Discourse effects the translation of these understandings, and ultimately CPD provision.<sup>49</sup>

As discussed in my introduction, some words that Williams found crucial in Keywords in 1976 and in its 1983 edition, are not included in New Keywords in 2005. For example, while Williams included “regional”, New Keywords opted for “space” and “place” as “more encompassing than regional”.<sup>50</sup> Williams’ point about the application of the term *regional* was of his time,<sup>51</sup> yet it is still of relevance to my thesis. He noted

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<sup>49</sup> This thesis does not attempt to critique language, or review the literature on language. Here, I am interested in the application of theories on words as they relate to artists and the wider arts ecology. Wittgenstein, Saussure, Derrida, Bakhtin, Threadgold, Hall and Foucault amongst many others have explored language and meaning-making. I do not include these thinkers on language. However I am aware of some of the ideas surrounding this complex area, and use those theories where it is deemed appropriate and where it moves the research on in a way which it is felt would not be possible otherwise.

<sup>50</sup> Bennett, Grossberg and Morris, New Keywords, 2005, p. xxiii.

<sup>51</sup> In 1984, the Arts Council of Great Britain (London) produced a report reviewing policies and funding over the first forty years of the Arts Council entitled Glory of the Garden— the development of the arts in England. This report highlighted the imbalance of funding between London and the ‘regions’, and was partly driven by a Government policy shift towards encouraging a regionalisation of art forms. The report paved the way for a quite remarkable series of relocations in the mid to late 1980s of various London-based theatre and performance companies ‘out’ of London to “the regions”. These relocations were remarkable in the signification of how home-grown ‘regional’ arts companies were viewed in comparison to London-based companies, and how the solution to redress imbalances was to relocate some who were London-based to what were considered to be less developed areas. The 1984 concept of what constituted ‘national’ or ‘regional’ can now be perceived as wholly limiting.

that “a novel set in the Lake District or in Cornwall is very often called *regional*, whereas one set in London or New York is not”.<sup>52</sup>

Massumi is perhaps more positive than Williams suggesting that language is “two-pronged”, and partly conveys the “unique” experience that cannot ever be completely shared or translated, and yet can be a “conventional” communication:

...it is a capture of experience, it codifies and normalises it and makes it communicable by providing a neutral frame of reference. But at the same time it can convey what I would call “singularities of experience”.<sup>53</sup>

Massumi maintains that every bodily movement “from moving your foot to take a step to moving your lips to make words” has a potential; “its capacity to come to be, or better, *to come to do*”.<sup>54</sup> This ability to embrace the moment, to embrace the possibility between “constraint” and space to “manoeuvre,” he conceptualises as “going with the flow”. This “navigating movement”, “immersed” in an already happening experience, and “being bodily attuned to opportunities in the movement”, is not a “commanding” of it.<sup>55</sup> He states:

So what you are, affectively, isn't a social classification — rich or poor, employed or unemployed — it's a set of potential connections and movements that you have, always in an open field of relations. What you can do, your potential, is defined by your connectedness, the way you're connected and how intensely, not your ability to separate off and decide by yourself. Autonomy is always connective, it's not being apart, it's being *in*...<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Williams. *Keywords*, revised edition 1983, p. 265. Emphasis in the original.

<sup>53</sup> Massumi interview, “navigating moments”, p. 11.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6. Emphasis in the original.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31. Emphasis in the original.

Massumi makes a key point here on the concept of embodiment, and suggests that we are always connected to others, never entirely in control of our decisions.

Whilst Williams is useful in thinking about the practical uses of language and evolution of words, Massumi links the articulation of movement to that of language, and thus extends language into space and time, and additionally reveals that autonomy has the potential for embodied connectedness. Massumi is not alone in his view that “we are our participation”, and this links into the following section on language and symbolic power and the theories of French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu.

Bourdieu’s theory of practice developed a conceptual vocabulary which is relevant to this thesis. He noted that language is “an instrument of action and power”, not frozen as “an object of contemplation”,<sup>57</sup> observing that words *are* powerful, and that language can constrain or enable. Bourdieu further developed his theories specifically on the field of cultural production and conceptualised the inextricable linking of the social world and arts world, describing how people embody, use and increase their “symbolic power”. The terms “habitus”, “field”, “capital”, “cultural production”, “market”, “practice”, “symbolic power” and “disposition” are particularly useful, and here I briefly outline these key terms.

## **Habitus**

Bourdieu’s idea of “habitus”, which I understand to entwine individual action and collective social structures, describes the embodiment of personal and social practices.

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<sup>57</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, Language and Symbolic Power, Cambridge, UK, Polity Press, 1992, p. 37.

Habitus refers to the ways we are, move and think as individuals, combining body and mind, and Bourdieu reveals that all these things are conditioned by class position and the groups we are in. Bourdieu described these beings and doings in an individual as “dispositions” which are largely inherited<sup>58</sup>. So habitus is both our catalysts and our end products. It exists in our heads, and through and in our practices with each other and the ecology; it is a collective construction. We also have dispositions grounded in our bodies in the form of unconscious knowledge such as hot / cold, up / down.

Bourdieu suggested that the power of habitus is in some ways related to our unconscious competences, how we get on with our everyday practice, as opposed to how we may be consciously competent, or consciously incompetent. Bourdieu suggested:

There is every reason to think that the factors which are most influential in the formation of the habitus are transmitted without passing through language and consciousness, but through suggestions inscribed in the most apparently insignificant aspects of the things, situations and practices of everyday life.<sup>59</sup>

In this understanding, Bourdieu links our *articulation* of being and doing and the social world.<sup>60</sup>

## Capital

The power relationships which Bourdieu describes deal with how people embody, use and increase the forms of what he calls “capital”. “Capital” for Bourdieu is not restricted to economic gain, but is appropriated to other forms of currency such as

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<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 89.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 51.

<sup>60</sup> This understanding correlates with the collaborative aspect of artworlds which both Becker and Abbing detail, and which is discussed in Chapter Two.

knowledge or status. Other examples are cultural, symbolic, linguistic and intellectual capital. Cultural capital for example, would constitute the forms of skill and knowledge that enable people to make particular types of decisions and form concepts. Symbolic capital could consist of an amount of accumulated competence and recognition, respect or importance. Linguistic capital is described by John B. Thompson (in the 1992 editor's introduction to Bourdieu's Language and Symbolic Power), as "the capacity to produce expressions *a propos*, for a particular market."<sup>61</sup> This could also be understood to form a (symbolic) profit of "distinction".

## Field

Bourdieu's The Field of Cultural Production (1993) concerns mainly his theories on the fields of visual art and literature, however it is relevant to the concept of the creative industries. "Field" suggests a constructed social space inhabited by both individuals and institutions. Richard Jenkins in Pierre Bourdieu (2002) observes that field is "defined by the stakes which are at stake."<sup>62</sup> The stakes could be certain cultural goods, or a range of "capitals", which can convert to other capitals, so artistic capital may become economic capital. The fields could also be seen as "markets" or "games", in which individuals bring their dispositions and stash of personal capitals to the field, and embody a "feel for the game". Within the site of these fields, Bourdieu describes various "forces" and a "struggle" for positions:

*The space of literary or artistic position-takings, i.e. the structured set of the manifestations of the social agents involved in the field – literary or artistic works, of course, but also political acts or*

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<sup>61</sup> John B. Thompson, "Editor's Introduction", Language and Symbolic Power, Cambridge, UK, Polity Press, 1992, p. 18.

<sup>62</sup> Richard Jenkins, Pierre Bourdieu, Oxon, Routledge, 2002, p. 84.

pronouncements, manifestos or polemics, etc. – is inseparable from the *space of literary or artistic positions* defined by possession of a determinate quantity of specific capital (recognition) and, at the same time, by occupation of a determinate position in the structure of the distribution of this specific capital. The literary or artistic field is a *field of forces*, but it is also a *field of struggles* tending to transform or conserve this field of forces.<sup>63</sup>

The accumulation of dispositions and capital creates how individuals are perceived and how they may access the field. Field and capital are symbiotic, and field is a fluid concept, in that any individual change in position in the field has a corresponding structural change in the field itself.

### **Cultural field / symbolic power**

Bourdieu notes the cultural field is “one of the *indeterminate sites* in the social structure”,<sup>64</sup> and suggests that players in the field may be “rich” in cultural capital, but not necessarily in economic capital, because one can be economically rich yet culturally poor or vice versa. He reveals that the cultural field is in fact “the economic world reversed”,<sup>65</sup> operating within an “economy of symbolic exchanges”.<sup>66</sup> Bourdieu stated that the structure of the cultural production field is via two opposing sub-fields: “the field of restricted production” – that is, the “autonomous pole”, one where the economic forces or earning of substantial profit is understood to be less respected or valued – and “the field of large-scale production”, or the “heteronomous pole”, where earning large income *is* respected and valued. Bourdieu observed:

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<sup>63</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature, Polity Press, Cambridge, UK, 1993, p. 30. Emphasis in the original.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 43. Emphasis in the original.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29.

<sup>66</sup> Bourdieu, Language and Symbolic Power, p. 37.

the specificity of the literary and artistic field is defined by the fact that the more autonomous it is, i.e. the more completely it fulfils its own logic as a field, the more it tends to suspend or reverse the dominant principle of hierarchization; but also that, whatever its degree of independence, it continues to be affected by the laws of the field which encompasses it, those of economic and political profit. The more autonomous the field becomes, the more favourable the symbolic power balance is to the most autonomous producers and the more clear-cut is the division between the field of restricted production, in which the producers produce for other producers, and the field of large-scale production [*la grande production*], which is *symbolically excluded and discredited*.<sup>67</sup>

Artists producing for commercial interest would be considered to “play” in the large-scale production field, and those producing with less priority to sell commercially, and aiming for a more “symbolic” value from their peers or others, would fit into Bourdieu’s restricted production field: “those...least endowed with specific capital tend to identify with degree of independence from the economy, seeing temporal failure as a sign of election and success as a sign of compromise”.<sup>68</sup> Bourdieu in addition makes a direct link between working as an artist and the need for income to do so.<sup>69</sup> In the case of Flaubert for example, he suggests that the artist had a private income in order to set about *being* an artist and this supported his *doing* as an artist.

Bourdieu argued that both the production of language and culture are firstly about belief. The working and upkeep of a field and success of any individual project within it depends largely on collusion of belief between those within the field. What is said by a particular individual or institution needs to be believed to be legitimate or true, defined inside and by whichever field is being interrogated. Players have a belief in the market and also value what is at stake. The agent to whom this legitimation is given has a

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<sup>67</sup> Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*, p. 39. Emphasis in the original.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 170. Bourdieu discusses Flaubert’s inherited income which allowed him to a certain extent to practice without needing to play an income-earning game.

power which they can then use in the games which characterise any field. This is “symbolic power”. Certain forms of self-suppression or censorship also characterise the business of the fields. In Bourdieu’s argument, the ability to define, to classify successfully with the “right” language in discourse, gives players in the field a “symbolic power”<sup>70</sup> and they can become dominant. Despite there being no such thing as *the* language, or *the* culture, or *the* knowledge, according to Bourdieu, the importance of an individual therefore, is not so much what they say, but how what they say is recognised and authorised by others in the market (“field”) in question. He suggests that “symbolic power” is unseen as power and is consequently “misrecognised”. We therefore become actively complicit in “recognising” the power as legitimate:

The symbolic efficacy of words is exercised only in so far as the person subjected to it recognizes the person who exercises it as authorized to do so, or, what amounts to the same thing, only in so far as he fails to realize that, in submitting to it, he himself has contributed, through his recognition, to its establishment.<sup>71</sup>

As players in the cultural field, it is possible that we mis-recognise the power of these structures and dispositions in our own lives. Jenkins suggests that when the linguistic habitus and linguistic market meet self-censorship takes place: “the speaker’s *anticipation* of the reception which his / her discourse will receive (its ‘price’)...contributes to *what* is said and *how*... This is one root of the inequalities of linguistic competence which characterise human communication.”<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Bourdieu, Language and Symbolic Power.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 116.

<sup>72</sup> Richard Jenkins, Pierre Bourdieu, Routledge, Oxon, 2002, p. 154. Emphasis in the original.

## Practice

Bourdieu's idea of "practice" is that it *cannot* be understood outside of time and space, is related to a feel for the game, and to having acquired skills and experience in the game – for example, how to navigate socially and what may be appropriate behaviour. Thompson suggests: "The practical sense is not so much a state of mind as a state of the body, a state of being".<sup>73</sup> Because it could be understood as unconscious competence, it is to some extent improvisatory, but Bourdieu argues that improvisation does not create choice, and perhaps exaggerates the potential that being skilled at the game creates, as opposed to being skilled in one's practice. The geographer Joe Painter has criticised Bourdieu for his "crude" distinction between (metaphorical) social space and (physical) geographic space, suggesting that:

If society and space are understood as co-constituting then fields are socio-spatial (and socio-temporal) phenomena, opening up the potential of a more thoroughly spacialised theory of practice.<sup>74</sup>

I return to this critique of Bourdieu in the conclusion of this chapter.

## The language of arts economies and ecologies

Bourdieu's theories on "language and symbolic power" and on the field of cultural production can be applied to the "field" of CPD and the "habitus" of experienced artists. Whilst artists are legitimised and recognised in their own artistic field(s), in their habitus the ability to successfully speak the different language of CPD (fed by the economic field and intersecting with the "cultural production" field) creates the need to

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<sup>73</sup> Thompson, "Editor's Introduction", *Language and Symbolic Power*, p. 13.

<sup>74</sup> Joe Painter, "Pierre Bourdieu" in *Thinking Space*, Mike Crang and Nigel Thrift (eds). Oxon, Routledge, 2000. Reprinted 2007, p. 257.

have different skills, or “capitals” or dispositions. CPD for them may also be operating with contrasting rules and beliefs, with providers and not necessarily artists, producing the meaning of CPD, and may value the development of economic capital above artistic capital. To survive as a CPD business, public funding is needed, and this is also articulated in the “symbolic” wealth of outputs and determined value systems.

Everyone within the cultural field, including artists, could be perceived, in Bourdieu’s view, to be using language to increase their respective capitals (for example, economic *and* cultural capital) through language. This consequently affects how we may decide to question, research and perceive the CPD needs of experienced artists.<sup>75</sup>

The theories of Bourdieu can be misrepresented in cultural policy; for example, Bourdieu’s word “capital” may have a straightforward economic meaning applied to the term, without recognition of the other forms of symbolic profit or capital that he identified in the field of cultural production. The United Kingdom has a funding system which demands written articulation in a language which funders deem appropriate, often linked to an indication of a product or production (evidence of creative industry) before financial or other support is given. This language of funders could be either constraining or enabling to a specific artist, and little attention has been given to recognising that the use of CPD language in itself is a form of power. The concepts of economy and ecology have newer usages which had not yet evolved when Bourdieu was writing. I introduced the concept of an arts “ecology” at the beginning of this thesis and the term is timely for artistic practice in the United Kingdom.<sup>76</sup> My previous chapters have demonstrated that common terms used for the sector within which South West artists currently practice are

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<sup>75</sup> It is acknowledged that to a certain extent, all specialist discourses develop a technical language – for example, the language of electricians or chefs or cosmologists.

<sup>76</sup> The word “ecology” is appearing again in relation to arts practice, and is being used in terms of thinking around a “healthy ecology” for arts by Genista McIntosh in her Review of ACE in June 2008.

the “cultural economy”, “creative industries” or “creative economy” (that is, understanding the sector as a way of adding economic wealth through creative activity).<sup>77</sup>

As Bourdieu has shown, economic and cultural success (or capital) are not mutually exclusive. As demonstrated in the previous chapters, the CPD needs of artists in order to achieve “success” are generally perceived by funding agencies in relation to how beneficial this might be to the artists’ economic success, and therefore the success of the UK’s capital growth. This appears to create a power relationship which is based on a language of economic “capital” and creative “industry”, not artistic progress. An example of this is the language of Creative Clusters, an annual conference with an accompanying website, that examines the growth of the creative industries, and their role in economic development and in culture. In the example below, Creative Clusters use the word “ecology”, but together with “industry” as an inferred metaphor for the artist or “creative” individual as income-generating, economy-strengthening fish-food:

The creative industry ecology is one of whales and plankton: a handful of high-profile global players, stars and multinational companies, dependent upon vast shoals of project-based micro-enterprises. From the surface, only the bigger players are visible, but these big fish are wholly dependent on the small fry further along the supply chain.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Chapter One also discussed how the term “cultural capital” is used particularly in contemporary arts policy and arts institutions.

<sup>78</sup> Extract from Creative Clusters “key concepts”, at: [www.creativeclusters.com/modules/eventsystem/?fct=eventmenus&action=displaypage&id=34](http://www.creativeclusters.com/modules/eventsystem/?fct=eventmenus&action=displaypage&id=34) (accessed 30 May 2007). The cost of attending the Creative Clusters conference is generally prohibitive to artists and freelance professionals. Attendees are in general, salaried policy-makers. On 2 March 2009, Creative Clusters announced that after eight years it would *not* be running a conference in 2010; the economic situation prompting a “sabbatical”.

This description of the “creative industry ecology” contrasts sharply with Bourdieu’s more complex analysis of how fields operate.<sup>79</sup>

Bill Sharpe from the International Futures Forum (IFF)<sup>80</sup> has begun a new conversation around the word “ecology”, linked to economy in the arts by writing two companion “think-pieces” supported by NESTA and ACE: The Economy of Art (2008), and Homo Poeticus and the Art of Culture (2007). In The Economy of Art he explores active meaning-making through conversation:

Where does the meaning in a conversation come from? What has been traded? Who owns the words? Meaning does not travel from one person to another, like a piece of traded goods in exchange for money; it is made in the moment, borrowing from the lived history of everyone in the room, and it lives on in the new patterns of significance that each person takes away.<sup>81</sup>

He points out that:

...if we let the logic of economics based on property dominate our thinking, then it can obscure the underlying systems on which any market in property relies.<sup>82</sup>

Similarly to Massumi and Bourdieu, Sharpe links language to power and economy. His second paper on ecology is currently being used by Missions, Models, Money,<sup>83</sup> under the initiative “supporting a healthy ecology of the arts.”<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> My research findings in Chapter Three suggest that some artists will prioritise cultural capital over economic capital.

<sup>80</sup> International Futures Forum (IFF) is “a non-profit organisation established to support a transformative response to complex and confounding challenges and to restore the capacity for effective action in today’s powerful times.” IFF is used as a think-tank for many creative organisations and policy makers. Creative People, the Cultural Leadership Programme and Watershed in Bristol have all recently made use of IFF. <http://www.internationalfuturesforum.com/home.php> (accessed 15 June 2009).

<sup>81</sup> Bill Sharpe for International Futures Forum, The Economy of Art, March 2008, p. 3.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>83</sup> Missions, Models, Money are discussed in Chapter One.

<sup>84</sup> International Futures Forum at <http://www.internationalfuturesforum.com/projects.php?id=24>, accessed 15 June 2009.

Raymond Williams selected *ecology* as a keyword in 1976 and chose to discuss *economy* within *ecology*, not as a separate keyword itself. Yet by the time of New Keywords in 2005, the selection had reversed; *economy* featured in its own section, and *ecology* was coupled with *environment* without a section of its own. Williams' short entry on *ecology* and Gibson-Graham's entry on *economy* twenty-two years later offer a fascinating contrast: Williams outlines the shared root for both words, *oikos* meaning "household", *logy* (discourse) and *nomy* and *nomos* (management and law), then tracks the development of *economy* from an early meaning of "management of a household" to *political economy* and then "to economics in its general modern sense".<sup>85</sup>

Williams observed that, "In 1931 H.G.Wells saw *economics* as a "branch of ecology...the ecology of the human species."<sup>86</sup> The meaning of *economy* according to Gibson-Graham has shifted significantly from "something that can be managed" to "something that governs society," signalling that "the economic imaginary has seemingly lost its discursive mandate and become an objective reality."<sup>87</sup> Gibson-Graham also suggest that *economy* has become "naturalized" and "deified". Bourdieu is not referenced but Gibson-Graham observe that governmental support has enabled "academic economists" to reduce society to a series of "capital" labels such as "social capital," "human capital," "information capital". Gibson-Graham do not use the term "cultural capital".

Gibson-Graham conclude optimistically with the word *economy*, highlighting the developing discourses on new economies such as the "green economy" where

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<sup>85</sup> Williams, Keywords, revised edition 1983, p. 110.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 111. Emphasis in the original.

<sup>87</sup> J.K Gibson-Graham (a pen-name of two scholars: Julie Graham and Katherine Gibson) "Economy", New Keywords, Bennett, Grossberg and Morris (eds), 2005, p. 96. Emphasis in the original.

“economic ‘value’ endowed by the market is challenged and displaced. The systemic monolith of mainstream representation is being supplanted or supplemented by *diverse economies*.”<sup>88</sup> In this view, economy can then include “prohibited” sectors such as participatory and community arts practices, non-profit making artistic activities, and other voluntary practices. Gibson-Graham end by suggesting that: “All are attempts to wrest ‘economy’ back from the reductionism of the market and perhaps assert that an economy is, after all, what we make it.”<sup>89</sup> In this understanding, economy reverts to a more ecological understanding and not one of capitalising solely on financial wealth.

The word “ecology” generally means the study of organisms, their relationship to each other, and their relationship to their environment. From my data in Chapter Three, the term “arts ecology” appears to more accurately denote the “social soup”<sup>90</sup> within which artists operate their everyday practices, and arts ecology may more accurately reflect the fluidity of artists’ practices than the term “creative industries”.

By the term “arts ecology” I do not mean “cultural ecology” or “arts *and* ecology”.

“Cultural ecology” is a sub-field term used specifically in anthropology to denote the study of the relationship between the natural environment and any society that inhabits it, as well as the eco-systems and life-forms that support it.<sup>91</sup> “Arts *and* ecology” means the combination of artistic practice within a relationship to an ecological perspective of

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<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 97. Emphasis in the original.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 97.

<sup>90</sup> Demos use the term “social soup”, discussed in the introduction to this thesis. I understand this term to accurately describe the way artists build relationships; they collect, devise, form, unform, reform, and move and shift as is necessary, desired or political within a mix of different capitals and profits. They may be funded to produce work, be awaiting a commission or other earned income, or be producing work which is not funded, or working professionally with and for friends or colleagues on an unpaid basis. They may be doing all these things at the same time and these fluid relationships could be seen to comprise an arts ecology.

<sup>91</sup> Mike Pearson’s and Michael Shanks’ definition of “cultural ecologies” is described in *In Comes I*, 2006, p. 28 as: “relating different fields of social and personal experience in the context of varied and contradictory interests”.

sustaining and understanding our responsibility to the environment and eco-systems of the planet. I would include “arts *and* ecology” practices as a sub-field within my understanding of an “arts ecology”.<sup>92</sup>

American performance company Goat Island provide a theoretically informed perspective on the language of ecology and economy and the making of work in their book Performance, Ecology and Goat Island.<sup>93</sup> In it they explore the concepts surrounding the word “ecology”, remaking the meaning for themselves, and in doing so, they comment on economy, making a link between pace and the falsity of fast deadlines to economic imperatives, or the “cut-throat” of capitalism. Anecdotally, Routledge, Goat Island’s publishers, suggested the work would sell better if the word “ecology” was in the title. This is the “right” language at the “right” time. Goat Island argue that Western research tends to shortcut thoroughness in the interests of completion because research needs proving in a short time:

Yet the *economy* of knowledge acquisition is too often tied to short-termism: research results need to be produced on deadline to satisfy the bodies providing funding. We human beings love to believe we can cut corners.<sup>94</sup>

In Chapter Two I demonstrated that artists’ CPD schemes are also often cut short or “piloted” owing to the demands of short-term funding initiatives.

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<sup>92</sup> Certainly all four of the artist case studies in Chapter Six partake in art which could be seen to be part of the arts and ecology sector, in addition to their artistic oeuvre being part of the wider arts ecology.

<sup>93</sup> Stephen Bottoms and Matthew Goulish (eds), Small Acts of Repair: Performance, Ecology and Goat Island, Oxon, Routledge, 2007, p. 9.

<sup>94</sup> Bottoms and Goulish, (eds), Small Acts of Repair, p. 9. Emphasis in the original. My research has a time frame of three years and will only provide a short insight in telling the stories of some artists’ lives.

## Right time, right place / space

Cultural commentator Malcolm Gladwell, writing about genius and success in Outliers (2008),<sup>95</sup> evidenced that ten thousand hours of practice (or approximately ten years of practice) was a measurement of time that created a foundational skill base and allowed for the development of potential success and exceptional status or “genius”. Gladwell’s “ten thousand hour” rule demonstrated a clear connection between time spent practising and one’s ability to actualise economic success and personal fulfilment. However, significantly, Gladwell also maintained that success is as likely to be a product of arbitrariness; of moving through the right time, space and place, with the right cultural legacy, surrounded by the right community of support. Gladwell therefore also considers an ecology or collective social activity of a field of people, suggesting that success is *not* “a simple function of individual merit”<sup>96</sup> but involves the arbitrary, insisting that no one “ever makes it alone.”<sup>97</sup> For Bourdieu it is about “dispositions”; how one orientates and locates using accumulated capital within a particular field, and how success in itself is viewed within that field.

Gladwell’s exploration of communication discusses how we may or may not get what we want when communicating with “authority”. Correlating to Bourdieu, Gladwell discovered it can be dependent on the class system one is brought up in, revealing that poorer people tend to be brought up to lack the sense of entitlement to stand up for themselves, or negotiate and navigate well through the world. He concluded that “social savvy is *knowledge*”<sup>98</sup>; social savvy is another form of capital.

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<sup>95</sup> Malcolm Gladwell, Outliers. The story of success, London, Penguin Books, 2009.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 115.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 102. Emphasis in the original.

## Conclusion

David Haley, working at MIRIAD (Manchester Institute for Research and Innovation in Art and Design), describes an “embodied ecology” in which we study our relationship to each other, and our experiential knowledge, not removing ourselves from the environment that surrounds us. Haley is keen to “regain *touch* with the very things we are working with”.<sup>99</sup> The concept of being *in touch*, embodied, knowing more than we can say, runs throughout this thesis. Massumi and Bourdieu in different ways demonstrate that the essence of our practices cannot be described by economic market languages and are jointly articulated via body and mind (*habitus*). Language *is* powerful, and yet we need to recognise what Goat Island and Haley demonstrate: a lived and haptic response to being and doing, not reducible to income generation, language, or economic markets of meaning.

Massumi’s exploration of dialogue and “field” seems to frame a similar, if more positive connection to that which Painter suggests Bourdieu reveals: that society and space are co-constituting. If Bourdieu is understood in a sociologically temporal and spatial manner then his theory of practice and ideas on language and power are extended in relation to space. Artists’ everyday activities are articulated through their bodies (*dispositions*) and in their *habitus* in which they create distinctive sorts of capital. Massumi perceives this as potential and “room to manoeuvre” within an everyday going with the flow, an unconscious competence (somewhere in between consciousness and unconscious thought) linked in the idea of articulation through speaking and moving.

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<sup>99</sup> David Haley, “A Walk on the Wild Side”, a paper delivered at TRIP – Territories reimagined: international perspectives, Manchester, 21 June 2008. My emphasis.

For both Massumi and Bourdieu, it is clear that their theories take account of practice and embodiment; our minds are not separated from our bodies.

If we consider the idea of “knowing how to travel”, or “going with the flow,” and think of experienced artists as an accumulation of their ongoing experiences and practices, intertwined with events outside of their control, CPD must relate to learning to practice one’s practice within an *uncertainty of where you are going*. It must foster a state of being “comfortably uncomfortable” – that is, with a need to develop the dispositions of confidence and endurance that a way *will* be found, and a practice continued to be made.

Bourdieu called region “the source of legitimate di-vision of the social world...and result of arbitrary imposition”.<sup>100</sup> This chapter began with region and has moved through a variety of disciplinary approaches that are negotiating unfixity, and in which the unstable combination of space, place and momentum is complicated by continuously evolving language, and the actions and relationships of individuals and institutions. These themes work together in this thesis to help question the possibilities for CPD in the South West and how a construct such as CPD “needs” for “mid-career” artists may appear to constrain as much as enable.

Providers of CPD may have a “powerful” use of language, creating the ability to gain funding or have an impact on cultural policy by using the “right” language, rather than the plurality of languages used by experienced artists in their vocabularies as they describe their own practice as demonstrated in Chapter Three. Chapters Five and Six

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<sup>100</sup> Bourdieu, Language and Symbolic Power, p. 222.

investigate further how providers influence how artists negotiate, narrate, and navigate through physical and metaphorical terrains in the context of their professional practices. Chapter Six explores what happens if artists articulate their practice without the constructed language of CPD.

Art is a progressive process, and it involves unearthing what we do not know, as well as what we do not know we know. To conclude this chapter, when I re-interviewed Clive Austin (one of the original Reflective Practitioners) in order to write the Reflective Practitioner advocacy booklet, Clive refused to “play the game” by listing his “successes” or accumulated “capital”. Instead he requested two pages in the booklet, facing each other, one black, one white. On the white page, Clive asked to be printed:

That which you call a practice I call life.  
That which you call reflection I call attention.

Regarding the value of the experience,  
it was in the money and with the people.  
The people brought me inspiration.  
The money bought me time.

On the black page:

Clive Austin used to be a mountaineer.  
He now makes films.  
Sometimes he understands.  
Sometimes he doesn't.

## **Chapter Five**

### **Two Approaches to CPD in the South West: Fellowships and DIY Schemes**

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## Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to document and analyse two different approaches to CPD in order to map current practice and to compare and contrast their efficacy: a “DIY” artist-led approach, and an administrator-led approach. In the South West region during the timeframe of my PhD research,<sup>1</sup> I followed the Contemporary Crafts Fellowship Scheme for mid-career crafts artists (CCFS).<sup>2</sup> For comparison, I also attended “The Artist as Cultural Agent: DIY (people, places and spaces)” (TACA), a three-day seminar from 25 – 28 September 2008 at The Bosigran Project at Bosigran Farm, Zennor, Cornwall.<sup>3</sup> In this chapter, I use the concepts described in the previous chapter, of “capital” developed by Pierre Bourdieu in relation to “symbolic” and cultural capital and the power of language and disposition in CPD approaches. I also consider the importance of space, place and momentum to artists’ CPD.

I will additionally explore DIY support developed by LADA, in its sixth year in 2009.<sup>4</sup> The two DIY projects are outlined first, followed by a detailed analysis of CCFS.<sup>5</sup> Appendix 9, 10 and 11 give further details of CCFS and TACA. The term DIY has come to be understood as a term which describes people who develop their own ways to solve needs.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This research took place from late 2007 through to March 2009 and is detailed in Chapter Two.

<sup>2</sup> Supported by the Crafts Council, Arts Council England, Esmée Fairbairn, The Devon Guild of Craftsmen and delivered by ArtsMatrix.

<sup>3</sup> Supported by BOSarts, The National Trust, ALIAS, NAN (a-n artist’s networking initiative), Newlyn Gallery & The Exchange, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Heath Project, and Arts Council England’s “Invigorate” Scheme. ALIAS is detailed in South West specific CPD providers in Appendix 1.

<sup>4</sup> DIY is run by LADA in partnership with Artsadmin (national), New Work Network (national) The Basement (South East), Colchester Arts Centre (East England), Nuffield Theatre & LANWest (North West), and PLATFORM (South West and national). Please see Appendix 1 for further details on LADA, Artsadmin, PLATFORM and New Work Network.

<sup>5</sup> The label “artist” is used interchangeably with “craftsperson” or “maker” following the convention of each scheme.

<sup>6</sup> The expression DIY (“do it yourself”) has a usage with regard to one’s ability to do jobs in one’s home

In order to understand the efficacy of these CPD approaches, I document each using the stories of some of the participants at TACA and the individual stories of each of the CCFS Fellows.

All three CPD projects involved the cooperation of multiple partners. In duration, CCFS took place over a year, TACA in three days, and the main events for DIY 6 within a six week period. TACA was artist-led, revolving around artists' peer presentation and discussion, in partnership with a diverse range of organisations such as The National Trust and ALIAS. DIY 6 was also artist-led with a partnership of organisations delivering management and funding. The venues and processes of CCFS were led by the decision-making of the managerial steering group.<sup>7</sup> This steering group selected a group of participating artists via an administration-led competitive process and also chose the people who provided additional "professional" support (such as a marketing coach and a facilitator of "growth plans").

### **The Artist as Cultural Agent: DIY (people, place and space)**

TACA's stated aim was to explore artist-led culture and the complexities of space and site in addition to developing understanding of working as an artist in the South West.<sup>8</sup>

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without professional help, and as a preferable way of developing skills and ownership of skills by learning through doing. A contemporary understanding of the phrase DIY extends into many subcultures (punk graphic design, for example) and clearly criticises contemporary culture, which is perceived to accentuate the idea that our needs are met by buying in "outside help". DIY instead inspires people to develop their own ways to solve needs.

<sup>7</sup> The management committee comprised the main stakeholders of CCFS were: Beatrice Mayfield (Crafts Council), Andrew Proctor (ACE South West), Erica Steer (Devon Guild of Craftsmen, previously with ACE South West), Saffron Wynne (Devon Guild of Craftsmen), Ruth Staple (ArtsMatrix) and Frances Meredith (ArtsMatrix and Scheme Co-ordinator).

<sup>8</sup> Appendix 11 details the original email sent out to advertise the conference. The seminar information stated it would "ask questions relating to how artists approach creating contexts for making work, both in terms of places and spaces, but also developing relationships across a range of dialogues and partnerships."

In Chapter Two I described my reasons for wishing to research artists' voices in the context of CPD; TACA was therefore timely for me in its South West focus and emphasis on networking by and for artists rather than relying on the leadership of salaried administrators. Organised as part of BOS08, a showcase of Cornish-based artists' work in outdoor settings, TACA formed part of a new partnership with Bosigran Farm (National Trust). Artists' peer presentation and discussion took place in a number of venues in and around Zennor, Cornwall, on National Trust property. Limited to fifty participants, most were experienced artists practising in a range of visual and live art forms for at least ten years.<sup>9</sup>

Open to all artists who chose to attend,<sup>10</sup> participants either arrived at Penzance train station in time for a lift to the campsite or arrived independently. Most participants camped for the three-day duration of the event (other options were available). Meals were provided, and whilst facilities were basic, I observed an inclusive, convivial and generous atmosphere. The opportunities to network and develop peer discussion were informal and used well. A seated dinner in the community centre took place on the second evening, and on the third, a bus transported people into St Ives, at which point some chose to split off into smaller groups. For some artists their CPD needs may have been met through the opportunity to network with their peers or to hear a particular presentation or to walk and talk along the coast path with another artist. The particular context of TACA formed a specific perspective of the South West region at a particular time; as discussed in Chapter Four, a concept of place was able to take shape temporarily through the converging of artists.

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<sup>9</sup> All quotations from TACA were noted or transcribed by the author from the artists' presentations, conversations and documentation during the three days, or from the original agendas for the event.

<sup>10</sup> To apply, an email request was sent to ALIAS, and attendance confirmed up to a maximum of fifty people. Whilst TACA was open to all artists, the emphasis was on visual arts.

As an introductory keynote presentation to TACA, Emilia Telese (of a-n artists' networking initiative, NAN) gave an overview of some of the research which a-n has led in artists' networking, and discussed artist-led practice in the current climate.<sup>11</sup> In her presentation, Telese referenced Morris Hargreaves McIntyre's Taste Buds: How to Cultivate the ArtMarket (2004).<sup>12</sup> This report (also discussed below and cited in the CCFS evaluation) is considered to be a significant piece of research for the visual arts market. Telese presented a diagram used in Taste Buds and included here as Appendix 12. The concept of mid-career in this report is depicted via a linear flow-chart. According to Telese, "The way they [Morris Hargreaves McIntyre] thought the art world works...half way through the artist would have died of old age." The room erupted with laughter.

Throughout the TACA weekend, led by a-n's research, the themes of artist-led practice and partnership, and ideas of "creating" and "being your own artworld", were discussed. Veronica Vickery,<sup>13</sup> described the Bosigran partnership approach as an attempt "to balance artist-led practices with working across partnerships and funding structures,"<sup>14</sup> and BOS08 as an "inter-partnership exchange...a test-bed for the future". As a new partnership with the National Trust, Vickery described BOS08 and TACA as "professional": "As artists we come to the table as equals, we have something to give...we are wanting to do something, making that happen." The partnership aimed to

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<sup>11</sup> "a-n The Artists Information Company has been proactive since 2001 in researching, championing and supporting artists' networking, as a key element of their practical and professional development...NAN artists' advisory group was formed in 2003 to explore ideas of what a network of artists' networks could or should be." a-n collections: Impact of Networking, Jane Watt, Charlie Fox and a-n The Artists Information Company, 2006, p. 18.

<sup>12</sup> Morris Hargreaves McIntyre, for ACE, Taste Buds. How to Cultivate the Art Market, October 2004. Funded by the New Audiences Programme, and managed by ACE, Tastebuds was a year-long research programme into the market for original contemporary visual art, and constituted the first study into this particular art market and how it works.

<sup>13</sup> Veronica Vickery is one of the artists developing the Bosigran partnership.

<sup>14</sup> From the agenda given to participants on arrival.

create “a space for ...the conversations, the possibilities that come out of relationships and the everyday... You...have conversations, things change”.

Vickery observed that partnerships run risks: “It could be awful to be tied down as a heritage organisation, or one could look on it as an opportunity... sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn’t”. This observation is hard to reconcile with the requirements of funding organisations for which an admittance of not knowing is often perceived as a weakness. It also echoes Clive Austin’s statement at the end of Chapter Four.

According to Vickery, artist-led “means run by artists...there’s nothing prescriptive about what arts-led can be...it’s up to us”. For me, the way TACA was organised created a sense of “play” and the ability to articulate artistic practices, as well as what Massumi described as “room to manoeuvre”.

Marcus Coates, a London based artist who works regularly in the South West, was a guest speaker at TACA. Like Artist H discussed in Chapter Three, Coates “became disillusioned” after graduating with an MA and developing a successful studio-based practice selling work to galleries. Coates reflected: “I felt I had the skills and developed imagination of an artist but wanted to put those into practice”. He particularly cited the role of Grizedale Arts and Adam Sutherland as its then-new Director who invited Coates to “do what you want in the forest.”<sup>15</sup> Coates described Sutherland’s invitation as “an amazingly liberating statement” and began a long term professional relationship

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<sup>15</sup> Grizedale Arts is based in the Lake District National Park, and runs a programme of events, projects, residencies and activity. Grizedale has neither studios nor exhibition space, and provides “artists with the opportunity to realise projects using the social, cultural and economic networks of the area and beyond.” Approximately six research and development grants with no fixed durational period are awarded per year to artists and creative practitioners, to develop ideas for projects in relation to the environment of the Lake District. The organisation aims for artists to establish a longterm relationship with them and work there whilst also continuing with their “normal practice”. <http://www.grizedale.org/about/> (accessed 27 October 2009).

with Grizedale, observing that he felt “shielded by the organisation to do work as an artist only”. Here Sutherland’s language (and intention) created a possibility for Coates’ artistic development.

In response to the question, “How do you work with the National Trust when you want to explain the types of things you want to do?” Coates replied, “Personally I don’t really talk about art much; I talk about the issues I’m interested in and what skills I can bring.” Another person suggested: “there seemed to be more satisfaction for you to show your work in a small community or village hall like this, so what’s the point in showing your work in a gallery space?” Coates answered:

Why even present it as art? I think the only reason it’s called art is because it’s shown in galleries and the money that funds it is from arts organisations. Actually for me, it doesn’t really matter...but for me to define my role in society in that totally impartial individual way... contemporary art culture is the only place to get funding from to be recognised and to have my work celebrated and valued...Sometimes I call myself an ornithologist or an amateur naturalist...Sometimes it’s a really positive thing to be an artist.

To the suggestion that “the art space validates the work”, Coates responded that it enabled communication with a wider audience. The cultural field allows Coates to make a living because his work is validated within it; language is flexible enough for Coates to have enough power to throw off the word “artist” if appropriate, and to develop to a certain extent the parameters of the field in which he is able to “sell” his work.

In the final plenary, the question “Is artist-led just a pseudonym for being run by artists or is it something else?” created discussion regarding the importance of a non-art audience, in addition to peer review. There was acknowledgement of the satisfaction of

getting work seen outside of the “field”. Coates observed: “arts production organisations have the kudos to represent you on your behalf”. The association of the label “artist” with privilege and bohemian living was also discussed; one participant observed that perception of what an artist is changes slowly. To a certain extent, Coates has redefined (with the help of others) the market for his “art”. Telese suggested that artists should define and create their own marketplace: “Each artist has a different marketplace and it’s up to you to define what that marketplace is...That’s the exciting thing, that the marketplace is open and up for grabs”.

### **DIY 6: 2009. Professional development projects *by* artists *for* artists**

Advertised by an open call to artists to lead professional development sessions, DIY 6 offered artists working in or around the form of Live Art the opportunity “to conceive and run unusual training and professional development projects for other artists.” In its sixth year in 2009, using the words “innovative”, “idiosyncratic” and “eclectic” in its advertising, it suggests an alternative approach to supporting the “often unusual needs of artists.”<sup>16</sup> Of the nine DIY 6 projects, two were South West based: Kayle Brandon, Heath Bunting, James Kennard and Vahida Ramujkic presented “Business as Usual” from 19-20 September 2009 at Avon Gorge, Bristol. This was a series of workshops “encouraging participants to spend time in the wilds of the Bristol as indigenous human beings: an opportunity to get scratched, burnt, dirty, afraid and enlightened”. The second was run in Plymouth by “LOW PROFILE”, Rachel Dobbs and Hannah Jones,

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<sup>16</sup> DIY 6 information. [http://www.thisisliveart.co.uk/prof\\_dev/diy/diy6\\_allgeneral.html](http://www.thisisliveart.co.uk/prof_dev/diy/diy6_allgeneral.html), (accessed 23 October 2009). DIY 6 advertised nine projects across England with awards of £1,000 each which must take place between 1 August and 30 September 2009. DIY began in 2002 and with the exception of 2003 has run every year including 2009.

entitled “What do you do with the leftovers?” Its aim was “to examine, re-trace, take stock of, and realise the potential of the ‘stuff’ that is leftover from the artistic process of making.”

DIY is open to artists of all levels of experiences, but those taking responsibility for leading professional development tend to have many years of practice behind them. Clare Thornton, a South West based experienced artist who took part in the first DIY in 2002, wrote: “I believe ‘DIY for artists’ is a really productive form of training, as it is so specifically tailored to what I need. I’ve been on many training courses before but none that felt so relevant to me.”<sup>17</sup>

As discussed above, the DIY ethic criticises a contemporary culture perceived to emphasise the idea that our needs are met by buying in “outside help” and instead inspires people to develop their own ways to meet their needs. Both LADA and TACA put this DIY ethos at the heart of their CPD by artists for artists with no pressure of an end product, and using the unmediated language of the artists. Whilst CCFS, which I discuss below, attempted certain elements of this approach by developing peer networking, the language, definitions of eligibility, leadership, and consequently ownership were held by the providers. In both TACA and DIY 6 the value system and decision-making is led by artists; the “field” or the “market” (in Bourdieu’s terms) is determined by the peer group.

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<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

## **“The real world”: Origins of the CCFS**

Over thirteen months, I observed CCFS, beginning with the first artists’ meeting on 21 February 2008 through to its culmination with the “Re-Route” exhibition launch at The Devon Guild of Craftsmen, Bovey Tracey, Devon on 13 March 2009.<sup>18</sup> Additionally I had informal talks with all the artists, evaluators and stakeholders.

In 2001 - 2002 Erica Steer<sup>19</sup> was instrumental in ACE South West research that resulted in the publication of The Real World / a Prospectus for the Crafts in the South West (2002). Its introduction stated:

This prospectus...reveals the professional and business development needs of the crafts constituency in the region. It shows where those needs are not being met and explains how we believe the sector can capitalize on development opportunities regionally, nationally and internationally.

The key to achieving this is partnership working.<sup>20</sup>

The main obstacles to growth for makers were summarised as “money, time and knowledge”.<sup>21</sup> These findings led to the eventual setting up of CCFS, taking approximately five years to develop. The pilot Reflective Practitioner Scheme (RPS), upon which it is based, took place first in 2002-2003.<sup>22</sup> It has already been stated in many of the documents discussed in Chapter One and particularly Chapter Two, in addition to The Real World, that experienced makers need cohort support, mentoring,

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<sup>18</sup> Appendix 10 details the peer events throughout the Scheme.

<sup>19</sup> Erica Steer was Crafts Officer for ACE South West, and in this position was originally one of the key people on the Reflective Practitioner Scheme steering group. As Crafts Officer she was instrumental in the setting up of CCFS and continuing to represent ACE on the management of CCFS. She began her new position as Co-Director for the Devon Guild of Craftsmen in early 2008, and has continued to be a significant player in the CCFS.

<sup>20</sup> ACE South West, The Real World / a Prospectus for the Crafts in the South West, 2002, p. 2.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>22</sup> RPS is discussed throughout this thesis and particularly in Chapters One and Two.

confidence and esteem raising via kudos from respected individuals and organisations in their “fields”. It should not be surprising therefore, that this support is successful when it is funded to take place.

In summarising the DIY case studies above, followed by a discussion of CCFS, I could evidence the same observations and findings again. All stakeholders in CCFS already knew that time, space, money and good networks are key to experienced artists’ development. The multiple understandings of mid-career parallel the multiple needs associated with being a practising professional experienced artist. CCFS makers, TACA and DIY 6 artists have different approaches to delivery, different “capitals” and speak different artistic “languages” when selling their work to different markets. Yet the models that are evidenced as good practice are surprisingly similar across all of these different ways of working: a core of individual artistic support and professional mentoring, within a cohort of peers, backed up with well tailored generic support that is appropriate to need.

CCFS was described in the draft planning document as “an entirely new initiative...specifically tailored to meet the development needs of contemporary crafts businesses in the South West region.” Despite being “entirely new”, the same paragraph stated: “The model is based on the Matrix: Reflective Practitioner...Evaluation of this cross-artform project found that there was benefit in the provision of flexible supported learning and that an approach that gave room for

individual practice whilst developing complementary peer group support was extremely successful.”<sup>23</sup>

In contrast to the two DIY schemes, CCFS used language to strictly define who could gain from the CPD on offer and appeared to be routing professional development in one direction: at the successful growth of a defined crafts market. An example of this is the Scheme’s definition of mid-career:

craft businesses that were able to demonstrate; at least seven years of established practice through a track record of development and regular exposure of new work through exhibitions and commissions at a regional, national and international level; originality and quality of making; evidence of a strong personal making style in their work; a potential to combine innovative and creative ideas with entrepreneurial acumen and the ambition to grow their business.<sup>24</sup>

Despite the knowledge that “mid-career” does not have a standard definition the Scheme did use a very limiting definition to determine who would be accepted onto CCFS. A retrospective comparative review of other mid-career focused programmes by the evaluators found “that there was no agreed standard criteria amongst agencies and individuals around the terms emerging, mid-career and established.”<sup>25</sup>

The Morris Hargreaves McIntyre report Taste Buds, discussed above, is used in The Real World and in the CCFS evaluation.<sup>26</sup> The report constructed three classifications of artists: Emerging, Mid-career and Established. Mid-career was defined as “artists who graduated more than 10 years ago and still consider themselves as professional artists.”

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<sup>23</sup> ACE South West unpublished draft planning document, working title: Craft Fellowship Scheme (CFS), n.d, p. 3.

<sup>24</sup> Palmer Hamilton Partnership for ArtsMatrix: Contemporary Craft Fellowship Scheme (CCFS) Evaluation Report, June 2009, p. 2. Punctuation in the original.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>26</sup> Appendix 12 represents Morris Hargreaves McIntyre’s diagram of an artists’ career path.

Established was defined as “artists who may have won national prizes or whose work is shown in national / international public collections.” Their definition of “mid-career” and “established” appear to be merged into the CCFS description above; applicants required a “track record” although this need not have taken ten years to establish.

The CCFS Management Committee met in January 2008 to select Phase One participants. No face-to-face interviews took place. The assessment criteria for CCFS were stated to be based on the “quality” of ideas and practice; “innovative ways of working”; how a maker managed their practice; whether the finances appeared viable; and the benefit to the maker and their practice.<sup>27</sup> Out of a hundred registrations of interest from designer-makers in Phase One of the Scheme, twenty-seven made full applications resulting in the selection of eleven participants (thirteen people; two of the participants were partnerships). Whilst one of the original key aims of CCFS was to support twenty designer makers:

It was felt that only 11 applicants met the stated eligibility and criteria from the 27 applications received. Some applicants did not fulfil the number of years in practice criteria and some did not fulfil the criteria for craft materials.”<sup>28</sup>

Rather than an open process where nine more makers may have benefited from a Phase One CPD process, those places were left empty, because applicants could not demonstrate what the committee had determined were the values for the “field”; these values were not necessarily led by the needs of makers in the South West.

It is possible that the successful Fellows could be described as having a developed CPD “disposition” – that is, a developed competency in making funding applications – and

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<sup>27</sup> Palmer Hamilton Partnership, Evaluation Report, p. 2.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40. Appendix 9 of this thesis details the objectives of the Scheme.

could therefore articulate their needs in a language recognised as “quality” by providers. The mechanism by which artists applied meant that those who could not articulate why they needed a Fellowship in the “right” language did not make the Phase One entry point. “Quality” and “track record” were words used explicitly in CCFS but not in TACA or LADA. How does one build a track record? If one does not have a track record, does that mean therefore that one is not mid-career? It seems that if we follow either the Taste Buds definition of mid-career or the meaning of “experienced” artist that I have discussed throughout this thesis, then the CCFS understanding of mid-career was neither of these, but was aimed at an artist who already had a strong market value, someone who was able to raise economic viability and cultural capital, someone who in Taste Buds would actually be described as “established”.<sup>29</sup>

The serendipitous usage of Taste Buds for two South West based CPD projects in opposite ways (CCFS viewed the report as evidence, TACA laughed at it), demonstrates that artists’ careers can be perceived and researched very differently. At TACA I observed philosophical discussions which were bound up in the experiences and working practices of those involved, resulting in the presentation of a diversity of perspectives. Many of those participating combined practices as artists with academic positions; some were also studying for PhDs. In CCFS the domains were rigidly separated and deeper philosophical and cultural dialogues were kept outside of the presentations and discussions of the Scheme.

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<sup>29</sup> All participants in CCFS had been practising for at least ten years, some for over twenty years or more. Most had a BA, some had MAs, and most had stayed within the crafts field since graduating. One artist was in what she described as her “second career”. Her first “career” had been in building recording studios, and she had worked in enamel since 1994. In addition to durational longevity, some international practices were in evidence and some were working in commercial design settings. Some artists had purchased large-scale machinery to work with; one had built a studio in their garden and installed a large kiln. Using Morris Hargreaves McIntyre’s definitions, most CCFS participants would create the impossible feat of being able to be categorised as both established and mid-career at the same time. All would fulfil Gladwell’s 10,000 hour rule detailed in Chapter Four.

## Region, place and space

At TACA, Vickery described her own artistic practice in Cornwall as “based on memory, story and a sense of belonging, whilst encompassing the complexities of time and place, of nostalgia and site... and having multiple layers and points of entry.” She reflected that she had been wary of getting “caught in the trap” of the beauty of the BOSarts sites, observing it was “very easy to get blown away” by the place. The importance of the Cornish coastline and farm sites as locations for the seminar (one session was held in a large working barn; we sat on haystacks, and for most of the session I had a warm clucking hen sitting on my foot and the sound of horses behind me), created an emotional context and what Mike Pearson describes as a “relational concept”.<sup>30</sup> The importance of that particular place at that particular time created a discussion which may have been articulated differently if the sessions had been held, for example, in Arnolfini’s building in Bristol. The participants came mostly from the South West region, and a few from London and Wales. For some people I talked to who did not attend, they suggested it was partly due to the thought of the long journey and having to “give up” time (including a weekend) to get to the site.

The accessibility of the Devon Guild of Craftsmen in Bovey Tracey is entirely dependent on one’s own starting location. The Guild is recognised as a successful “hub” for the craft sector in the South West region:

The *Real World* research highlighted that there were no definitive figures for the actual numbers of makers in the south west region but estimated that there could be as many as 5,000 – the highest number of makers in England outside of London...The Devon Guild of Craftsmen is identified in the research as a highly valued source of

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<sup>30</sup> Pearson, *In Comes I*, p. 11.

support for designer makers of contemporary fine craft particularly those at mid career level.<sup>31</sup>

According to statistics in CCFS evaluation report, the number of initial registrations for CCFS from Devon were over twice that of Cornwall and Somerset and nearly five times more than Gloucestershire, Dorset, Wiltshire and Bristol.<sup>32</sup> The same statistics viewed via application by “town”, evidence that Exeter represented twice as many registrations of interest (over thirty) than any other “town”.<sup>33</sup> Phase One successful applications were evenly spread via sub-region.<sup>34</sup> Two of the five CCFS Fellows, Fabrizia Bazzo and Janet Stoyel, were already members of The Devon Guild. Whilst actual CCFS events moved around the region with meetings in Plymouth, Bristol, Bovey Tracey and Exeter, with the final “Re-route” exhibition at The Devon Guild, the situation of the Guild exemplifies some of the theories in Chapter Four: in particular, Massey’s assertion that “an insertion *into* a space/place... will help produce that space, and it may do this both as a material object (if it is such) and as a set of practices.”<sup>35</sup> The location of The Guild in relation to an individual maker’s location in the South West may be to a certain extent, serendipitous, and yet it can affect information, availability and access to the “right” connections or networks depending on one’s practice.

Originally CCFS proposals aimed for a three-year Scheme delivered in two eighteen month phases for mid-career designer-makers. Funding to deliver this Scheme was sought from the South West Regional Development Agency (SWRDA). Because SWRDA required demonstrable economic impact on the participants’ businesses within

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<sup>31</sup> Palmer Hamilton Partnership, *Evaluation Report*, 2009, p. 1. Emphasis in the original.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.* (Bristol had just over fifteen, and Plymouth just fewer than fifteen registrations).

<sup>34</sup> Dorset was an exception to this and was not represented.

<sup>35</sup> Doreen Massey and Gillian Rose, *Personal Views: Public Art Research Project*, The Open University, Social Sciences Faculty, 2003, p. 11.

six months of the Scheme's initiation, conditions for funding were determined to be too burdensome, and alternative sources of funding were sought. After various re-writings of the Scheme to fit funding objectives, a significantly trimmer two-phase process was created. Phase One consisted of professional development support, one to one sessions and networking opportunities to all participants, and led to eligibility for practitioners to apply for Phase Two which offered a bursary of £5,000 and personalised mentoring support.

CCFS evaluator Paulene Hamilton observed the relative ease of gaining funding for graduate / emergent artist provision, because more common needs can be provided for en masse. Once an artist becomes more experienced, "it's very very expensive to provide what they need".<sup>36</sup> This is not a new revelation; Erica Steer returned to this theme in discussion at the January 2009 CCFS session. One of the Fellows asked the administrators, "What happens for support in the future...How to get money to do it again?" CC and Devon Guild agreed it was difficult to continue with the same format, and observed that the Craft Blueprint suggests partnerships are the way forward and yet Creative and Cultural Skills are clear that they will not be a delivery agency; this means that "other organisations will need to go out and deliver what's needed". Frances Meredith of ArtsMatrix revealed that she receives approximately one enquiry per week regarding finding funding for artists' mentoring.

Acknowledging the time the CCFS took to set up and fund, Steer said:

The RDA funding was one step too far. CCFS is about genuinely investing in the sector...The RDA wanted explicit outcomes and

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<sup>36</sup> Informal conversation with one of the evaluators of CCFS, Paulene Hamilton, at CCFS day, 30 September 2008.

demonstrable economic impact. Economic viability was not the rationale behind the Scheme... There were many false alleys, and it takes longer than you think to set up. Funding doesn't fit the current agenda... Money and intensity are a much better outcome than funding individuals to do superficial training.

The RDA's value system based on building economic capital and the language of funding outputs were perceived by those responsible for CCFS as detrimental to experienced artists' individual CPD and deemed to be too onerous even for providers accustomed to framing and narrating artists stories to suit available funding agendas. Although not entirely successfully, the focus in CCFS did attempt to iterate a "journey" rather than a fixed destination.

### **CCFS Phase One: Peer networking days, 21 February 2008 and 14 April 2008**

The first CCFS peer networking day asked artists to describe why they registered for Phase One.<sup>37</sup> The following broad reasons were articulated: re-engagement and re-inspiration to move forward with current practice; developing new work; developing existing work in a new direction; moving into new arenas, such as fine art, design, larger-scale or more publicly-sited work.

At the end of the second Phase One day, in an Open Space session facilitated by ArtsMatrix, the discussion moved onto addressing the question "What was a meaningful language for artists to describe their practice?" Most suggested that this was dependent on what felt appropriate for the time and context and to whom they were talking. The facilitator asked artists to describe their preferred label. After initial frustration at the

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<sup>37</sup> Appendix 10 details the peer networking days.

question, the following comments were offered: “Designer/maker” (three people), “builder”, “designer” (two people), “sculptor”, “artist”, “ceramicist”, “craftsman”, “jeweller working with enamel or studio jeweller or designer-maker”, “jeweller or designer-jeweller”, “ceramic artist or ceramicist or potter - designer is not for me”, “designer-maker /general Ceramicist as opposed to a potter because of my industrial background.” It was noted that people are reclaiming the term “applied artist”.

The broad theme of “time” underlay much of the professional needs discussion in Phase One of CCFS: in particular, how to “buy” or create time to research ideas. Time has to be subsidised or paid for in some way, and the need to take time “out” was often undervalued because of the need to earn income. Many of the artists felt they consistently under-priced their time. One observed: “I need to know I am worth this”. Gaining validation (described as “being able to ‘feel’ professional”, increasing esteem, confidence and respect in the field), and exploring ways to raise public profile were linked in the marketing session to thinking about gaining exposure and visibility – for example, researching the market and finding the right fair or event at which to sell work.

Other discussions of professional need centred on finding ways to pitch oneself and price work at the “right” level; this was linked to volume produced. For example, a number of artists used huge amounts of their time to make relatively few sellable products or for commissions. One small commission in economic terms was described as taking over “my life for a year”, and another commission as “a massive amount of labour time”. Finally, the need to be challenged and continue to be inspired and (as discussed previously) to find meaningful languages to describe practices was linked to the values of individuality and uniqueness.

## **CCFS Phase Two: The five successful Contemporary Craft Fellows**

Following Phase One, a Phase Two application process resulted in five Fellowships awarded to: Fabrizia Bazzo (glass); Jenny Beavan (ceramics); Fionna Hesketh (jewellery); Katie Bunnell and Jessie Higginson (ceramics, working as Higg and Bunn); and Janet Stoyel (textiles). All were women who had significant experience in practising their craft.<sup>38</sup> Beavan and Stoyel both had over twenty five years experience; Hesketh over twenty years; Bazzo, and Higg and Bunn over ten years each. The Fellows had disparate needs: Bazzo and Beavan wished to extend into site-specific practice; Bazzo into larger scale production, and Beavan into permanent sites. Hesketh wished to gain new ideas and Stoyel to gain new international markets. Higg and Bunn wished to research markets for their new partnership whilst researching the possible artistic processes of the partnership itself.

The following section details my observations of the Fellows' aims, comments and actions during CCFS. All quotations are from their presentations and documentation during the networking days; from the "Re-Route" film or exhibition signage, and from the evaluators' report.

Fabrizia Bazzo practices in stained glass. Arriving in the United Kingdom in 1996, she became a full member of The Devon Guild of Craftsmen in 1998. She observed:

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<sup>38</sup> The Fellows were all women, and the people representing the major stakeholders were also women (including the two evaluators) except for the new ACE SW Crafts Officer who replaced Erica Steer. The Devon Guild of Craftsmen membership list shows that approximately forty percent of their members are male.

My journey started in November last year [2007], out of desperation, frustration. You know what you want but don't find who can help you technically to make this idea a reality... I thought I was naive very early on, thinking that these great glass pieces were made by geniuses, and then I realised that these are made in collaboration with studios.<sup>39</sup>

Her proposal for the Fellowship was to research a commercial laminating facility where she could fabricate larger scale glass work without using lead, to orientate towards gaining large, sited, glass work commissions. She observed: "in order to expand your practice at some point you need to look outside [using existing facilities] and consider working in collaboration, otherwise you can't expand."<sup>40</sup>

Bazzo "found nowhere in the UK" before locating Derix Studio in Germany, who collaborate with artists: "the philosophy of how they work is special."<sup>41</sup> She undertook a two-day introductory visit in July 2008 returning for nine days in October 2008. Bazzo aimed to make samples to show potential clients: "Sampling is something I never do; I hadn't had time or money. I realised it was a useful process for others to understand my work."<sup>42</sup> At Derix, Bazzo worked with an assistant for seven days: "it is the first time I have worked with anyone else, it's a very very interesting experience."<sup>43</sup> Bazzo revealed she had requested technical information in order to understand how Derix prevented bubbles forming in the glass but Derix would not provide this, as it was valuable "market knowledge".

The Fellowship gave Bazzo both financial support, and the ability to take one of the many "wonderful ideas bubbling" into focus and support it within the timeframe. She

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<sup>39</sup> CCFS presentation by the artist, 30 September 2008.

<sup>40</sup> CCFS presentation by the artist, 20 January 2009, and "Re-Route" film.

<sup>41</sup> CCFS presentation by the artist, 20 January 2009.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

commented that “one year seems a long time, but it is not when you are trying to realise this idea.”<sup>44</sup> Significantly, Bazzo stated that the Fellowship “gives me credibility, a presentation card, for when I next contact someone.”<sup>45</sup> She also observed that “it is a great opportunity to everyone, a booster to self-confidence.”<sup>46</sup>

Bazzo had not considered mentoring before, although she was aware that ArtsMatrix offered it.<sup>47</sup> Her mentor was George Papadopoulos, a glass artist from Yorgos Studios, chosen by the CCFS committee because he has published on glass lamination and has a long experience of working with Derix. The influence of expertise of the committee on choice of mentor, and the subsequent direction of the relationship could be perceived positively or negatively.<sup>48</sup> Bazzo commented in January 2009:

I'm not sure whether we approached the mentor / mentee relationship in the right way. We are very opposite...

When you are a student you know you are a student, even if you know more than your tutor, you are in a position of observing and learning. And I found myself in this situation. It is difficult to say to your tutor: “you are wrong”. You can't sometimes; it wasn't that kind of relationship. The positions somehow give you the authority or non-authority...no-one else seemed to have that issue with their mentors...Because he's he, him, I could never do that in the same way, I must find my way to present myself, my work.<sup>49</sup>

The emphasis of the mentoring relationship shifted to the areas of marketing, management with clients, and finance, areas in which Bazzo observed, “I am very very

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<sup>44</sup> “Re-Route” film.

<sup>45</sup> CCFS presentation by the artist, 20 January 2009.

<sup>46</sup> “Re-Route” film.

<sup>47</sup> ArtsMatrix do not offer arts-based mentoring on an ongoing basis, only when they achieve funding or a specific themed project in order to do so.

<sup>48</sup> Previously, ArtsMatrix successful mentoring scheme had asked those applying for mentoring to choose their own mentor: “The ArtsMatrix Mentoring Scheme asked that each potential mentee chose their mentor, and did not keep a database of potential mentors. This was singled out as a key factor in the success of the programme and of the mentee/mentor relationship.” Notes from facilitated evaluation of ArtsMatrix Mentoring Scheme, Friday 23 February 2007, 10am – 4pm at Watershed Media Centre, Bristol, p. 6.

<sup>49</sup> CCFS presentation by the artist, 20 January 2009.

weak so it has been a big help really. It opens horizons that I've never considered before." Bazzo felt that mentoring had been "useful but difficult."<sup>50</sup> A fragment of Bazzo's exhibition signage said: "the important outcome for any journey is to consider that it's only the beginning of possibilities not even yet imagined."<sup>51</sup>

Jenny Beavan's work engages with the concept of "place" involving detailed research partnered with an academic teaching practice. Her main aim for the Fellowship was to extend her practice into "site specific and public and civic situations."<sup>52</sup> She applied for the Fellowship: "knowing that I wanted to increase the scale of my work and I wanted to take it from an impermanent situation to a permanent situation. To be set into a place and made with that place in mind."<sup>53</sup> She also later described her proposal as "a new cycle in my clay work – continuing my interest in the chaotic and unpredictable nature of geology...I am scooping up all my techniques and re-jigging, re-assessing... gathering all the things that I've done in order to sift through them in order to work up solutions."<sup>54</sup>

Relocating to Cornwall from Yorkshire in 1983 Beavan encountered: "a lot of prejudice...I was not a jobbing potter, I didn't have an enormous kiln...I was not of the 'Bernard Leach School'"<sup>55</sup> The move from one region to another, at this time, evidenced regional differences in interpretations of what represented the "right" kind of pottery. Beavan wished to push in a different direction, against the accepted "dispositions" of the field at that time.

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<sup>50</sup> "Re-Route" film.

<sup>51</sup> Fabrizia Bazzo, Exhibition signage at "Re-Route" The Devon Guild of Craftsmen, March 2009.

<sup>52</sup> Palmer Hamilton Partnership Evaluation Report, 2009, p. 27.

<sup>53</sup> "Re-Route" film.

<sup>54</sup> CCFS presentation by the artist, 30 September 2008.

<sup>55</sup> CCFS Initial presentation by the artist, 14 April 2008.

Cornwall's landscape has been geologically, visually and economically affected by the China Clay industry, and Beavan's ongoing interest in china clay (in addition to granite, water and other materials) became the focus for her Fellowship investigations, particularly the recording of the de-commissioning process of one specific china clay site, disused from 2008: Buell Driers at Par Docks in St. Austell. This site may eventually be developed as an "Eco town". In January 2009 Beavan said: "it's difficult even for me to know how it's going to go...The place is the most important thing...I'm working with place for my inspiration: China clay is everywhere in this situation. I'm just having a field day!" Beavan's mentor wrote: "the resulting work is a body of wholly unique and site specific pieces that trace the memory of space that is slowly eroding, and washing away down the very drains that Jenny is mapping".<sup>56</sup>

Beavan's mentor during CCFS was fundamental to her development. She chose Amanda Wanner of Studio Three architects in Liverpool and a lecturer at Leeds Metropolitan University: "She was absolutely amazing in terms of her encouragement and offering me opportunities to see different things that I wouldn't normally have looked at...I was in great need of feedback and needed someone to recognise the qualities of my work."<sup>57</sup>

Beavan observed a slow start to her Fellowship because of existing commitments: "I found it difficult to get moving on it."<sup>58</sup> Independently of the Fellowship, she travelled with eleven other British artists to China in August 2008 on a month-long residency, which on return "kick-started" the Fellowship. During the residency Beavan was badly

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<sup>56</sup> Palmer Hamilton Partnership for ArtsMatrix, Evaluation Report, 2009, p. 27.

<sup>57</sup> CCFS presentation by the artist, 20 January 2009.

<sup>58</sup> CCFS presentation by the artist, 30 September 2008.

stung by a scorpion. However, for her, the Fellowship came at the right place and right time, she commented: "The timing was quite immaculate".<sup>59</sup> She also revealed:

I don't think I have a label at the moment and I quite like that ...people used to say "what do you call yourself? Are you a potter? A ceramic artist? A ceramicist?"... And you go through all these things and you think what does any of them mean? At the moment I've no idea what I am and it's a wonderful place to be, at the beginning of something, and I don't know, I'm not at the end and it's a bit like Par docks really, new beginnings, the windows of change.<sup>60</sup>

Beavan still intends to work on a larger scale and develop permanent situations in which to install her work.

Fionna Hesketh is a Stroud-based jeweller, who described her learning experience as "a bit weird: I went from A to D to C to B rather than A to B to C to D."<sup>61</sup> Hesketh, at sixteen years old, undertook a two year craft and design course at Plymouth:

but I could avoid drawing...I stuck to making...For a while I'd been thinking should I do an MA? or an Access course? I felt it might be too slow or I'll lose interest, so when this came up [CCFS] I thought: "brilliant, mentors!" That's the main thing that attracted me to it.<sup>62</sup>

After leaving college she made small batch work, describing it as "bread and butter; I could have a living from it."<sup>63</sup>

In the concentration required to become a maker Hesketh had not given herself the opportunity to tinker or explore ideas nor to explore what drawing might offer for her. Following many years of producing disparate items of jewellery and selling them,

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<sup>59</sup> "Re-Route" film.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> CCFS presentation by the artist, 20 January 2009.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> CCFS Initial presentation by the artist, 14 April 2008.

Hesketh was concerned to make an artistic engagement with her practice. Her Fellowship proposal was entitled: "new ideas, no end product." She said:

I was used to getting to the end product quickly... There is pressure to earn a living from what I was doing. I was feeling like I was making what people wanted to buy rather than what I wanted to make.<sup>64</sup>

Hesketh's two "official" mentors were Matthew Harris, a textiles maker and lecturer in drawing who "lives up the road... I've been watching his work develop and feel comfortable with him," and Helen Carnac, a metal-smith and lecturer. Hesketh said: "I had been to an exhibition, Process Works, which Helen had been part of, and I realised 'I don't do this'".<sup>65</sup> What Hesketh did not "do" was give time to "process" in her practice. She was particularly keen to introduce the use of gestural mark-making to generate ideas and later observed:

I've had two fantastic mentors who've really challenged me. I needed mentors who knew what I was doing and how I'd been working in order to know what I needed to change... I needed a concentrated amount of time and input from other people to help me find ways to use the drawing to help me creatively so that I could put it into my work. I knew the two were linked somehow but I didn't know how to piece them together.<sup>66</sup>

Simultaneously with the Fellowship, Hesketh began a collaborative project with two other makers who were "proving to be like mentors as well... I've benefited from one to one attention with sensitive and empowering advice from my mentors. I've also had good advice from the large community of artists in the Stroud area."<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Amalgamation of CCFS presentation by the artist, 30 September 2008 and 20 January 2009.

<sup>65</sup> CCFS presentation by the artist, 20 January 2009.

<sup>66</sup> "Re-Route" film.

<sup>67</sup> CCFS presentation by the artist, 20 January 2009.

Her Fellowship took on the practices of wild drawing and walking: “My mentor said ‘go for a walk and draw without conventional drawing’”.<sup>68</sup> Within this process Hesketh discovered a new approach, explaining:

One ‘Eureka!’ moment for me: I’d been walking in the woods and brought back some wild clematis; traveller’s joy, old man’s beard. It was just lying on the garden table as I had a cup of tea, and some of the fibrous innards came out. I was just idly looking at it and I realised that’s it, that’s it, that’s what I need, I tried to take some photographs, unsuccessfully, so I grabbed a white gesso board that a friend had given me and took some photographs... This was my moment for me. I knew it had to go somewhere. It was the fibrous qualities about it that appealed to me... That’s the moment I remember.<sup>69</sup>

Hesketh noted “some crushing and bruising experiences as well as inspiring ones”.

Another frustration was the need to fulfil obligations for teaching and jewellery making before she could begin drawing. In January 2009 Hesketh was worried she may lose customers because of her new way of working, yet was also surprised that clients so far had accepted a more gestural mark-making presentation of possible products rather than the processes that Hesketh had previously used with clients.

Of all the Fellows Hesketh stood out to me, and to the evaluators and Crafts Council, in terms of the artistic leap she had made. She had used her external landscape as inspiration and observed:

I consider drawing differently now... How I can use drawing as a tool for new ideas. You have to keep on looking... keep the enquiry open, always asking questions, keep investigating, be patient... you’ll know when it happens, when that’s the thing you know you’ll need to investigate some more.

I want to expand on materials now, start reskilling how to use them. That’s a bit of a nut to crack. I am used to using metals in a certain way, and I want to slightly deskill and come at it from a different

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<sup>68</sup> CCFS presentation by the artist, 30 September 2008.

<sup>69</sup> “Re-Route” film.

angle...I wanted to meet the challenge. It's been a great period of self-development.<sup>70</sup>

However, the exhibition signage mediated by Devon Guild and the stakeholders presented Hesketh words slightly differently:

I see the Fellowship as being a pivotal part of my career, a trigger point that will leave a lasting legacy. At the end I expect to have built up momentum in my approach to design that will set a precedent in my creative practice.

I have welcomed the opportunity this award has given me as a starting point to refresh, invigorate and renew my creative practice.

Hesketh said in January 2009 that "it appealed and scared me, and gave me confidence; that someone thought I was worth it." The content and context of language in CCFS is discussed throughout this chapter. The documentation at the exhibition formed a carefully chosen story which represented only the stories that the stakeholders wished to tell.

Katie Bunnell and Jessie Higginson, working as Higg and Bunn, share an aesthetic interest in mark-making with a focus on surface pattern and wanted the Fellowship to support them to work and potentially design together in order to:

Create a sustainable creative business partnership based on the development of a range of high quality ceramic products. Our shared passion is for creating ceramic surfaces, exploring pattern, line, colour, texture and illustrative imagery.<sup>71</sup>

By January 2009 they observed: "We are very confused about what to do, we have indecision, we are talking in circles." In the film shown at Re-Route they concluded: "We were very ambitious to start off with in this business we wanted to run, in that we

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<sup>70</sup> "Re-Route" film.

<sup>71</sup> Palmer Hamilton Partnership, *Evaluation Report*, 2009, p. 28.

would take our skills in surface design into manufacturing and make the Higg and Bunn empire!”

Their mentor was Tavs Jorgensen, a ceramic designer running his own design consultancy (Oktavius) and who also operates as Dartington Pottery’s main shape designer. Higg and Bunn said: “we used our mentor less perhaps, and used each other instead and talked to twenty to twenty-five other different people.”<sup>72</sup> They described “a rather depressing trip to Stoke on Trent” where they visited businesses to “ask what they might do for us... We felt that none of the businesses were secure enough to work with. Therefore we had to rethink the project. We went off-plan regarding how we envisaged this year going – it has gone in a completely different direction.”<sup>73</sup>

The current state of the UK ceramic manufacturing industry disappointed them, and they were struck with the pace of change of ownership of factories and businesses. They “discovered three or four models of practice that we might be able to follow but as makers we wanted to maintain control over the process, foolishly, and therefore wanted to make forms for industry rather than selling designs.”<sup>74</sup>

At the end of the Fellowship year, Higg and Bunn had created a body of research, but had not identified a clear way forward. The Crafts Council representative suggested the research formed a viable off-shoot of the process, of use to a wider peer group working in similar areas. Acknowledging that the Fellowship had been invaluable in creating a network and body of research, Higg and Bunn also suggested that their ambition did not

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<sup>72</sup> CCFS presentation by the artists, 20 January 2009.

<sup>73</sup> “Re-Route” film.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

fit into a single year timescale, and their project is longer term. However they observed that the Fellowship had provided:

the time and the funding...to do our research and explore working together as a partnership...It's been very useful to be able to say "we've got this grant funding, we're supported by the Crafts Council" to gain access to these people to say we can pay you for two hours of consultancy money. People have taken us more seriously and are more willing to talk to us because we could offer this professional background to our project.<sup>75</sup>

They will use the remaining money to discuss surface pattern design with a relevant person.

Janet Stoyel was unable to complete the Fellowship due to illness. Her work had attracted significant commercial interest; she already occupied a strong position in what Bourdieu would term the "Field of Large Scale Production"<sup>76</sup> where earning large income *is* respected and valued. After leaving school at fifteen, Stoyel trained as a baker, later training for four years in constructed textiles at Birmingham. Following work for others (for example, Marks and Spencers, and the fashion designer Helen Storey), Stoyel set up on her own. The mainstay of her business for the previous fourteen years (to 2008) had been laser-cut textiles, in particular laser-cut lace, "mainly to the American Market; New York international Gift Fair, San Francisco Gift Fair and Atlanta markets etc."<sup>77</sup>

In July 2007, Stoyel's "Topography collection" had sold out at a Japanese Fair. Stoyel also had a senior research post in textiles at the University of the West of England. In 2006 she had received a Winston Churchill Travel Award to research Japanese

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<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>76</sup> This is discussed in Chapter Four.

<sup>77</sup> CCFS Initial presentation by the artist, 14 April 2008.

Katagami (Japanese paper stencil patterns), and had received a Corpus Christi architectural commission (after being “picked up” at the design fair “100% Design”) to create a four metre long architectural piece: “I had 1108 enquiries from that.”<sup>78</sup>

Stoyel’s aim for the Fellowship was to research international markets; particularly she wanted to focus on the Index trade show in Dubai. At the start of Phase Two of CCFS in September 2008, she said: “life happens...I’ve had a really bad time” and presented both the work she had begun for the Fellowship, but in addition, images of being hospitalised, explaining: “so I’ve been very slow starting my Fellowship”<sup>79</sup> She had however, already been on a scoping mission to Dubai and said she could feel the “shift” from her main market in America to this “enormous market at a fair encompassing fifty-six countries...They have a truly disposable income...I could be very rich this time next year”. She observed that Dubai “is a huge growth market...a gateway to a much bigger market...a massive market.”<sup>80</sup>

Her research focus was to be in designing headwear for Muslim women using her existing laser-lace techniques. Her mentor was David Lloyd OBE (Senior Consultant to the Middle East Association); he has offered to support Stoyel post-Fellowship, and the outcome of the Fellowship for Stoyel is delayed.

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<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> CCFS presentation by the artist, 30 September 2008.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*

## Observations from Phase One and Two

The steering group emphasized the importance of peer networking throughout CCFS and aimed to develop an established cohort that would “use peer support networks to monitor, review, evaluate and sustain development.”<sup>81</sup> Participants were encouraged to take responsibility to “shape” the network days. ArtsMatrix suggested regular cohort meetings for mid-career practitioners, at known venues around the region. The idea of the development of a new network which would facilitate communication beyond the introductory days for all Phase One participants has not worked. The evaluators observed that “it is clear from the feedback that the CCFS ‘network’ has not been used fully to monitor, review, evaluate and sustain development.”<sup>82</sup> The introductory day:

was met with mixed feelings. Some...gained a lot...experiencing techniques that helped them bring clarity to their professional development. Some...did not consider it wholly worthwhile...Others were sceptical about the approach, which was new to them. Some of the feedback suggested that they might have felt awkward at this first session – where there were people they had not met before including representatives of the Crafts Council and ACE South West.<sup>83</sup>

The evaluators observed that three people “felt that the competitive element for the bursary did not sit comfortably alongside the development of peer learning and networking”. They also observed:

Unless it is very clear from the beginning what the network is meant to support or to address then the constraints of geography, time and money as well as the different disciplines involved creates a challenge for facilitation and management.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Palmer Hamilton Partnership, *Evaluation Report*, 2009, p. 10.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24. Appendix 10 in this thesis gives detail of the Networking days.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

A further networking day for November 2008 was discussed but did not happen; the evaluators stated this was “due to the geography and size of the region.”<sup>85</sup>

LADA, by contrast, whilst having rigid guidelines, is open to expressions of professional development delivery by the artists, and creates strong temporary peer networks via the artists. CCFS was very much defined by the stakeholders with a rigid application structure within a defined and controlled timescale. This may explain why the expectation that artists would then take the lead for a permanent South West wide networking initiative which had been led and initiated and controlled by the stakeholders and not owned by the artists was unsuccessful. In Chapter Two I described the methods of artist-led conversation in the practices of Petralia and Parrott. Above in this chapter, Vickery called TACA an “artist-led inter-partnership exchange”; conversations took place in an unpressurised environment. CCFS attempted to create a similar exchange in a peer network, but as it was framed by each partner’s “capitals” in Bourdieu’s sense of the word; all brought different agendas, and there was little sense of commensality, of “equals” at the table, or a sense of the conviviality that had been evident at TACA.

Despite the failure to create a productive formal network, whilst CCFS continued, so did discussion exploring shared concerns. In Phase One, a spontaneous conversation on technical language, regarding how to market and what to call pieces which are not mould-cast but are similar, resulted in an artist sharing advice to call these “variable editions”. Another discussion took place on “uniformity” in laser techniques in industrial applications. In Phase Two the group were able to make connections, and

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<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

share fragments of advice – for example, regarding the technical aspects of working with wire, or pending Design Shows and European networks. As RPS and many other schemes have demonstrated, the added cohort leading to cross-fertilisation of knowledge and information is extremely valuable; networking builds social capital. A participant observed: “it was a brilliant session to hear other people talking about our work...to be talking to people on the same level... not be just giving, but actually getting a response.”<sup>86</sup>

## **Mentoring**

The second Phase One day invited two South West based practitioners, Daisy Dunlop and Lucien Taylor, to present on their experiences of mentoring. The presentations operated as both sharing of learning, and as advocacy for mentoring practice which would be a key element of Phase Two. Dunlop described her experience of acting as a mentor, and three different experiences of being a mentee (mentored by a business advisor, a “visionary person” and a crafts officer). The business advisor was “far too abstract, clinical”; the visionary “was incredibly helpful, but I still did not have the level of empathy and identification that you need”; and the crafts officer “took my work to pieces”. Dunlop described a good mentoring relationship as “being paired with someone who is somehow on the same page.”

Dunlop as an experienced maker and mentor reflected on a particular point which made her realise need *throughout* her working experience:

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<sup>86</sup> Participant, 14 April, 2008.

I got a little freaked out when I realised that I was still having lots of problems. I am consistently beset by lots of challenges...I constantly change my mind, work, game plans etc... Things do get better and better and better, but you're faced by a whole new set of possibilities and challenges...I can't overestimate how much support I need from my peer group as well... Mentoring makes me consolidate and recognize my achievements.

Lucien Taylor, reflecting on his experience of being mentored observed: "I'd got to a point in 2003 where I needed to make a change, and look at how I was working." He was successful on the Maker's Professional Development Scheme run by ETA,<sup>87</sup> describing the Scheme as operating on the principles of: "Orientation. Mapping of understanding of where I fitted in the field... The nature of the Scheme placed the creative centre of practice as the core driver". Taylor was keen to find a meaningful language for his practice, and aimed "to make significant change from the inside." The Scheme gave Taylor "permission" to practice and take time to think about his process, and he suggested that "everyone needs to buy themselves the time." Taylor had identified a need to return to an ideas generation process because his "ideas had ossified." Via interjection from his mentor, Taylor found that "the material was able to surprise me, what it hadn't been doing for years."

Similarly to Hesketh, described above, Taylor needed support from "outside his own head", and recognized that "mentors could become addictive; it's quite hard when that tap gets turned off because of the funding...I miss my mentor." The making of art as discussed in Chapter Two is to some extent a collaborative process. Bazzo also revealed, as described above, that a successful collaboration (with Derix and an

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<sup>87</sup> ETA previously meant Education Through Art, but now stands for Empowering the Artist. ETA was a comparator case study for the Reflective Practitioner Scheme and the evaluators for CCFS also used ETA as a comparator model of good practice for artist's professional development. Unfortunately ETA's Director, Deborah Rawson who was instrumental in professional development for artists died in November 2006. ETA's activities have been discontinued following an organisational review by the Board of Trustees and ACE South East.

assistant) can achieve more than a single maker. Interestingly Bazzo's was perhaps the least successful mentoring partnership; she was aware of needing to enforce her own identity and not mimic that of her mentor. Higg and Bunn seemed indifferent about their mentor, whilst Hesketh and Beavan's mentors performed the most significant and fundamental functions within their Fellowship. Hesketh and Beavan identified their own mentors, while Bazzo, Higg and Bunn and Stoyel had "support" with finding their mentors. Hesketh chose South West based mentors; all other mentors were from outside the region, and with the exception of Beavan's mentor, were London-based.

### **CCFS "Re-Route" Exhibition**

By the final CCFS peer day in January 2009, I observed that the focus on the "Re-Route" exhibition two months away in March effected a change in atmosphere for the Fellows. Beavan said: "the desire for an end product may eclipse the process which was the point of the Scheme which was time, resources, money". She commented: "it feels like a fag to do it. I've got to where I've got." Higg and Bunn also commented: "we're uncomfortable with doing the work and uncomfortable that we have to produce an exhibition." The evaluators observed that the Fellows were:

concerned about presenting new work before they felt they were ready and perhaps risked alienating existing clients. However, the showcase deadline proved to be a positive motivational experience overall in encouraging them to present their journey and experiences on the Scheme within a gallery setting. Only one Fellow viewed the exhibition as a commercial opportunity to sell work and attract commissions.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Palmer Hamilton Partnership, Evaluation Report, 2009, p. 31.

The CCFS had an expectation of delivery and therefore orientation towards product despite its stated aims that focused on process. An exhibition required further time and resources from the Fellows which the £5,000 did not cover. If the evaluators felt that the exhibition was an opportunity to gain in financial capital this suggests that the actual expectation of stakeholders regarding the outcomes of CCFS were not aligned to the original process-driven proposal.

## Language

CCFS demonstrated how powerful language is and how it is also evolving. During Phase One, each artist acknowledged their use of changing labels to describe themselves dependent on their situation. When presenting to each other as peers but still in competition for a bursary, the artists' approaches differed to their presentations once the selection process was complete. Their language was dependent on their own situation within the process, and who was present. In Phase Two, Jenny Beavan found herself "intensely liberated" from the label of "ceramicist" or "potter" via her process through the bursary.<sup>89</sup> She had also observed: "Once you get past leaving art college etc., you do have different ideas of what success is, how to 'frame' yourself."

The presence of the evaluators, CC representative or film-maker also changed the tone of artists' responses. The filming for "Re-Route" took place in January 2009 at the peer networking day. Fellows were therefore attempting to anticipate as well as reflect on the end of a process in which they were still engaged; the content and context was still changing. In peer presentation to each other, Fellows were understandably more

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<sup>89</sup> Interestingly Marcus Coates used the same word when discussing the "amazingly liberating statement" from Grizedale Forest's Director discussed above in the TACA Scheme.

revealing than in the more formal Re-Route exhibition material, in the advocacy film or in the evaluation report. Many of the comments made in presentations at this day correlate with the film and with the evaluation, because the presentations, evaluator's interviews and film-making happened on the same day. Whilst the evaluators also attended most of the other days, this was the only point at which they formally interviewed the artists.

Also on the same day, a discussion session entitled "What happens after?",<sup>90</sup> highlighted the different usages of language and where symbolic power lay in the discussions. For example, there was a prevalent sense of Fellows being "in process", in momentum, and a one-year timeframe was perceived as too short. Higg and Bunn said, "We have only just started. We thought we'd have loads of products to take to market but we haven't." Frances Meredith, the ArtsMatrix staff member responsible for the administration of CCFS,<sup>91</sup> pushed the question: "Where do you want to see your work?" "Where do you see it?" She suggested that if you have specific ideas about what you want, and where you are going, it is easier to get "there". However Higg and Bunn answered, "We have not yet done enough work, and our thinking is purely visual. We have no aims status-wise, and no agenda whatsoever, because it gets in the way." At this point in their process Higg and Bunn could articulate no further, and could not answer the specific question regarding production.

This exchange between CPD provider and artist represents a possible challenge of language which exists between business providers of CPD and artistic providers of CPD. Higg and Bunn were wrestling with process, while Meredith insistently asked,

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<sup>90</sup> Please see Appendix 10.

<sup>91</sup> Please see Appendix 10.

“Yes but how are you going to sell it?” She constantly reiterated the question and consequently disallowed the discussion of process. In this case, the need to discuss areas of intellectual, symbolic and cultural capitals, and to acknowledge the unknown and as yet unlocated outcomes, were more important to the artists than the areas of production and economic capital.

The exhibition signage and evaluation report mediated and re-represented the artists’ words (as, of course, this thesis also does). The various business processes which constituted CPD development as a part of the networking days (for example, marketing strategy and business planning) had a different language to that used when artists described CPD in the form of artistic mentoring processes.

### **Finding a “route”**

When attending the second CCFS Phase One day, artists did not know whether they would be chosen for Phase Two; the application deadline was a few days away. All artists had been requested by ArtsMatrix to give short presentations, and address the following questions within their presentations: What had been their biggest success? What was the bravest thing they had done? They were also asked to describe a barrier they had encountered. Comments from two makers (who were ultimately unsuccessful) were:

I’ve got to a point where limitation is part of my barrier. I have exhausted a particular method and need to move on... to explore the innate characteristics and qualities of the material... My biggest success is that I can make a living for over 25 years albeit a very modest one. (Ceramicist)

I have ten years of textile making, four to five years of enamel and I have been stitching for thirty plus years, and I’m at ease with this. As

a maker and author I'd had an established practice. Here I'm applying for the grant to start all over again... I'm not confident as an enameller like I am with stitching...my old practice has gone and with it, most of my confidence as a maker. (Textiles / Enamel artist)

Both these comments and Dunlop and Taylor's words, discussed earlier in this chapter, provide evidence of the difficulty of setting known routes in advance of artistic professional development and artists' recognition that they continue to navigate the unknown. Together with the five successful Fellows, and the artists detailed in Chapter Three, the need to keep being in momentum is not a "re-routing" but a continuation of being challenged and inspired. The need to develop skills of an awareness that the loss of comfort and confidence is part of the journey, is different from the implication of the term "re-route". Re-routing suggests a stopping and placing onto another already-made path within an existing field or market.

The CCFS Fellows had to forge individual ways for themselves. Beavan had articulated this as: "I want to allow things to happen, and learn from them."<sup>92</sup> Bazzo, unlike Beavan knew what she wanted to do, but was still frustrated, and her final statement that "the outcome...is only the beginning of possibilities not even yet imagined" suggests a similar understanding to that discussed in Chapter Three, when Artist H advocated being "comfortably uncomfortable". Beavan observed that she did not know how it was going to go. Higg and Bunn went "off-plan", and were faced with an unexpected decline in the ceramics industry on a national scale. Stoyel was unable to continue the process and Hesketh advised keeping enquiry open and reflected: "I don't want the pressure; I want to keep exploring the material." She felt that her work was unfinished and was resisting the expectation of an end product for the exhibition, perceiving it as a good

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<sup>92</sup> CCFS Initial presentation by the artist, 14 April 2008.

example of being in process. Hesketh also felt she would miss contact with her mentors, and may continue discussion with them, observing: "I'm sick of talking about it, but I will miss that as well". She was also concerned to keep herself "known" and "out there". Other artists discussed in Chapter Three use many ways to articulate the sense of always being in process, in momentum, of not reaching full resolution, and never fully "making it". From Dunlop and Taylor's ongoing needs for mentoring to Hesketh's comment that she will also miss her mentors, they evidence that the support of others is needed throughout a career.

The Fellowship co-existed with other influences, happenings and work commitments in the Fellows' lives. Accidents happened which changed their responses to and engagements in the Fellowship process and how they navigated through it, and were inextricably linked to the professional processes of their making. Hesketh's wild drawing exercise became a crucial part of how she was talked about in the launch and by the Crafts Council and other funders. She described a "leap forward" and this metaphor for her progress illuminates Massumi's theory discussed in Chapter Four of articulating both in language and in movement, embodying a moment. Hesketh moved forward because of something unplannable and relatively arbitrary yet within a framework that supported the possibility of action.

### **CCFS Partnerships: The Crafts Council (CC)**

Craft is separated off from the rest of the creative industries sector in both Creative and Cultural Skills' "footprint" and subsequent Craft "blueprint" document and in DCMS

statistics.<sup>93</sup> CC is the recognised funded organisation supporting this “field” of development. Creative Britain states:

The crafts sector employs nearly 100,000 people and has a turnover of £826 million. The industry is supported by the Crafts Council, the main advocacy body for the sector, which is funded by Arts Council England. The Crafts Council has recognised the importance of crafts to the creative economy: their new strategy aims to “build a strong economy and infrastructure for craft throughout the country”.<sup>94</sup>

In the introductory speeches to CCFS on the first networking day, CC discussed their involvement and funding to pilot different CPD approaches for mid-career practitioners from 2008 to 2010; CCFS is one of those models.<sup>95</sup> Findings from these three Schemes were to support CC’s modelling of future provision.

Executive Director of CC, Rosy Greenlees, opened “Re-Route” on 13 March 2009 at The Devon Guild of Craftsmen. In her speech she highlighted three themes: Professional Development Skills, Innovation and Research, and Partnership. She acknowledged these were “all buzz words,” and described the Fellowship as a “laboratory for pure experimentation creating new learning and new skills.” Observing that “in these times, it is important to allow innovation and experimentation,” Greenlees paid particular attention to the area of partnership: the partnership of mentor and maker in addition to the partnership of organisations for CCFS. She stated: “It is no mean feat for organisations to collaborate and it has been a learning process.” She described an “isolated environment for makers”, with the CCFS providing “opportunities to take oneself out of the box and engage in a bigger world.” In an associated radio interview

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<sup>93</sup> Creative and Cultural Skills “blueprints” are discussed in Chapter One. The Crafts Blueprint was launched on 10 June 2009.

<sup>94</sup> DCMS, Creative Britain, 2008, p. 44. Creative Britain is discussed in Chapter One.

<sup>95</sup> Appendix 10 further details these three models in the section on 21 February 2008.

Greenlees used many travelling metaphors, stating CCFS enabled makers to “explore new avenues”, on “a journey of discovery.”<sup>96</sup>

In a May 2009 letter to Arts Professional magazine entitled “Craft and Creative Industry”, Greenlees welcomed

the dialogue between art and industry...we know there are many excellent examples of craft interacting with other creative industries, notably fashion, architecture and design. *Perhaps in some artforms, the difficulty is language* – surely, increasing the nation’s wealth is laudable and does not detract from the intrinsic worth of art. “Skills development” is another phrase popular with government but less beloved by arts practitioners who may object to the words while supporting the aim.<sup>97</sup>

Greenlees suggests that language is problematic, evidencing that “skills development” is a difficult term (the term “CPD” is not used). Her letter also advocates for the Creative and Cultural Skills Craft Blueprint,<sup>98</sup> which “reviews the challenges facing craft and delivers recommendations for skills development. Businesses and agencies from across the sector, including the Crafts Council, have already committed to working in partnership to deliver these.”<sup>99</sup>

Taking into account recommendations in the Craft Blueprint, and to develop its own strategy, on 1 October 2009 CC launched its own new programme entitled “Crafts Council Collective.” This is described as creating a physical and virtual network of CPD incorporating five strands: “Craft Rally”, “Portfolio” and “Hothouse” (to be delivered via partnership with agencies across the country), and “Injection” and

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<sup>96</sup> Rosy Greenlees, BBC Radio Devon 13 March 2009.

<sup>97</sup> Rosy Greenlees, “Craft and Creative Industry”, Arts Professional, Issue 193, 4 May 2009, p. 2, at: [www.artsprofessional.co.uk](http://www.artsprofessional.co.uk) (accessed 5 May 2009). My emphasis.

<sup>98</sup> Creative and Cultural Skills, The Craft Blueprint. A Workforce Development Plan for Craft in the UK, June 2009. The Craft Blueprint was launched on 10 June 2009.

<sup>99</sup> Greenlees, “Craft and Creative Industry”, p. 2.

“Artistic Licence” (to be managed by CC). With the exception of Hothouse (for emerging makers) the other four strands will deliver CPD to all practitioners, with “Injection” and “Artistic Licence” particularly for experienced practitioners.<sup>100</sup>

In CC’s press release to launch “Collective”, Hilary Carty, Director of the Cultural Leadership Programme (CLP), is quoted as stating:

one size does not fit all... One of the real tangible successes of the CLP has been our partnership working with sector organisations and institutions.<sup>101</sup>

Perhaps the partnerships advocated by Greenlees and Carty prevent the separation of CPD into “business” and “artistic” professional development, by creating a “both / and” rather than an “either / or” situation.

The partnerships of business and artists in CCFS did create a successful Scheme. However, the organisations through which the funding was mediated controlled the process and consequently, as evidenced in Appendix 10, the presence of one and often two representatives of each of the main partners plus the evaluators meant the five Fellows were outnumbered by the administration. In a positive framing, a wealth of experience coalesced at each meeting, represented by artists and high profile funding bodies together with a South West-based CPD agency. This could also be framed

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<sup>100</sup> Crafts Council, “Collective: Introducing the Programme”, 1 October 2009. “Craft Rally” will support four rallies per year across the country; “Injection” will be a tailored approach with “in-depth” mentoring for a maximum of ten makers per application process requiring “business development” with support for up to eighteen months. “Artistic Licence” is based on CC’s “spark-plug” model and supports risk taking for a maximum of five makers over a maximum eighteen month period.

<sup>101</sup> Crafts Council Press Release, “The Crafts Council announced its most ambitious programme of support for craft makers at an event at Tate Modern, London on 30 September 2009.” 1 October 2009, at: <http://www.craftscouncil.org.uk/about-us/press-room/view/2009/crafts-council-collective-announced?from=/about-us/press-room/> (accessed 6 October 2009). Hilary Carty also observed: “Partnership is really an essential ingredient in today’s climate. It uses shared expertise, creates new perspectives, builds and facilitates knowledge transfer and ensures that the work that is developed is relevant. Critically, it also establishes and creates vital networks that create longevity.”

negatively; there was an observable complicity from the London-based evaluators and the London-based representatives of CC – for example, Plymouth and Bristol were referred to as “towns” both in informal discussion and in the Evaluation Report. Whilst this is a small point, it also evidences how it did not seem important to use the word “city” and suggests a lack of interest in using an appropriate word to describe South West places. Also whilst it is clear that South West-based artists may work all over the world, and consequently their mentors may also be based anywhere, it was notable that only Hesketh’s mentors were based in the South West region. In addition, the high costs of a Scheme such as CCFS are partly created by the high attendance and administration costs of the partners involved, and there was also an observable reticence for Fellows to dwell on failings and mistakes in a room full of future potential funders.

An artist in the final plenary at TACA asked: “How do we interact with this economy? The middleman is a kind of myth figure, do we let the dealer do everything?...Should practice be mediated by other people? Is it part of the culture of DIY to do it all yourself?” This series of questions is perhaps also answered by the word “partnership”. Earlier in this chapter I discussed the The Real World which stated that the key to meeting CPD needs in the South West region was through partnership. All three approaches discussed here advocated partnerships between artists and artists’ support organisations with strong symbolic capital. The choice of how partnerships work together can increase symbolic capital for the main players in addition to the obvious advantages of a practical sharing of experience and skills.

## **Symbolic capital**

The CCFS was fascinating in that the initial cohort comprised a number of “successful” people with large commercial contracts, publication history and a well formulated durational longevity of practice who still felt the need to apply for a CPD grant (either for the finance and/or the kudos) attached to the relatively small amount of a £5,000 Fellowship in order to make a change in their practice. This returns to Bourdieu’s idea of symbolic capital, and its importance in relation to economic capital. The Fellowship allowed a different kind of momentum from that of their normal practices: an invigoration or an alternative form of validation. Bazzo and Higg and Bunn described the Fellowship as a kind of “calling card”. Support from The Crafts Council and ACE gives kudos and credibility; it marks a maker out and is a recognisable symbol of a certain quality. The Fellowship offered significant increased “symbolic capital” for the Fellows.

It is also clear that CCFS did change maker’s lives, by giving time, permission and money, allowing Fellows to move forward in their practices. In Phase One, an unsuccessful applicant had noted that success earlier in gaining a “large ACE Research and Development grant...had completely changed my working life”. Similarly another unsuccessful applicant reflected on a previous grant: “I had a huge stroke of luck, I got an award from South West Arts to attend an engraving course in London...This changed my work hugely.” CCFS gave Bazzo time and money to sample; for Beavan it was “immaculate” timing; and for Higginson amongst other professional support, it bought childcare to free up time to collaborate with Bunnell.

Achieving CPD funding is challenging; one has to be in the “right place at the right time” using appropriate language. This was evidenced by selection for CCFS and how an artist’s symbolic capital played a part in selection. Of the five Fellows chosen, two were featured in The Real World in 2002. One of the unsuccessful eleven Phase One participants was also featured.<sup>102</sup> It seems that building symbolic capital, being known to ACE or CC, is helpful to gaining funding later. An unsuccessful Phase One participant observed: “Not having a degree is a disadvantage, and I have a chip on my shoulder about ‘not being a professional.’ It might not be to your taste [the work] but you can see it was worked, and has quality.”<sup>103</sup> Nine places out of the twenty available on Phase One of the Scheme were left empty because, as discussed earlier, they did not fulfil the management committee’s criteria; it is also possible that the work was not to the committee’s “taste”.

So the symbolic capital is likely to increase as the artist becomes more experienced. The increase in symbolic capital for each of the Fellows as a result of CCFS is far greater than the economic capital. The evaluators followed up one unsuccessful Phase One participant, who revealed:

The CCFS was a useful spur to focus on what I want and need to do, but without the financial / mentor support I can’t put it into action, so it doesn’t particularly support my professional development... I visited one of my chosen mentors... we got on well, but without the focus of a financially supported mentoring Scheme, it is difficult to advance a working relationship... One needs a specific focus – people tend to be extremely busy.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> Jessie Higginson (Higgs and Bunn) is on p. 15 and Janet Stoyel on p. 22. Conor Wilson, one of the original eleven but not the final five, was featured on p. 7.

<sup>103</sup> Informal peer discussion at networking day 14 April 2008.

<sup>104</sup> Palmer Hamilton Partnership, Evaluation Report, 2009, p. 34.

This participant did state that they had found the one to one ArtsMatrix business development session extremely useful and had been working on a three year business plan.

It appears that equally significant as the symbolic capital developed by the Fellows is the symbolic and cultural capital that all the individuals representing the funders and stakeholders developed as a result of building their own skills and expertise via their participation in the Scheme. The evaluation report stated:

The pilot Scheme has produced key advocates for the development of future programmes within the funding system (ACE SW, Crafts Council and ArtsMatrix), within the professional development arena (ArtsMatrix and Devon Guild of Craftsmen) and within the practitioners community (the Fellows and the mentors). All those involved in the Scheme have expressed a desire to act as ambassadors for the programme. This should be harnessed to support the development and promotion of any future Scheme.<sup>105</sup>

The division articulated between “the professional development arena” and “the practitioners’ community” is an interesting one, and suggests that the “business” of CPD is separate to the practice and business of art.

I observed that the stakeholders of CCFS enjoyed being part of discussions and hearing artists present passionately about their work. However, did administrators learn anything different from CCFS than they did from the previous successful Schemes such as RPS and ETA? The findings appeared to be known in advance: CCFS challenged all the Fellows’ process and practice, and developed it. Whether CCFS created “growth” in the Fellow’s businesses is not evidenced, nor is it evidenced that “growth” (in CCFS taken to mean growing bigger in finance and size) is necessarily a positive development

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<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 48.

for one-person businesses. Symbolic growth has been evidenced, financial growth has not.

One of the mentors noted the large amount of bureaucracy and strict reporting requirements for CCFS, observing that in their relationship with their mentee they only returned the paperwork they felt to be appropriate, “breaking some of the rules if necessary”.<sup>106</sup> They also observed that the practices learnt in CCFS by all “the top-heavy load of administrators” might have positive benefits because their learning could be passed on within their organisations. However they felt people often do not stay in administrative cultural posts long enough to do this, and coupled with the one-off pilot nature of these high cost schemes there is a significant loss of potential to build on existing knowledge, and a consequent loss of CPD delivery to artists.

The Reflective Practitioner Scheme and CCFS were high cost schemes to run. The CCFS funded five artists to a maximum of £5000 each.<sup>107</sup> However, the participation of individuals from the support organisations partnering CCFS cost money in travel, staff hours and resources for those organisations and the time taken. The five Fellowships (six people) were equalled or outnumbered by administrators at every Phase Two session. This was a CPD Scheme for the administrators as much as for the Fellows.

Despite Greenlees’ emphasis on partnership, each organisation has re-written the outcome of the five Fellowship case studies to presumably “own” the process for their

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<sup>106</sup> Informal conversation with one of the mentors of the Fellows of CCFS, at “Re-Route” Exhibition launch 13 March, 2009, The Devon Guild of Craftsmen, Bovey Tracey, Devon.

<sup>107</sup> Phase One of the Scheme offered ArtsMatrix professional development support: One to one sessions with an advisor, and a CPD session in the first two networking days. Participants in Phase One were eligible to apply for Phase Two which included up to £4,000 bursary and £1,000 for mentoring. The fee to evaluators was £7500. One of the target outputs of CCFS was “one specialist post established.” This funded ArtsMatrix to integrate the post into an existing member of staff’s job description.

organisations and in addition highlight their own roles in order to present the best case for achieving future funding. ArtsMatrix in an independent venture has written promotional case studies for the four completed Fellowships. The language of these case studies is for marketing purposes, and does not mention the role of the other funders and partners.

A plethora of writing to support the success of CCFS has been created – this Chapter adds more – and yet, no obvious funding source is available to build on the Scheme.

## **Conclusion**

LADA's DIY Scheme has embedded an annual programme of artist's professional development, and the Bosigran Initiative repeated the format of TACA for a further three-day seminar in September 2009, exactly a year after the first one. Artists are able, to a certain extent, to expect LADA's DIY Scheme to continue to run and still be available at a time they may feel ready to apply or run a session. It may be that TACA also becomes established as an annual practice. By contrast, CCFS, is "one-off"; it took five years of development and fundraising activity following on from the Reflective Practitioner Scheme to create a similar scheme which ultimately benefited five "mid-career" craft Fellows in the *whole* of the South West. The main organisations that developed CCFS have all stated they are not able to commit to funding a further Scheme despite the identified successes of meeting "mid-career need".<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> "Discussions with ArtsMatrix, ACE SW and the Crafts Council have revealed that although all three stakeholders would, in theory, be interested in supporting the continuation of the Scheme none of them are, at this stage, able to commit actual funds." Palmer Hamilton Partnership, Evaluation Report, 2009, p. 31.

TACA, DIY and CCFS were all effective as professional development for artists in the South West region. The stories over the next decade of the Fellows' lives may well highlight further evidence of the usefulness of CCFS. Throughout this chapter it is noticeable that in CCFS the artists' words are re-framed in language by the key support agencies into findings and aspirations for future funding. Each stakeholder has chosen which stories they tell. My discussion in Chapters One and Two evidence that the South West is exemplary at developing successful pilots for artists' CPD which are cited as models of good practice. However none of these are embedded in its cultural ecology; they are a temporary and short-lived insertion into the space / place of the South West.

I have discussed the efficacy of different approaches to CPD, contrasting artist-led with provider-led. CCFS acknowledged that models for successful CPD are already known, and yet the findings were again "piloted" and re-evidenced. This chapter has highlighted how whilst CCFS was highly beneficial to the successful Fellows, it operated within a field where powerful symbolic capital was attached to the organisations who led the scheme, and identified that whilst smaller initiatives have less developmental power for the individual working within a "field", the smaller initiative may be more useful by its ability to embed a *continuing*, often annual, provision. Despite the differences in scale of the three approaches discussed here, in that context, DIY appears a far more responsible and effective use of funds for CPD in that it supports a greater number of artists without a loss of artistic depth and builds social capital and a continuum of knowledge in addition to artistic capital.

A participant at TACA described artist-led initiatives as "the storytellers' home where the relationships unfold as the story is told". Chapter Four discussed Doreen Massey's

theory of space as a plurality of positionings, and as a simultaneity of “stories-so-far”. This describes the potential of a situation where an outcome is not planned and is not yet known and is applicable to the DIY schemes I’ve discussed. What TACA has in common with DIY 6 is that the unknown quality of the professional development is valued and marketable to funders and to artists. DIY schemes tend to advocate the process, and do not set outputs from the beginning or focus upon end products. CCFS contrasted to both of the DIY schemes in this regard by having focused outputs from the beginning.

My research so far has found that experienced artists continually move forward and are exceptionally good at recognising their needs to continue to navigate the unknown. Yet in the application process to CCFS, makers appeared to need to articulate their development needs in the context of already known markets and pathways that the providers already understand and are able to identify. In this way the providers’ knowledge and perception of the limits of the field led their advice and definition of what is available and potentially stunted the ambition or vision of the artist. Making one’s own path and meandering may look in retrospect like the same trajectory as being “re-routed” or diverted onto a recognisable path, but it is not; it is the path made by the artist, not by the providers or the market. I explore navigations made by artists in the next chapter.

## **Chapter Six**

### **Case Studies of Four Artists in Momentum**

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## Introduction

This chapter comprises the final data collection and analysis for this thesis. It documents and considers how artists in four art form areas navigate, narrate and negotiate their CPD whilst in a momentum of practice. As discussed in Chapter Two, through the research method of walking and talking with artists, I extend the metaphors associated with finding a path to the reality of articulating an artistic life in process, *throughout* a career, rather than at fixed points within a career. I consider how the needs of four individual artists, who are not drawn together by a CPD initiative but by my own enquiry, can be analysed through the concepts and theories discussed in Chapter Four – particularly through the concepts of language as power and “field” and “habitus” which Pierre Bourdieu identified,<sup>1</sup> and through Doreen Massey’s concepts of place / space and articulation as explored by Brian Massumi.

In finding a way via both metaphorical notion and physical motion, I explore the concept of artist-led articulation. I question the homogenous constructed language of CPD by moving outside institutionalised sites into a space for possibility and attempt to consider alternative ways that artists may be supported to articulate and develop their skill needs and ultimately their practices. In doing so, I look to the possibilities afforded by action research in the landscape of South West England and how that landscape has become part of the articulation and performative process of the research.

In this chapter I wished to represent as faithfully as possible each artist’s voice, and yet, as discussed in Chapter Two, I was challenged by how to represent the substantial

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<sup>1</sup> As I discussed in Chapter Four, Bourdieu’s habitus is both our catalysts and our end products. It exists in our heads, and through and in our practices with each other and the ecology; it is a collective construction.

amount of transcribed words spoken in ten durational walks lasting many hours. My choice and organisation of material in this chapter attempts to exemplify and illustrate a dialogue with theory, even though the theory detailed in Chapter Four is rarely explicitly referenced. I felt I would break the flow of the storytelling and lose the artists' voices if I intervened with explicit theorisation; this chapter is therefore the embodiment of my theorisation.

However, the dialogues discussed below reflect the subject matter and research questions of this thesis; the languages I am exploring inevitably affected the words used in conversations, and how those words were echoed by the artists. They also evidence how words are powerful. I aimed to use the artists' words supportively, but of course, in doing so I demonstrate how easy it is to slip into the same conventions of the policy providers whom I criticise for putting uncomfortable words into artists' mouths. I have often, for example, edited out some conversation, perhaps discussion on the location, or my own question, and included only the artists' side of the dialogue. The process of gaining feedback from each artist on this final chapter demonstrated that they wanted to be in control of their words; they were concerned that their conversational streams appeared inane because conversations which take place while walking would not usually be recorded and edited in this way.

There is a significant number of appendices associated with this chapter. Whilst I have heavily edited the transcripts to include excerpts in this chapter, I have made a decision to keep in some conversations in detail because I feel in themselves they represent a wealth of experience from the artist concerned, and it felt faithful to the original discussion to represent this as it happened, within the ongoing momentum of each

conversation. These are contained in Appendices 13 to 17 (Alyson), 18 to 21 (Mariele), 22 to 26 (Helen), and 27 and 28 (Phil): sixteen appendices in total.

The artists discussed in this chapter are based in the South West and their practices concern land; in, on, about, or sometimes of it, but not necessarily within the South West. All four work with other disciplines and in collaboration with others if appropriate to specific projects. As highly experienced artists and “leaders” in their field, they have significantly over their ten thousand hours of practice each.<sup>2</sup> All work or have worked as lecturers. It has been a privilege and a joy to walk with them.

I made two or three South West-based walks with each artist, over the period of a year from March 2008 to March 2009, in a corresponding timeframe to that detailed in Chapter Five.<sup>3</sup> It has been the artists’ choice where we walked and for how long. I walked and talked with Alyson Hallett, Mariele Neudecker, Helen Poynor and Phil Smith.<sup>4</sup>

## **Alyson Hallett**

Alyson is a poet and writer who lives in Hartland, North Devon. Born in Street, Somerset, Alyson has been writing since she was six, and has published widely. Her first full collection of poetry, The Stone Library, was published by Peterloo Poets in

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<sup>2</sup> This is in reference to Malcolm Gladwell’s 10,000 hour rule discussed in Chapter Four.

<sup>3</sup> Appendix 7 details the walking interviews and additional information. I have also attended or observed workshops, performances and presentations by the artists as detailed in Chapter Two and in Appendix 7.

<sup>4</sup> In Chapter Five I used surnames when discussing artists, following the usual convention. In this chapter, using the four artists’ surnames when discussing them did not feel appropriate to me because of the relationship we built up over time, so I have used their first names throughout this chapter.

2007. Solidus Press published her short stories, The Heart's Elliptical Orbit in 2003.<sup>5</sup>

Alyson has written scripts for Sky Television, drama for Radio 4, and in 2001 was commissioned to write a site-specific poem for Bath.<sup>6</sup>

Alyson taught creative writing at Bristol University and teaches poetry at Arvon Foundation. She held the writer-in-residence post for Arts Council England, South West for Year of the Artist,<sup>7</sup> and for two years was Visiting Writer at the University of the West of England. In 2007 she completed a three year poet-in-residence post at The Small School in Hartland.<sup>8</sup> Her project, "The Migration Habits of Stones", has been in progress since 2001 and is based on the idea that movement is a fundamental part of the nature of stones. The opening line of Alyson's poem "And stones moved silently across the world" has so far been carved onto three large stones each chosen by Alyson which she has then carried and publicly sited, in three locations in Bristol, America and Australia. In between our walks two and three, she was taking her third carved stone to Koonawarra in Australia.<sup>9</sup> Alyson is also studying for a practice-based PhD in poetry at St. Mary's College, London.

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<sup>5</sup> Alyson also has two limited edition artist books: In the Time of Crow (2001), made in collaboration with Penelope Downes (edition of 500), and Towards Intimacy (1999) in an edition of 150, again made with Downes.

<sup>6</sup> The resulting poem, "Arise", was carved into Milsom Street pavement by letter carver Alec Peever who has continued to collaborate with Alyson on her Migrating Stones project.

<sup>7</sup> This residency led to the publication of 365 (Agre Press), a book of poetry and images inspired by artist's projects.

<sup>8</sup> Alyson has also participated in performance residencies with the artist organisations Goat Island and Desperate Optimists.

<sup>9</sup> Appendix 16 details Alyson's Migrating Stones project.



*Figure 4. Alyson Hallett by her first Migrating Stone. Leigh Woods, Bristol.*

We made two walks around Hartland (our first and third walks), and a walk in Bristol in Leigh Woods. At no point did Alyson feel she needed a training course; she admitted she did not much like attending courses and perceived them irrelevant. She demonstrated the difficulty of accessing relevant training by relating how she had gained funding to attend a Devon Arts Culture Marketing course which she felt had been inappropriate to her practice, disappointing, and geared towards visual artists. Although Devon Arts Culture had not supported her to better market her work, they did fund a celebratory “thank you” launch party in Hartland for the people that had supported Alyson to develop The Stone Library.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> The detail of this marketing story is in Appendix 13.

Alyson described gaining a small business development grant which enabled her to choose and pay for a poet who worked through some of her poems with her. This had progressed her practice:

He was a lot more experienced than me, so he drew my attention to consistency of punctuation, and asked were my images believable?<sup>11</sup>

Alyson observed that he “was meticulous” and his attention to her work, at a time when the writing that she was sending out was “probably getting more rejections than acceptances...was probably more invaluable than any course.” Alyson also commented that Colin Brown’s one to one surgeries at Poetry Can were “*superb*”.

Alyson said that to find technical help she looks for someone excellent in their field. In the same way as for the development of the Migrating Stones project she needed to find somebody “whose practice is a lot more developed than mine”, and request their help based on their experience. She observed that the problem with courses is they tend to end up being “so general”, whereas “when the need arises I *will* find someone, and I’ll go and talk to them”. We agreed that professional development support could be located, but accessing appropriate support at the right time was a challenge particularly because of the transience of opportunities. Alyson felt “lucky” to have been in the right place at the right time, and being awarded what she described as “fantastic residencies”. She felt that an increase in creative writing residencies which included writing time for writers were needed.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> In walk two Alyson mentioned the usefulness of this one to one work again, observing “there aren’t many people who’d sit round and talk about commas with you, or how you resolve an image.”

<sup>12</sup> She revealed residencies for visual artists include making time, but writing residencies tend not to include writing time, and she had argued hard previously with Poetry Can to include writing time in her residency with them.

Alyson was aware of the contradiction that her “greatest need is to write a poem and write a *better* poem”, and yet she practically needed to earn an income to eat, and create time to continue to write, and so she returned in our conversation to outside support.

She stated:

Art and poetry are verbs not nouns...When you get to the heart of what you do, it's just the doing of it and the wanting to do it really well. All the other stuff, the infrastructure, the culture within which you work...is so I can eat, be warm, so I can have a roof. I need those things but it's my work that is important. People can help me, like I said, people can bring my attention to my work. But my own responsiveness, that's my task.

She also observed that the issue of money always comes up, for all artists.

Alyson stopped teaching in July 2007 to “buy time”.<sup>13</sup> She had run workshops for twenty-two years and said, “I can't tell you how big that [change] was”. In our first walk in March 2008, I asked Alyson “If you could say, this is what I need to push my practice forward, (and maybe you've already got it, maybe it is really about time and space), is there anything that you can see that you could really do with right now?”

Alyson replied: “Yeah, get me a review in The Guardian”, and continued:

If you'd spoken to me maybe a year ago ...and teaching was driving me insane, I'd have said that what I need for my practice and my development is time, but I've bought myself that... I've bought myself a sabbatical out of the world...So I've got time, I've got space, I've got the most beautiful studio, I am unbothered. Delightfully unbothered. And what would now forward my work is more people reading it.

Six months later, by walk two, Alyson still felt a need to concentrate fully on her practice. In between our walk two and three, she had gained a part-time job working in the local pub, work that does not interfere with her practice. She said:

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<sup>13</sup> Appendices 13 and 14 detail this.

I've now had a year and a half off of teaching altogether. It's been fantastic. I'm just starting to get the first flicker of "ooh, I wouldn't mind doing some teaching"...I'm just so glad I made the decision to stop.

By walk three, Alyson was considering a small teaching role.

Particular places of land and sea in the South West have significance to Alyson, such as Leigh Woods in Bristol, the location for our second walk and where her first stone is sited. Alyson said, "I love this wood; it was my little pocket of sanity when I lived in Bristol". In the wood she explained: "I've experimented with getting lost quite a lot; I get to a point in my head, where I say 'All paths lead somewhere, and lost is another way of saying I don't know.' It is such a crucial part of my practice." Alyson's reading at Arnolfini in September 2008,<sup>14</sup> contained new poems about Hartland, and I asked about living there. Alyson observed, "it is such an intense place to live, they've [the poems] grown out of the place rather than being about the place". Where Alyson lives becomes part of her work.

On walk one we came to a place where there were three yews and one oak and which Alyson described as her favourite spot, a place where she comes to think and "tune in". She observed that living in Hartland and the connections to the land and this particular oak tree had been "as great a teacher and as influential in my CPD as any people." She laughed and said "now that sounds totally like I just tie-dyed my own skirt and wove my own yoghurt for breakfast, and I don't like tie-dye and I don't like yoghurt." She had learned as much from living in this particular landscape and experiencing the ocean and the woods, and this had given her support in making decisions that had major

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<sup>14</sup> Detailed in Appendix 7, Alyson read at Arnolfini Auditorium, Bristol, 11 September 2008, as part of Bristol Poetry Festival, 4 -14 September 2008.

impacts on her life. She said “so in the summer I will swim every day, and we’ve got quite dangerous tides here, quite a lot of rips... You have to be careful, you have to be respectful, but you learn with that beast, and I come here to this tree.” Alyson described how she had been diagnosed with skin cancer some time ago, a big shock. She pointed out she is now fine, but her consultation process with the “gnarly old oak” had been especially significant in her healing process.

Similarly to Helen, who I will discuss later, life weaves into Alyson’s practice. Living in Hartland and taking on a PhD had given Alyson a focus which she had not had before.

I’ve never lived somewhere and been a practising writer to this extent. Everywhere else I’ve been, I’ve been teaching, I’ve been doing a residency, I’ve been looking for work. I’ve just been so full of other things as well, that this is the first time I’ve been able to really immerse, and I’m sure it’s no small thing, but my partner is really really supportive of that, he’s totally behind me. He’s saying, “Don’t teach, give up the work, do your thing”, and that makes a big difference.

Similarly to Mariele, also discussed below, the support of a partner had allowed time for Alyson to immerse in her practice. Alyson’s travelling also progresses her practice.<sup>15</sup> However Alyson’s main relationship is not to places, but to words: “It’s my relationship with words that excite me and thrill me day in day out...you nurture that relationship.” Alyson’s agent for her novel had also pushed and supported her in a new way, and her PhD had additionally created feedback on her practice.

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<sup>15</sup> For example she described a trip to Mexico detailed in Appendix 13. She observed “that would help me, a grant that would enable me to go and live in Mexico for six months.”

We discussed teaching and how it is not possible to teach motivation to students; all one can do is inspire.<sup>16</sup> Alyson pointed out:

You're not going to go to school, to be taught this is how to be uncertain and to doubt and be nervous; people are going to say you're going to have a goal and this is how you aim for your goal. Both have a place.

We discussed a similar comment made by Mariele about the challenges of learning, and we agreed that one can only make space within a teaching process to create opportunity for students to find out how to manage their own unknowingness and have confidence in it. Through laughter Alyson said

Maybe that's the kind of teaching I'll do if I ever go back to it. I'll say "Right, I'm going to be your terrible teacher who's going to teach you how to be nervous and uncertain".

Alyson observed that "your ability to endure is what distinguishes you in the end". She stated:

I think in our culture there's so much emphasis and pressure upon succeeding, being mentored to succeed, achieving, putting forward your best side, being positive... Where's the space for being human? I fail at things, I have disasters, I flounder, I don't know what I'm doing. I get depressed. I despair. Not exclusively, but those things are equally a part of my practice... I suppose what I want is for practice to be transparent in some way, because I think that's more honest.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> This is detailed in Appendix 14.

<sup>17</sup> Alyson had also questioned: "Where is the room for what you think somebody doesn't want to hear? I remember once going to give a talk on running workshops for old people as part of an MA in Bristol. It's really difficult, I'd done a lot of very short-term residencies in old people's homes, and expectations get raised, you start to develop relationships, then the money runs out and you have to go 'bye bye' which can be really upsetting, so part of my talk was to say 'Well maybe its better to do nothing than to do these things', which again makes people go 'oh well why are you talking to us then?' But ask that question, make it difficult, make it something you start to wrestle with."

She described serendipity in her practice – for example, being commissioned to write what became a successful Radio 4 play, Dear Gerald.<sup>18</sup> She observed that “you absolutely couldn’t plan for that”. However it also brought another issue into focus.

Alyson stated

So many people said “That’s it now, Alyson, you can write plays, you know what you’re doing”...I never wanted to write that one, and that’s why it’s not a career. If I wanted a career, maybe I’d have said yes, there’s money in TV and radio. I’d done some work for TV before...I can become someone, they know who I am, I can build on it, but that’s not what it was about... That’s how I went travelling I wrote some short scripts for Sky TV. I earned a fortune.

I questioned why Alyson could not earn an income via short scripts now instead of taking on a cleaning or pub job. She answered

I don’t think I’ve got the energy, I don’t think I can spread myself like that anymore. I could in my twenties. Sometimes I wonder, do I just like doing one-offs because I like the challenge of a new thing? And that’s where poetry comes in. I’ve written more than one short story, but poetry keeps me intrigued the most.

We discussed the bespoke nature of project by project working, and the challenge to oneself of working continually in an ad hoc way.

One of the limiting factors earlier on in Alyson’s writing career had been, in her words, “a quite staggering lack of self belief and confidence”.<sup>19</sup> She stated that even now this is present, but she is more knowing of herself:

The gorgeous thing is being able to go to other people: “Look what I’ve done, here’s something I’ve done that’s really moved me. What do you think?”...and somehow this is more relaxing than the shy kind of contraction that just comes with being so fearful around it. When you have that lack of self confidence and when you know, I know my

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<sup>18</sup> See Appendix 13 for detail of this story.

<sup>19</sup> This is discussed further in Appendix 14.

own cowardice...I know I'm a terror, and maybe they are good things to know. I'm hideously fragile, I'm human. I used to think people were so confident and they were scary and they'd made it, but where do you get the confidence to be able to share how fragile and unconfident you are in this world?

Alyson imagines seven migrating stones in her life and during our walking, she completed the journey to Australia with stone three. She observed:

It was just so in the right place at the right time, things unfolded...

So that's sown a *seed* for me as a practitioner about feeling good about my work. I had a two and a half year delay...If I'd gone earlier my friends wouldn't have been there, loads of contacts wouldn't have happened... So sometimes...you really do have to have ridiculous patience and listen to whatever it is that just says "no, wait wait wait just wait."

Whilst support and connections (in Bourdieu's terms, "social capital") were crucial to the completion of the three stones, funding was also crucial and this has now run out.<sup>20</sup>

Alyson's desire to expand the stone project was frustrated by funding: "I'm starting to realise that a lot of funders only fund new projects...and I didn't realise this, and looking at funding, it's got to be a new project or in initial stages. It is getting harder to fund a project which is not 'new' anymore." Alyson here demonstrates the problem of a "pilot" culture, that in order to develop a longitudinal project she has to invent new and "additional" aspects in order to enhance her chances to gain funding.

We discussed Alyson's blog, in which she had termed "not knowing" as

"floundering".<sup>21</sup> She commented that after finishing the stone:

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<sup>20</sup> In conversation with Alyson on 18 January 2010, Alyson said she had now gained funding for her fourth stone, and has also been awarded a Leverhulme grant to be a part-time poet in residence at Falmouth University from September 2010.

<sup>21</sup> Appendix 17 details an extract of Alyson's blog. She also said: "Can you learn how to flounder? God I hope not...! You can perhaps learn how to accept floundering, I think it happens anyway, and it's often when there's a disparity between what you want and what is."

Lots of people are saying “ah, what’s next, what are you going to do next?” There’s a big part of me thinking I should know what comes next. I should be planning, scheming, applying for funding, being organised, and I’m not, and the floundering happens in that kind of space between what I know I should be doing and what I am doing, and actually it’s fine, I’m not ready.

She is clear that the next stone will be informed by a different more publicly open process:

I’m going to invite people to suggest where I take the next stone and why. Then I’m going to read all the suggestions and go with one of them. That’s going to require a phenomenal amount of energy and thought and at this moment I don’t have that...I want good funding behind me.

She observed that the more public siting of her third stone in Australia was a reflection of her increased confidence and had involved connectivity to more people and wider negotiations, when compared to the first stone in Leigh Woods. The idea for the fourth stone would progress the potential of “public” art further.

I found that my questions to Alyson about “professional development” and “mid-career” limited our conversation, because everything within Alyson’s life and practice could be professional development but this is not the language she would use. She referred to the book Art, not chance.<sup>22</sup>

There’s a great line...if you get a load of artists together they’re going to talk about where they buy their turps not the theory of why they’ve back-grounded the yew tree on their triptych...Often when I meet with people I’m not talking about my practice as such. I’m talking about life and what’s happened, but then maybe that’s part of the practice.

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<sup>22</sup> Paul Allen (ed), Art, not chance, 2001. I discuss this book in the Introduction to this thesis and in Chapter Two.

The language of professional development appears to me to create an objective “being looked at” rather than a subjective “participating in”. Alyson said on walk three, “I don’t care if I’m mid career or not. What I do care about is that you’re interested in my work.” By the second walk and particularly by our third, I was convinced that the power of the language of “CPD” and “mid-career” restricts the possibility of conceptualising an artist as being in momentum and also restricts the flow of the conversation and of understanding of practice. In walk one Alyson had described mischief and playfulness as her preferential position. This sense of play was evident on our third walk; she left me written instructions at my B&B in Hartland which told me where to walk, where to meet her, and set me a task. The first parts of both of our walks that day were solitary ones moving to meet one another. Alyson commented regarding her organisation of our last walk:<sup>23</sup>

In some ways I did feel in control today for the first time...It was up to me; I’m going to set the frame, which made me a little nervous. I don’t know if that’s where individuals and organisations come together but maybe the biggest single thing for CPD is simply somebody being interested in my work.

...I felt different coming to meet you today. I loved thinking at breakfast time, you’re not going to know what you’re doing, where you’re going to meet me, we’re not going to...have it pre-arranged, I’m going to give you this set of instructions...to me there was an element of fun in that and I wondered is she there?...I had this sense of fun of thinking up something quite ridiculous for you, and somewhere that helps my professional development, the element of surprise. You don’t quite know if it’s going to work.

...So if I had to name one thing, it’s people being interested in my work.

The language of industry and giving her practice a name is unimportant to Alyson. She discussed the word “industry”:

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<sup>23</sup> Alyson’s instructions are detailed in Appendix 15.

I'm resisting what I'm doing as being an industry...If I wanted to be really difficult I'd just say well I do a job, I work, I make, in the same way my father who went to the shoe factory made...He did it to earn money, but who needs to name and define within that very specific way? Who needs to do that? It's not generally the people doing it who name it; unless they're trying to get funding...I don't need to call it something...

I don't like the idea of it being a cultural industry, it annoys me. It's an erratic, penniless, difficult thing to do.

Ultimately what occupies and fulfils Alyson is to write *better*. She stated "the question for me is how do I keep some kind of integrity, authority. How do I keep with that which is what for me has a true pulse?" She stated, "I've never done a professional development course in my entire life, I'm so sorry. Do you think I should go and do one, what would I do?"

Alyson's progress as a writer is about her work; the word "career" also "feels very uncomfortable". She explained:

I associate a career with a very conscious path, so I'm going to be, what, a stockbroker, a bank manager, a *pilot*? So you go do whatever training you need to do and then you become that thing, and for me, being a poet or a writer has always been so very much about being unconscious about what I'm doing as well. I'm sure you hear that quite a lot. It's a struggle doing all those practical things like sending your work out, trying to get some money, because all you really want to do is write, so career feels like the *wrong* word, and sometimes there's very little choice in it somehow.

I wouldn't look at myself and say I'm mid-career. That's the boxes that other people make.

She also said:

People being interested in *me* as a mid-career artist; it feels like an ice-cube...square and cold, and it's like "*I'm Alyson*, I write some poems. If you're interested in my poems or my stones in the first instance, great, I'll come and talk to you until all the words have run out and we retire to the bar." Inviting me as a mid-career artist will make me feel very nervous. I've had that from the beginning. I don't quite know

what it means, but if you're interested in my work and that's the foregrounded element then great... if you happen to mention it half-way through "well you're forty five years old you've been doing it for a while now, does that have any relevance?" Well that's fine, but to have the headline "mid-career artist"...that just sounds fucking deathly to me, but if it was like Phil Smith - Walker, performer extraordinaire, Mariele Neudecker - artist, then it's "O.k. Who are these people? What are they doing?" That's interesting... You choosing me, that helps my whatever; because you're interested in what I do, how I do it...it feels very nice to have been asked.<sup>24</sup>

Alyson commented that our walks had given:

The opportunity to talk about what I do, why I do it, and often I don't know what I think until someone asks me and I say it and I think "ooh that's interesting"...you being interested in what I do is great, but it *needs to be in what I do, in my work, not my career.*<sup>25</sup>

This comment was echoed by all four artists.

## **Mariele Neudecker**

Primarily a visual artist, Mariele Neudecker became the first Henry Moore Sculpture Fellow at Spike Island Studios, Bristol in 1998, and moved permanently to Bristol in 2001. She exhibits internationally and has a studio space at Spike.<sup>26</sup> Her work is mischievous with scale and our sense of place, inviting us to travel on journeys which are as much about the worlds inside our heads as they are about those externally. Laura Cumming suggests that Mariele has made "a tremendous career out of these submerged

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<sup>24</sup> This represents the speaker's emphasis, not my own.

<sup>25</sup> My emphasis.

<sup>26</sup> Mariele has recently developed a website: [www.marieleneudecker.co.uk](http://www.marieleneudecker.co.uk). She has lived and worked in the UK since 1985. I first saw Mariele's work at her exhibition at Tate in 2004: Mariele Neudecker *Over and Over, Again and Again* 22 May – 26 September 2004. Tate St Ives, Cornwall. <http://www.tate.org.uk/stives/exhibitions/neudecker/>, accessed 2 April 2008. Strangely as I look back through my notes I see that this exhibition ran parallel to David Nash that I discuss in Chapter Two.

theatres of the unconscious.”<sup>27</sup> Mariele uses multiple materials, sound, technology (for example, prototyping and Computer Generated Imaging) and borrows from other disciplines where appropriate.

Mariele and I walked through Ashton Court, and made two further walks, one through Leigh Woods in Bristol, and the final walk from Pensford to Stanton Drew Stone Circle. On all our walks we were also looking for objects for Mariele to cast. In walk one we sourced Weston Hemlock pine cones, on walk two we were looking for a particular kind of rock, and on walk three, we were sizing up trees. The walks in a small way became part of Mariele’s ongoing research of the land.<sup>28</sup>



Figure 5. Mariele Neudecker, Faintly Falling Upon All the Living and the Dead (1, 2 and 3), 2008, mixed media/fibre-glass. Installation (left) and detail (right).

<sup>27</sup> Laura Cumming, “Bristol Fashion”, *The Observer*, Sunday August 27, 2006, at: <http://arts.guardian.co.uk/reviews/observer/story/0,,1859127,00.html> (accessed 2 April 2008).

<sup>28</sup> If something feels appropriate, Mariele will cast in situ.

## The space / place of the South West

Mariele moved to Bristol because of artistic connections (The Henry Moore Fellowship) as well as personal connections (meeting someone). She felt that peer support, when she needed it, was easier to find in London and still feels a loss of those unprompted everyday peer conversations.<sup>29</sup> However she has benefited from living in the South West; for example, she finds material suppliers more personable in Bristol:

That was something that I really liked about Bristol; you go to a resin supplier, and they take their time to show you stuff, they personally come to your studio, they give you demonstrations. You would never have that in London... it was completely new to me that they had this personal thing in Bristol.<sup>30</sup>

I asked Mariele if she found the South West had what she needed. She observed:

To transplant my situation into London, at the minute, would be really hard, partly because of the family, the cost of studios, it just wouldn't work. I wouldn't have the resources at all...I wouldn't say professionally or in terms of shows that I'm saturated from the South West; I go to London to see shows still a lot.

For Mariele the proximity of London to Bristol allows her to have "both, and"; she can utilise the relatively cheaper cost of accommodation, living and studio space in the South West and maintain her links in London. She observed: "I can do a full day trip to London, and the journey time is perfect...I can plan, read, etc."

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<sup>29</sup> Following her MA at Chelsea College of Art, Mariele took a studio at Curtain Road Arts in Shoreditch, London, which had an active studio group. Appendix 21 details our discussions on mentoring. Mariele said: "It has to be a continuous conversation with certain people, somebody that will challenge what you do, or think."

<sup>30</sup> Whilst we were walking and talking Mariele commented that in order to get a glass piece fabricated she had chosen to work with someone in Bristol. We discussed *Fabrizia Bazzo's CCFS fellowship* to work with fabricators at Derix studios in Germany because Bazzo was unable to find anywhere in the UK. Mariele commented: "I did have a list of people all over the country, and the best quote came in from Bristol." Appendix 18 details our conversation.

Pivot points for Mariele in her “career” have variously related to places and significant opportunities, notably the Whitechapel Open whilst Mariele was still in London, and her 1999 solo show at Spike, Unrecallable Now. She stated:

*It wasn't really money they gave you, it was space to show. I had a whole room in the Whitechapel...Saatchi bought things...and you suddenly think “oh, I'm in the right place”. Then the Unrecallable Now exhibition at Spike was certainly pivotal. I was invited to Melbourne Biennale with that piece and it was totally surprising that someone wanted to invite such a big piece, but that's what Biennales want...That toured to Melbourne and Yokohama Biennale, and up to Denmark, so that put me onto an international map.*

Mariele described:

*A mixture of coincidental situations, where I was in the studio, in the right place maybe winning competitions, then it leads onto shows that relied on those circumstances, and one thing led to another, so eventually I felt I could make the move out of London, without suffering too much about not being in London.*

Picture This, South West Screen and Spike have been influential organisations for Mariele,<sup>31</sup> and to some extent this influence is mutual, demonstrated by the impact of *Mariele's work set in the South West. Her relationship with the South West but* continuing proximity to the opportunities afforded by London suggest that Mariele could not function “successfully” just “anywhere”, and coincidence, talent, hard work and opportunities for being in the right place at the right time, with connections to people and place, has created the foundations (albeit fluid) on which Mariele's practice is built.

In conversation with Kate Brindley at Bristol Museum in early 2008, Mariele observed:

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<sup>31</sup> Appendix 1 describes these organisations.

I am busy enough... I am waiting to see what comes towards me... I am very located in Bristol, there is very much a sense of an audience reviewing my work, and getting lost in my work, which allows me to move my work forward. All the work informs each other.<sup>32</sup>

In our second walk Mariele had stated "I'm confident I want to be in this country... I'm also pretty sure I wouldn't have been able to do what I'm doing here in Germany, for example".

Finding appropriate studio space is crucial for Mariele. On our second walk, Mariele had noted that further artists' studio space was opening in Bristol which she was hoping to rent.<sup>33</sup> Mariele described the space as "really in demand with a massive waiting list".<sup>34</sup> Initially she planned to sub-let the new space to five of her ex-students but by walk three, she was looking forward to moving into the new studio herself. I observed that sometimes moving physical space can move one forward in a way not yet visible. Mariele suggested that the new space would have a major influence on how she felt, observing "It's going to be a really nice space...I get a very good feeling from it. I think I would be quite liberated just getting out of the whole Spike thing in some way. Even though it's got so much going for it that's really good. I've done my stint there."

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<sup>32</sup> Mariele was in conversation with Kate Brindley, Director of Bristol's Museums, Galleries and Archives on 31 January 2008, at Bristol City Museum & Art Gallery. This event linked to the opening on 17 December 2007 of Mariele's permanent pieces at Bristol's City Museum & Art Gallery: Those Who Came Before Us, And Us Who Are To Follow and You Are Always On My Mind.

<sup>33</sup> This new space was likely to create additional visual arts infrastructure for Bristol.

<sup>34</sup> The letting was filtered by the organiser, it was not on "a first-come first-served" basis. The studio developers are property developers from London, who had already built experience from a similar development in Bristol (the Robinson Building). Mariele commented, they "have a really simple set up for artists to have direct debit with them" with no other commitments. They also have a person who had taken on the role of coordinating and organising gallery space, etc. Interestingly, Mariele commented that this building "has not got the charity and commitments that Spike has." Sub-letting it for a while will allow Mariele to keep her options open. The time taken to get a studio was evidenced by Mariele: "I put my name down maybe a year and a half ago...I'm holding my breath to see how it works, even though it's not a charity, but they are keeping the rent quite low." Appendix 20 details extracts from our walk three transcript.

Mariele is an extremely competent administrator in addition to her obvious skill as an artist. She has experience in fundraising, running charitable organisations and organising her own practice. She observed that “you just have to pick” skills up:

You just have to pick them up wherever you are... As an artist...some things you can push off to a gallery if you have one and other things – there are so many things you can't give anyone else – you just have to learn it...it wouldn't have anything to do with London or South West or anywhere, you just have to learn it.<sup>35</sup>

However she observed, “I would love to have it set up for me”.

In walk one I asked Mariele if she felt she was mid-career. She observed: “I don't know, I must be. It seems to me that it stretches out quite a long way...Once you start supporting yourself financially as well, you feel slightly more mid-career than when you are starting up.” Later I asked “Do you think you are in a career at all?” Mariele replied:

I think I am. Of course, yes, there are points when I think I can't bear the stress anymore, because you don't know when you'll get the next *cheque coming through*... I know I'm not serious when I say I'll do something else...I'd go mad if I didn't do it I'm sure.

Mariele felt success and the idea of being “mid” were all relative and that age sometimes does seem to be a defining factor.<sup>36</sup> We agreed that success is not necessarily concerned with money. Mariele confirmed:

Oh it isn't, obviously not, and I think it was quite useful even at the very early stages at Goldsmiths to know that some very well known artists had to borrow money from their parents to buy a house...that was a real eye opener, to know that you can be very successful and be absolutely struggling to survive.

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<sup>35</sup> Appendix 18 details this conversation further.

<sup>36</sup> Appendix 20 details our conversation further.

When we first started walking, Mariele's niece had been accepted to Chelsea College of Art's foundation course. Mariele said that my research:

Reminded me immediately of the struggle that I have to try to explain to my niece what it might take to stay in London. To do this, that and the other, because things have changed in ten years...the nature of everything being slightly fluid and liquid and hard to prescribe to anyone. Even to talk about your own career development isn't that easy, because one day you feel great about it and the next day you think, "god I should be somewhere else by now"...There's this advice I try to give them, that one thing leads to another...There's no prescribed way of doing it at all. I think one important thing is also how prepared you are to take the stress off not knowing what's happening next all the time. Some people are just not made to do that...You have to have a willingness to keep being, in a post-college situation all the time, except on a bigger scale, you know it might all collapse.

We discussed the continually comfortably uncomfortable,<sup>37</sup> and about just not knowing where you may arrive, but trusting in skills and experience to guide or navigate you through. Mariele said:

There's a point where maybe you need seven years, you might need ten years, you might need three years, to get your head around it and accept that fact that that's what you work with. It's interesting to see first years coming into a course and struggling with exactly that sort of freefall, that "I'm in charge" and they can't cope, and then they want to be told what to do and it's that willingness to just enjoy not knowing, that takes quite a while to get your head around. It's interesting to continuously see these students come in and freak out completely because they know, I think deep down they all know, that that's what they have to get to grips with. You have to be totally self motivated and invent your own projects all the time and no-one is ever going to tell you, and you can guide them a little bit maybe, or stop them from doing certain things.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> As described by Artist H in Chapter Three. I also mentioned that performance artist Joshua Sofaer had commented that he preferred to view "anxiety" as "excitement" in response to my question "how do you find a way through the challenges you described?" on 5 March, 2008, following a performance seminar at University of Plymouth, part of the Faculty of Arts Research Methods workshop.

<sup>38</sup> I had followed this with a question: "Do you think that's true of any artistic profession, say a theatre director?" Mariele had answered: "No, no, I think in a theatre, or in the music world, or in most of the other ones you would work with a given project unless you are a scriptwriter or you work from a book, there's often a clear starting point isn't there? It depends what I'm talking about I suppose, if you are a musician in a classical context, in an orchestra then it is very different...You can interpret it still in different ways I suppose, but you're given a certain project and you choose from a range of projects,

I felt this comment profoundly summed up the everyday awareness needed to be a project-by-project artist. Mariele saw this awareness as potentially daunting and exhausting for students.

Mariele supports other artists' potential. In addition to teaching students, she was Chair of Spike Ground Floor Sculpture Studios,<sup>39</sup> and a member of FORMAT, a self-generated, artist-led peer network in Bristol.<sup>40</sup> Mariele described FORMAT meetings:

I love going...It is with people who I don't know whether they're mid-career or early career or what but they're the kind of people who don't get tutorials anymore, and need a kind of input, because nobody really talks about their work...even though I might be in Spike, I don't talk with anyone about my work. There is one person who's left who I might have had a chat with. But that's the sort of thing that worked really well in London...Critical practice is missing a bit...It's quite isolating sometimes, but then again, I feel like I get out enough, so it doesn't affect me that much, but it would over time if I was stuck in Bristol.

By walk three, FORMAT had organised an experimental sound night which Mariele had really enjoyed. Mariele felt that the forming of FORMAT came from a constant need for peer group reassurance, from the realisation that the certainty of unknowingness never really goes away, and the need for a "tutorial" does not diminish

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whereas you set up all that framework yourself as a visual artist, you can choose possibly from a bigger range, and I don't know whether that's fair, but I have worked with musicians for quite a while, and I think it's interesting how the difference between a second violinist and a soloist singer, and the different roles, and the whole pecking order and politics from an orchestra is really interesting."

<sup>39</sup> On walk one, Mariele noted that she had been treasurer for Curtain Road Arts Studios for ten years and then more recently, on the committee at Spike Ground Floor Sculpture Studios. She said: "I don't mind the admin stuff." She had also said that it was quite a burdensome duty. However, after walk one when Mariele first discussed this, at the January 2009 Spike sculpture studios AGM, Mariele had been made chair. She said: "which is great because it is a smaller job." On 26 January 2010 when we were fact checking this section, Mariele said she had resigned from the chair of Spike last week.

<sup>40</sup> FORMAT meets monthly. Mariele noted that it started off as bi-monthly but "now, they have a presentation or invited speaker, or one of us, a formal thing going on every two months, then a meeting in a pub somewhere on the other month, to save on the rent for the space etc, and just have the contact, because sometimes the meeting after the formal format session in the pub, is actually just as useful as the actual presentations." The main art forms represented in FORMAT are film, video and photography.

as one becomes experienced. She stated: "it is something that is a constant, and try telling that to first years."<sup>41</sup>

On walk one Mariele described how she had asked five painters (her ex-students from Bath) to show at Spike Open Studios on her wall space:

They had a great time I think. I needed someone to open the door and sit there. They jumped at the chance, and they all made new work...I rang them about three or four weeks before, saying "Look, I'm in this situation, I could put a piece in the middle of the room, but I've got loads of wall space, do you want to show your paintings?"...I think they counted something like just under 2000 visitors in that space for three days or something...I'm thinking I'll do that again next year.

Mariele is also asked to sit on advisory panels by arts organisation such as BVAC.<sup>42</sup>

Mariele now earns her full income as an artist including lecturing.<sup>43</sup> We discussed balancing teaching with practice. In walk two, Mariele described teaching as a "virtuous" activity, and continued:

You have to see the shows, you have to keep up with the students...I have three kids. When the last one is out of nursery, I may stop doing it, because one reason was to cover the nursery costs, and be stable....You have to keep coming up with ideas all the time. You have to try to be free-flow about things, but at the same time you are in the structure of maybe teaching here, having commitments there. Sometimes I find that's the most difficult thing. You have to be forced to keep pushing out ideas all the time, without having the slack time. Sometimes I quite jealously think of ten years ago when I could just read for hours in the studio, which I just don't do anymore.

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<sup>41</sup> In January 2010 Mariele observed that FORMAT was clearly more prominent at the time of our walking than it is now. She had not attended a session for some time.

<sup>42</sup> Detailed in Appendix 1.

<sup>43</sup> She observed: "When I left college, for quite a while I worked having several jobs to have money to be in the studio, and buy time. And then, I got a bit of teaching in Exeter (from the Whitechapel Open), so I started teaching. I have fully supported myself probably since the Henry Moore fellowship in Bristol. I don't think I've gone back to any jobs since the Senior Research Fellowship in Cardiff, that was a three year post. Mariele lectures "one day a week in Bath, which I've been skipping lots of weeks because I've been travelling a lot in the last few months."

Having a family has meant Mariele has had to change the way she works; she feels a “different kind of pressure”.<sup>44</sup> Attending lectures or working late is more difficult.

Mariele commented:

I know there are lecture series going on at a non-family friendly time, which I miss, this might change eventually, but it’s usually six o’clock, seven o’clock, and I think “no, that’s a no”...I think you learn, having a family, you have to be really focused and organised, and I call myself quite an organised person anyway, but more so in the last seven years, because I’ve never really stopped working.

However, Mariele’s partner *has* stopped working, to look after their children.

She observed “I don’t know how I’d function otherwise, I’d just stop.”<sup>45</sup> She also said:

I really don’t feel it’s necessarily appropriate to keep going on about the family and the kids, but, it is a difference when you support yourself and you...go with the flow, and you can pick up a job, here there, anywhere, and it doesn’t work out, or you just make less work. When you’re on your own, it’s a very different ball game.

In all our walks, time was consistently described as the main need for Mariele. She felt that the big problem for identifying need was “that it becomes about the artist, not about the work.” In walk one she had commented:

I need more time. I find it quite hard to farm out projects to get made by others, and more and more I feel forced to do it in some way, to have this funny administrative advisory panel role on things, and I don’t really want to do it. So I’m determined to make the next piece all by myself and try to organise it so that I have the time to do it as well, at least the model making, and then maybe get somebody else to cast that.

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<sup>44</sup> Please see Appendix 21, on mentoring, for further detail.

<sup>45</sup> I had said to Mariele that I had tried hard not to invade people’s sense of privacy, but knew from my own experience that there is a lot of hidden support, partner patronage. Mariele answered: “Yes to be honest, especially abroad, I don’t know, there’s a preconception that my partner would work, and would support my artistic income on top of that, and of course it’s not like that, but it’s quite a good thing that it does work for all of us.”

In walk two she said:

You need time in order to just settle in on something to focus. But then I like being really busy with different things as well. I think I concentrate better when I've got a lot on.

By walk three, Mariele needed time to focus on work in her studio and observed that working away on other projects was taking that time and focus. She also wanted to spend time with her work:

I want the work to be around the studio for longer. The piece in Japan was quite extreme. I only saw it finished for a few hours, it was never fully installed here. It was shipped and completed there, and then I had to leave. So I saw it there at the opening for a couple of days... That would be great to be able to have work around for longer. If there's a wish list, that's one thing that I would put down, so that I could look at it more.<sup>46</sup>

I asked, "And do you think that would push your practice even further critically if you were able to spend that time, that reflection before it goes?" Mariele responded:

I'm tempted to say yes it would, because one thing I enjoyed about having the residency here [Spike], was that during the whole time of the installation, I was there everyday, talking to people, with the piece in the room. It seemed to be a very good thing to be able to do, and I realised then how little one can do that normally, it just doesn't happen.

By walk two, Mariele had taken on an assistant because of the pressure of time created by working on the Singapore project. (In walk one, she had felt an assistant may not be the most appropriate way to address her time pressures, and because studio time is to a certain extent "private" time).<sup>47</sup> She said:

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<sup>46</sup> See Appendix 18 for more detail.

<sup>47</sup> Mariele had explained in walk one, "there were phases where I had volunteers, and I've had paid assistants and volunteers, and the whole thing got a bit messy, and I then got into a situation where I employed a couple of model makers quite a lot in Spike who had their own studios. I would be their client, and they would have been my assistants, kind of situation, and I've got a similar situation now with a company in London where I wouldn't call him my assistant, but I'll ring him and give him a

In the great big panic, I frantically rang around and found someone... amazingly good...she's just full on when she's here...she's working out really well. I said to her it would be sporadic...she's a student so she's quite flexible.

Key here is the flexibility of the assistant to enable Mariele to fulfil a development need. Working with fibre glass, resin etc., creates a need for Health and Safety awareness for Mariele, and she has attended first aid training. The skills development associated with these areas of her practice are taken on an "as and when needed" basis.

Mariele discussed a lack of structure, of not belonging to anywhere, and of having to keep ideas moving in addition to the "continuous pressure of deadlines" where it feels like "there is no time". She hoped with a forthcoming music project that:

it's a situation where I wouldn't just sit down and think about it in my spare time, because it isn't my spare time. But that I'm making spare time because I'm paid to do it and I can afford to do it and it'll be great to just force myself to think about one thing for certain weeks or days.

The layering of projects working at different paces is normal to Mariele:

Like last year... [one project] took two years to sort out, so that was on a slow timeline. There was a commission in New Zealand which exploded, imploded, in the credit crunch...And there was a thing in Greenwich which disappeared. Things do sort of drop, and that's the trouble. I find myself saying yes to everything because I know half of it might go, and that puts the pressure on because you're constantly not quite sure if it's really going to happen.

This is what Phil, discussed later, described as being "at the mercy of invitations". Like Phil, Mariele balances work commitments with projects she wants to do.<sup>48</sup> She observed

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project to make, outside of the studio. I think that's in a way healthier for me, and my studio isn't that massive. I need to be able to just feel free in the studio. I wait for the day when I actually need somebody in there. I just don't like that situation in the studio where you have to keep someone constantly busy."

<sup>48</sup> Please see Appendix 18 for further detail.

“I probably should say no to more, but that’s when you want to take the pressure off financially, and put the time pressure on... it’s a gamble.”

I asked Mariele how she navigated through: “Is it a mix of your experience and your skill and your knowledge, and you just look certain ways, trying to keep a 360 degree view going on?” Mariele explained:

You learn so many skills for a certain project that you never need again, so it’s hard to say, but I’m sure it accumulates somewhere and you get a sense of where to be more careful, and where to put your foot down and say no, or ask for things.

Mariele observed that need changes with every situation:

I’m just thinking of a project I’m doing with sound where I’m working together with a sound engineer who knows lots... These projects work out really well, because there’s someone who knows their own particular area really well, has their own expertise... I’d work with them with their expertise, and then go away and do a completely different project and I don’t need that knowledge ever again.

Mariele described these skills as evaporating, but leaving a “dormant network” of specialists one can call on.<sup>49</sup> She observed:

That’s what’s so exciting, because it keeps you learning things. If you accumulate more and more of the same type of experience (I’m sure a lot of artists or people would be quite happy doing that as well), and maybe sometimes I could be quite jealous of the capacity to hone in on one thing and just carry on doing that, but in another way it keeps it more interesting and open.<sup>50</sup>

In walk two Mariele had identified the need for a website and a skilled person to develop this for her. By walk three a website was established. She described this as “a

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<sup>49</sup> Appendix 18 details our conversations regarding this. For example, she can call on a professor about bugs, or a stereolithographer.

<sup>50</sup> Appendix 18 gives Mariele’s answers in more detail.

big deal actually. It has made a big difference ...I can check things and look at my dimensions! For me that was a major step...It's really useful."<sup>51</sup>

I asked Mariele if she ever worked to a business plan. Mariele responded:

A business plan? No, no, I don't even know how to spell the word!...No, the extent of that is me saying to Barbara at my gallery<sup>52</sup> "I should be doing more charcoal drawings etc". That would be as far as my business goes!"

Mariele commented that her work is "kind of difficult to sell, large, not easy to store", and recently her gallery had thrown away non-essential structures for her work. Mariele perceived that was a "credit crunch moment" and she had seen that some galleries are making people redundant. This made her wonder if she should have a business plan, however, she pointed out, "I'm usually too busy to worry about it...My work evolves over time...Projects come along and they come and go which is not necessarily different or new or interesting, they've always just been coming and going."

## Helen Poynor

Practice implies something that is not perfect, is human, eluding closure, process rather than product. I too am practising, I am not working with or from a closed system of knowledge nor am I attempting to construct one.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> www.marieleneudecker.co.uk. Mariele's need for a website was prompted by "too many weird things coming up on the first page when people searched for me; Interviews from 1995 from Camberwell coming up, and I got really bothered by that. And thought, 'I want to be in charge'. I wanted to be in control, because these things are so out of date somehow. I mean its fine that they are there but you can point people at the things you want them to see, and be able to see them quicker. In fact if anything that was a bit of business. It's not really business at all, I'm not necessarily gaining from it, other than it's a good information thing. I like some of the essays that were written for the DVDs and things and it's a good place to have them, for people to research. Things might happen because of it." Helen and Phil also had identified a need to develop a website during this research process.

<sup>52</sup> Mariele's gallery representative is Barbara Thumm at: www.bthumm.de.

<sup>53</sup> Helen Poynor, Women – Body – Movement: Non-stylised movement practice as a process of personal development, empowerment and expression for women. MA Thesis, University of Bristol Department of Drama, November 1998, p. 4.

Helen is an independent movement artist working along the South West (Jurassic) coast between Exmouth and Swanage. Helen trained in Java and California and works professionally in the UK and Australia.<sup>54</sup> She runs her own public programme of workshops and a training programme for movement practitioners under the title “The Walk of Life” and offers one to one sessions including movement practice and mentoring for artists and others, and dance therapy. She is also a visiting professor of performance at Coventry University, and spent five years as a lecturer in performance practice at the University of Plymouth.<sup>55</sup>

Helen and I made two walks, Beer to Branscombe, Branscombe to Beer. We set off out of the front door of Helen’s house for our first walk in 2008 and walked Beer to Branscombe over-cliff, returning under-cliff. On our second walk in 2009, we set off from the back door, and walked along the shoreline returning over-cliff.

Helen creates a kinaesthetic experience of place where movement itself is a translation of site, where the form of landscape and the form of the body come together, described as “non-stylised movement practice.”<sup>56</sup> Helen said, “My work springs from here”. She describes building a “respectful relationship not ownership” with *particular* places, and plans her coastal work around the tides. Helen observed:

I spend time on site beforehand...getting to know a particular bit of a place...building a sense of relationship. I make work for outside. It is about the relationship to place.

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<sup>54</sup> In her MA Thesis, Helen describes three influences on her practice, these are detailed in Appendix 24.

<sup>55</sup> Publications include: Helen Poyner and Libby Worth, *Anna Halprin*, Routledge 2004; “Yes, But is it Dance?” in *An introduction to Community Dance Practice*, edited by Diane Amans, Palgrave Macmillan, 2008; and *Dancers and Communities*, co-edited by Helen Poyner and Jacqueline Simmonds, Ausdance, New South Wales, 1997.

<sup>56</sup> Appendix 22 details Helen’s explanation of non-stylised movement practice, the Halprin RSVP cycle and “scores”. Appendix 23 is Helen’s statement of practice, extracted from her MA Thesis.

I asked Helen what pivot points had moved her practice on, and whether that had related to particular places, people or organisations. She observed:

The odd thing is that some of the major things that have moved me on have been things that have happened not here [South West]. Anna [Halprin] in California, Suprpto [Suryodarmo] in Java and moving to Sydney with my partner and having to find a way of working there...

Moving my practice out of London was a pivot, moving to the South West for the first time...as a result of the work in California...that was probably the beginning of what I do now...In the early 80s... committing to the South West, was probably the base from which everything has grown.<sup>57</sup>

Helen discussed a shift in location which led us to explore how Helen perceived the South West. I asked, "Do you think there still is an urban / rural divide?" Helen answered, "The arts scene in Bristol, Exeter, and in Plymouth is just completely different from those of us working rurally. I think the cities still get the focus." In her MA thesis in a section titled "Walking and talking – from theory into practice," Helen wrote:

The transition from an academic practice based in the city to an alternative movement practice based in rural Devon constitutes a journey across landscapes and languages, since the ways of understanding, being in and speaking about the world in these two environments are fundamentally different.<sup>58</sup>

It seems that being located in the village of Beer has enabled Helen to recognise and craft her own vocabulary away from the cities of the South West.

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<sup>57</sup> Helen discussed a number of points where she made decisions that did not seem sensible financially or rationally but which felt right and turned out well.

<sup>58</sup> Poynor, *Women – Body ~ Movement*, p. 31.

On our second walk, Helen stopped walking at a rock tunnel between Beer and Branscombe, on route to the site of Crow-ne.<sup>59</sup> Crouching in the tunnel, she described previous and current work intertwined with personal events, and narrated a story from over a decade ago regarding a workshop for women she had run called “Moving On Moving Through” which used the tunnel, prior to leaving to work in Australia:

Before I went to Australia... people knew I was going for two years and knew when I was coming back... As usual, I'd go to all the sites before the workshops, to create the score and to check the condition of them. The central image of this workshop... “moving on moving through”... involved each woman coming through this tunnel... This is pretty challenging... you're working with the tides... So we did this piece of work which was quite extraordinary and people had extraordinary experiences.

Helen recounted the context of this work, which began with morning sessions indoors, and outdoors after lunch.<sup>60</sup> On the last day, in Helen's words: “the women arrived at the beach after lunch significantly late”; they had been discussing how to continue working together whilst Helen was away. Their discussion resulted in hiring the hall in Beer, working independently of Helen in peer-led workshops. Helen continued to narrate:

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<sup>59</sup> Crow-ne was created in 2005 by Helen Poyner and Annie Pfingst, in the rocks in-between the shoreline underneath the cliff which we walked in both directions. We also shared lunch on our second walk on the site of Crow-ne. It is a significant piece of work in Helen's repertoire. Helen observed in our discussion: “It's actually these cliffs that would make it very hard for me to leave Beer.”

<sup>60</sup> Helen noted: “The environment work constitutes at least half of any workshop and in some respects the movement work inside is preparatory for it.” Helen observed that she is careful to ensure that participants work indoors first to prepare for the outdoor work in order to be fully able and grounded with the awareness needed to practice outside in what can be a challenging environment. She said: “It is not always the right time; we need to be respectful of the environment... People might not trust the body if they haven't done the indoor work first, they either get overwhelmed by the landscape or they get spaced out... they're just not energized... the indoor work is twofold.” Helen had also said: “I look at the group as an environment, as a landscape. So when we're working in the studio that is the landscape. I don't look at the structure of the studio as my environment; I look at the moving bodies as an environment for each other, so there is a sense of the group.” Helen said to me in response to a comment that I had made: “The other thing you said, that I know my environment like a landscape painter - it's a lovely thing to say, and part of me goes ‘yeah that's right and that's an acknowledgement of the level of detail’, but another part of me goes *no*, because a landscape painter knows the environment visually rather than kinaesthetically because that is fundamentally different, but in terms of the level of relationship, maybe there's a parallel.”

When I came back...I didn't have anywhere to live, it was a very difficult time, and I was trying to re-establish myself. I was working with a colleague, Sandra Reeves. We were looking at the concept of being on the brink in terms of the coastline. We won a commission from PVA Media Lab for the Jurassic coast, and we were looking at the notion of slippage and character fragmentation, and being on the brink psychologically as well as geologically...I was also re-establishing my teaching practice, I needed to start earning again.

I was setting up the first workshop...I presumed I'd set it up in Beer, even though I wasn't living there. I presumed it would be easy, and I came back to Beer, and there was no way I could do it. There was *no* way I could do it; the place just said "no", and the reason it said no, or my understanding of why it had said no, was because that group of women who called themselves "women on the move", had established it as their place, and I couldn't just come back and take it over. It was quite painful but actually it was very clear.

...I established my practice in Charmouth. It was quite a while before I started working in Beer again, and even now, I haven't gone back to any of the sites I used to work in, except for this coastal strip.

I doubt Helen and I would have had *this* conversation about place, the particular landscape of Beer and its impact on Helen's work whilst we were indoors, sitting still. Here, it is impossible to extract Helen's professional choice from personal decisions and feelings alongside the actions of others. Helen said:

I wouldn't leave the Jurassic coast, I wouldn't stop working here. One of the requirements of my studio is it needs to be somewhere between Exmoor and Swanage, all of which are areas that I've worked with.

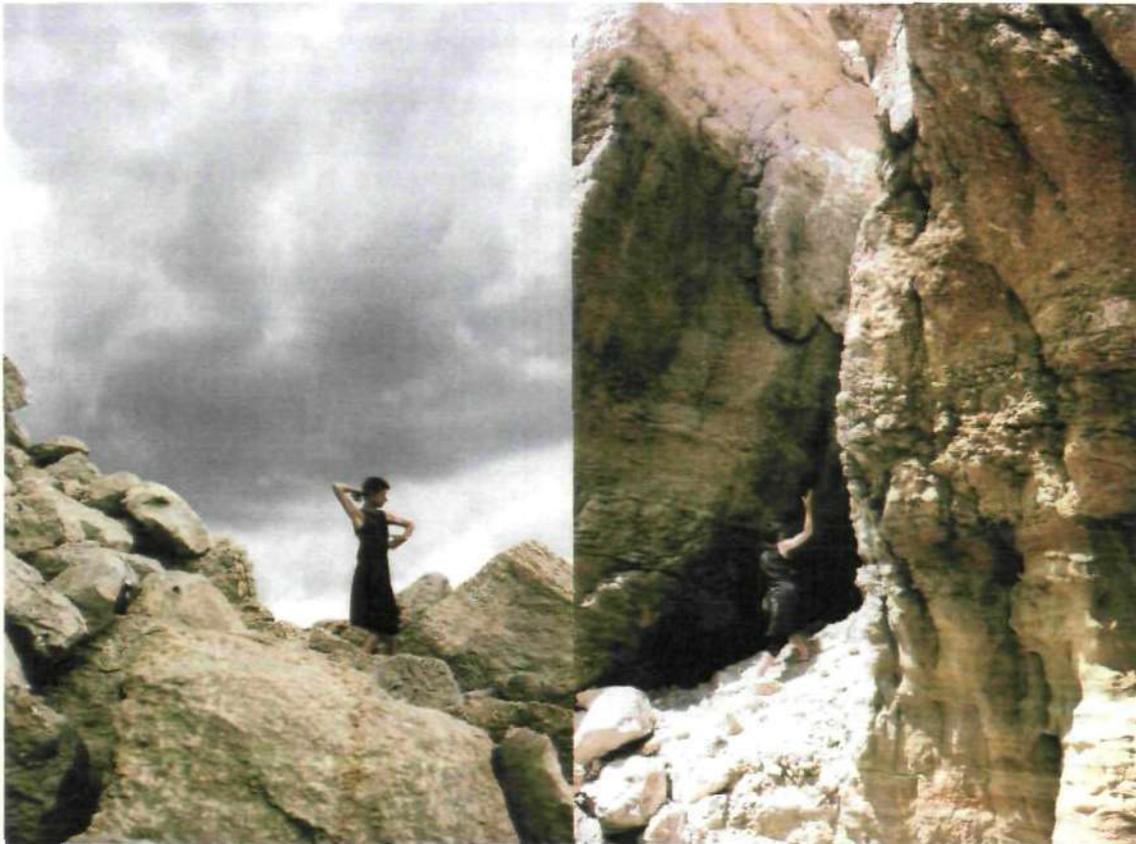
Helen also described her relationship to place as being part of her identity; her:

personal wellbeing, coming and sitting down on the rocks...I come out a lot to sit, to do qigong, to write my course descriptions for the workshop programme, and I always work physically when I'm preparing. It puts me back into myself...It's like I know who I am, I don't even need to do anything, I just need to be out here, and everything goes back into balance.

On our second walk, Helen said:

Before we go on, I'd like to look back at where we've come from. That whole area along there I work with people a lot, and I come to a lot... the white boulders that you see...they're fantastic surfaces on which to work on...that big cave...one of the scores that I've used...is to start the group from that cave...to give them a journey...It is extraordinary to witness.

I observed: "I can see why this is such a special place to work, I think you're answering why you brought me here as we go along."



*Figure 6.* Images of Helen performing Crow-ne, 2005. Helen Poynor and Annie Pflingst.

Helen and I discussed her need as an artist to be able to navigate the "unknown". Helen expected her main earned income to come from her public workshop programme in 2008 - 2009, and yet she acknowledged:

Suddenly I had an extra eleven individual sessions over two weeks, which was unexpected. I love doing the individual work. It's not that the Walk of Life public programme becomes less important, it's just

that I've always thought of it as my main thrust but actually it's only part of my main thrust.

Suddenly (a word used a lot in our second walk)<sup>61</sup> the public programme was no longer *the* central factor either in terms of Helen's income, or in terms of her work. Helen was unable to foresee that her practice may veer in an unexpected direction, and it would have been difficult to write into a development plan or set a goal for it. Helen's understanding of her practice is that it takes place in a diversity of ways, and in an unpredictable balance. She can be prepared to be unprepared from a position of rigour and craft and was able to deal with this "sudden" change by her experience as an artist. In her workshop practice, Helen revealed:

I do fantastic preparation and then I work with whatever happens...I think the difference now and my work twenty years ago is that I'm more able to manage my own internal environment in a way that allows me to trust my intuitive response. I've always worked that way, but am now more confident about trusting it so that when I'm working with the unknown, I'm more able to follow what's coming through.

In Donald Schon's terms discussed in Chapter Two, this suggests that Helen has "tacit knowledge" which she has continued to develop as an artist building a body of experience.

This trust and confidence in and ability to manage her own practice is part of Helen's professional development. Helen had set up a new training programme which moved into a second year in 2009. Since our first walk, Helen had made a number of moves

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<sup>61</sup> See Appendix 25 for example of the use of the word "suddenly" in the extract from my transcripts of our walk two. Helen describes the difficulties of balancing the necessary administration with an artistic practice. She observed: "I do quite a lot of one to one, love doing it actually; it spans the spectrum from working with people on solo, autobiographical work; to mentoring quite established artists; to self development and almost the dance therapy end of the spectrum." Phil also used the word "suddenly" when needing to adapt to unexpected changes in his working practice.

forward. She observed "I've been much more confident and we've really gone for it."<sup>62</sup> I asked Helen if she could articulate what she needed now for her professional practice. She answered: "I know I need to start some of the really boring stuff in relation to getting a studio." I suggested this may be support for grants, planning, or general capital project management. Helen agreed and clarified:

Yes I manage my programme the whole time and it's no problem, but we're talking a different order of finances and regulations and laws... The trouble is that I switch off when people start talking about those things and it's odd because I'm very competent financially but there's a bit of me that doesn't want to do this, and I want that stuff to come from the same place that my movement work comes from and that's the sort of split. It's keeping that particular sense of spaciousness or fluidity or heart that's going to be a challenge for me, so I need support in the process.

Helen demonstrates here a need for sensitive support to her practice which allows space for a flexibility. Appendix 25 provides more details of Helen's response to the question of CPD "need". Helen also had various new potential projects and was looking for a film collaborator. She said of one project, "It's a bit like the way you're working... We're having these meandering conversations and neither of us knows quite where we're going."

In our first walk, we discussed how I was feeling about writing my thesis. Helen said:

...it's funny; I've just been listening to you, thinking about my own work, that's exactly the image I used when I was writing my MA. The experience of trying to write about embodied practice for an MA was exactly about trying to pour these diffuse experiences through the *funnel of language*.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> On our first walk Helen had completed the first (pilot) year of a new training programme a different programme to "Dancers on site" with an application process. Helen observed: "it's been wonderful." By our second walk Helen was half-way through the second of her first year training programme and was just on the brink of launching the second year of the programme.

<sup>63</sup> My emphasis. Helen writes in her MA thesis: "When I write I feel as if I am attempting to gather and pour a diffuse cloud of experiential knowledge, through a small hole created by the demands of language

Helen is however, acutely aware of the need to share knowledge, and articulate knowledge in words. She is keen to “*not* disappear into the woods” but “to invite you to walk and talk with me in the landscape of my home.”<sup>64</sup> I asked Helen how her movement practice is unmediated, not translated into language, how that also corresponds to a “knowing more than you can say”.<sup>65</sup> Helen said:

I’m in one of two modes when I’m working creatively. I’m very fluid and very flexible, I work with change the whole time, I work with the tides, I work with weather that’s totally unpredictable, I work with people who are completely unpredictable...as a personality I like things to be very clear very structured and very cut and dried. If I’m working in the academic environment or for an institution that bit of me has to function more and the other bit of me gets very blocked.

For Helen there is a need to articulate her practice through her own movement language, playful, freer from language constraints, having in Brian Massumi’s terms, “room to manoeuvre”. Yet in the context of her MA thesis she needed to articulate her practice in a way that related to academic language.

Living with grief has been a huge part of Helen’s life during my research timeframe.

Helen said:

The way I work with people comes from what I’m doing myself, so it’s not my professional development. It’s not like I’ve got to learn how to work with people with grief, it’s like I’m grieving and moving, and by doing that I will learn how to work with it.

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and logical thought...this is neither pleasurable nor a satisfying channel for my expression because it excludes my body.” Helen also wrote in the same thesis: “There is a deep-seated resistance in me to attempting to articulate bodily knowledge. In my movement practice my body already has a language which I love to surrender myself to, which makes perfect sense to me, which is complete, which needs no explanation, which is both spoken through me and which speaks to me. Although individual, this language is not exclusive, it is shared with others.” Poynor, *Women – Body – Movement*, p. 17 and p. 23.

<sup>64</sup> Poynor, *Women – Body – Movement*, p. 31.

<sup>65</sup> Referring to Donald A Schon’s quotation used in Chapter Two.

What this signalled to me (similarly to events that affected the Fellows discussed in Chapter Five) is how the personal is intertwined with the professional; the personal can become professional development as personal contexts are twisted and woven into the fabric of being an artist. Helen said:

Sometimes work has been very very demanding and this is mid career stuff actually, dealing with these sort of life events...and I realise that the work has been crucial, because it's demanded of me to find a place within myself that puts me in touch with my core...The work I do with other people is also about that connection. If you work with bodies in the way that I do you can't leave everything else behind.

From the earlier story about the rock tunnel near Beer, to other unforeseeable events, I questioned their integration into Helen's artistic practice and whether important events are integrated by artists in a way which is different to other everyday professional practices. Helen explained:

I don't know whether being an artist means that I expect or need, or being the type of artist that I am, more internal space to process personal change than I would be if I was a chief executive, or maybe that it's just that I choose to value that in my life and I somehow make work about it. It becomes part of my practice.

I asked: "Whereas if you were chief executive of something that didn't allow you to involve, inject, engage with those things, then those things don't become within and part of your practice?" Helen answered, "Yes that's exactly right."<sup>66</sup>

Whilst we were walking, Helen described moving in response to her extremely painful and private experiences in two groups which she perceived as professional

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<sup>66</sup> Helen and I also discussed finding a "flow", a sense of rhythm, of being an individual artist where it is unusual to have the support of an organisation which is able to continue without you. Helen observed: "I think there's certainly a difference between people like me and people who are employed, absolutely... What's important for me is the quality of my work, how that relates to the type of life I lead, so for me to be doing the work I'm doing and not have a sense of rhythm in my own life is a complete contradiction, so I think this year has been about returning to, trying to find the sort of consistency between what I do and how I live."

development: an artist-led peer group and a Sumarah meditation workshop.<sup>67</sup> These were pivotal moments in which Helen moved her practice on, and yet were outside the boundaries of the official business of CPD.<sup>68</sup> As she observed, “it isn’t the situation I would’ve chosen for professional development”. However Helen is receptive to what may move her practice on; and in these examples, her movement practice forms the professional language which predominates over a written or spoken one. I asked Helen about perceiving career development as an ongoing collecting of tools in a burgeoning tool kit; in doing so I had fallen into the same trap of CPD “powerful” language which I have been trying to escape. Helen’s answer was:

I don’t really think about it as tools. In a situation when I’m changing what I’m doing, I think about it as process... I think one can get very into cut and dried words that come from systems and methods which is not how I work.<sup>69</sup>

When I discussed Alyson’s mischief in our walk, Helen remarked on understanding artists in their environments by using their choice of narrative rather than as “objects” for CPD:

What’s interesting is that your subjects, your objects, are refusing just to be the objects of your research... I didn’t bring you on this walk for a challenge, I brought you on this walk because I love it...The types of walks you’re doing with each of us are on our terms, they’re the types of walks we do. I can’t say loudly enough, that we’re artists, we know what we need. It might be different for each of us,...I don’t mean in terms of specifics, but if they [CPD providers] really are serious about supporting mid-career artists, it’s not about inflexible

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<sup>67</sup> Helen described both groups as “creative outside of the mainstream, user pays or self funded”. Her observations are detailed in Appendix 24.

<sup>68</sup> Helen said “As I attempted to move with the grief...it was non-negotiable. I could have avoided it; I could have escaped it; I could have crafted it; I could have *not* crafted it but have done my normal following the body; I could have acted it out; but it wasn’t that; and it was a complete gift. So it was a pivotal moment for moving my movement practice on...I brought it to the...group because I needed to personally. Afterwards I thought there’s something in this artistically...This situation could be clearly seen as professional development but it was not intended as such.”

<sup>69</sup> Appendix 24 details extracts from walk one, including an extract relating to the idea of “power”.

training, and not about making themselves or their ideas too important.

Approaching Helen on her terms, moving through her working landscape, appeared to facilitate a *different* kind of conversation.

Helen strongly suggested that “artistic vision should come from artists not from organisations”. We discussed the challenge for all freelancers who need to retain good working relationships with agencies (such as ArtsMatrix or dance development agencies). Helen said:

Even if there are issues that you do not agree with, as artists, you can’t fall out with these people... because if I want project funding it’s them I have to go through. I think far too much of arts funding goes into infrastructure and it’s squeezing artists. I’m not saying that people aren’t doing a good attempt or whatever; they just don’t get it...

On our second walk, Helen stopped abruptly on the beach and said (with a sense of humour) “I’ll do my rant now”. Her rant consisted of the following:

We don’t need other people to set up career development opportunities. If you get to being a mid-career artist you know what you’re doing, you know what you need, you know what you want, we don’t need some organisation to say this is what you need or this is what you want or how about this workshop on raising money... What we *need* is organisations to support us with the wherewithal to do more of what we do rather than wasting our time and energy (I mean this is ranting!) on having to run our businesses or having to raise money or whatever...

I want to be doing more of the work, and I’m *overwhelmed* with the administration. I could spend all day every day at my desk, or reading emails...sent by organisations...telling me that I should go on a business sponsorship workshop. I don’t need that, I need those organisations to say “We rate your work, we support your work, what do you need?” And what I need is money or administrative support.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Appendix 25 further details Helen’s observations and ideas about “need”.

Helen was clear that general administration can be a positive activity. Paying someone else to spend time on admin would be useful for Helen and free up time for her to work creatively or, for example, prepare an article for publication.<sup>71</sup> The point that Helen makes is the same point that Phil and Alyson both make (in this chapter): that courses in administration, such as marketing or planning, are not necessarily appropriate to them as artists; what they actually need is basic administrative support.

Economic profit or building of financial capital is low on Helen's list of priorities, although on our first walk, she observed:

I'm now having to think more materialistically about my practice because I've left the University, and I don't like that. I don't like thinking "Well it's important that I do this workshop because I need £400" or whatever...the University bought me the ability to not think about that.

Helen made an interesting comment about continuity of training (she had run "dancers on site" for the seventh year in 2008):

If you're working independently ... People assume you'll always be there. I make my living this way. I love doing this, but nothing is guaranteed. Maybe that's something about being mid-career, occasionally I feel like just going off... people assume I'm doing "dancers on site" next year... I'm thinking, I might not *want* to do it next year... I might not be here, I might not be working next year, I might not have enough money to eat. I think the work is acknowledged now, but sometimes I feel like I get treated as though I'll just go on forever.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Examples of administrative tasks which Helen felt she could delegate are as follows: Update B&B lists, confirm places on workshops, negotiate and confirm flights with a collaborating artist, finalise copy for training programmes, send them out, etc. During our second walk Helen gave a more detailed example; the person who had voluntarily set up Helen's website and had been maintaining it for free, needed to reduce his own administration burden. Helen understood that this was entirely appropriate but did need to find someone to maintain her website, as she said "that's all stuff that I need sorting and it's not stuff I can do, it's not my priority, but the website is becoming increasingly important, people are finding me through the web."

<sup>72</sup> Helen also made the point that "mid" tends to be early for a dancer observing: "I'm very old for a dancer... in dance it's very specific; the aging thing, it's much less acute than it used to be, particularly for those of us who are independent dancers, but it's still an issue."

I suggested that Helen has created a CPD organisation on her own; she responded:

Absolutely, but what I feel is that the input I give to the continuing professional development of younger artists, and not only younger artists, in my field, is not recognised and it is completely self-funded. Maybe it is recognised now... I am providing a huge amount of continuing professional development for people across the spectra, from people working site-specifically, to people combining movement and other art forms to people working in dance... That's the level of work I need to be doing, so there's issues for me about where I am in my career, about the level of work I want to work with people, and what's most appropriate... I am already facilitating and mentoring people on a personal and individual level as artists. If this type of work was more acknowledged maybe it would not be necessary to support expensive infrastructures.

Helen is responsible for a significant amount of, in her words, "leftfield training that is available", and suggests people apply for funding to attend if appropriate. It seems to me that Helen's training forms a considered CPD, led by the artist.

Helen has planned to develop her own movement studio for some time and this will mark a major shift in her practice. Her new training programme (discussed above) was a precursor to the studio, but personal events had delayed plans.<sup>73</sup> To make the studio happen Helen commented she would have to operate "out of my comfort zone, not out of my competence zone", and would need to balance creative practice with workshop practice: "I'm not just a facilitator, a mentor or a teacher. All of that comes from my practice, it *is* part of my practice." For Helen to move forward with her studio and her practice, working one to one with dance development consultant June Gamble has been

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<sup>73</sup> Helen had commented: "If everything personal hadn't happened I would be much further down the road on the plans for my studio - I haven't had the energy... I've just managed to keep my practice together... Cancelling and rescheduling a month of work is a huge thing to do... I felt I was moving along the sea bed at a slow slow pace after the deaths in my family."

useful. Gamble was funded by Dance South West and other dance agencies to work with dancers in the South West region.<sup>74</sup> Helen observed:

It was useful but it wasn't the best moment. Now is when I need her but I wasn't one of the artists who got taken on for the third layer of funding from Dance South West for individual work with her.

Helen's comments point to the "right time, right place" issue for CPD, where practically for Helen, Gamble's CPD could have been timelier but the timing was related to funding. I asked what was specifically useful about Gamble, and Helen answered: "looking at how I need to move on and what I need to do next, she has helped me with some grant applications...June is more able to meet you as a human being, she's very approachable." In our second walk, Helen observed that a further funded one-off session with Gamble had allowed Helen to think differently about the studio and has supported making the vision of the studio possible. Helen said: "As a direct result of talking to someone I've got the courage to start grappling with my ideas again... I've moved on and I know what I've got available." It was crucial that the advice came from someone who Helen trusts and from a position of significant experience.

ArtsMatrix's training information bulletins were perceived by Helen as "a fantastic resource." ArtsMatrix stopped producing hard copies in 2008, maintaining an online bulletin. Helen commented:

When they went online they said they would send a hard copy, and I've tried to phone them and they don't reply...I used to read mine at breakfast. I would read about their CPD courses, and I would think "why would I want to do that? It sounds incredibly tedious"...Earlier on in my career I've gone to stuff about marketing and sponsorship. I found it very alienating and at odds with the value of my practice.

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<sup>74</sup> June Gamble previously worked in London and has relocated to the South West. Helen observed that June Gamble had described her work as gaining recognition saying that Dance South West consider her to be a significant part of the dance ecology in the South West.

Helen's professional development is also supported via collaboration with other practitioners. She has, for example, a six year ongoing collaboration with a Feldenkrais expert whom she describes as "a very safe collaborator who I absolutely trust." Their collaboration in 2009 challenged Helen and continued to develop understanding of how the two practices can work together.

## Phil Smith

Phil is a performance and theatre artist who lives in Exeter. A founder member of performance company Wrights & Sites, Phil's practice includes walking.<sup>75</sup> Formerly a Senior Research Associate, now Associate Lecturer (and from October 2009 full-time PhD student) at the University of Plymouth, Phil also teaches at the University of Exeter, and at Dartington College of Arts. His walking performances include The Crab Walks (2004) and Crab Steps Aside (2005)<sup>76</sup> in South Devon and Rescued From The History Hut (2007) and The Fabulous Walks at Teign Village.<sup>77</sup> In 2007, Phil retraced the 1909 two-hundred mile walk of the engineer Charles Hurst who planted acorns, finding the now mature oaks as research for a new play, In Search of Pontiflunk (2008).<sup>78</sup> Amongst many mis-guides, Phil has created tours for A La Ronde (National Trust) in 2007, 2008, and 2009, and a "twalk" at the Royal William Victualling Yard, Plymouth for The Hidden City Festival in 2008. Phil's book Mythogeography. A

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<sup>75</sup> Further information on Wrights & Sites online at: [www.mis-guide.com](http://www.mis-guide.com). Alongside Phil Smith, the three other core members of Wrights & Sites are Stephen Hodge, Simon Persighetti and Cathy Turner. Phil's walking practice is relatively recent; he observes "A few years ago I 'chose' to walk. Before then walking had been a function of something else: getting to work, to the cinema, collecting the children from nursery." Walking, Writing and Performance: Autobiographical Texts by Deirdre Heddon, Carl Lavery and Phil Smith, edited by Roberta Mock, Intellect, 2009, p. 81.

<sup>76</sup> The texts of The Crab Walks were published in Mock (ed.), Walking, Writing and Performance.

<sup>77</sup> In collaboration with other South West based artists: Katie Etheridge, Anoushka Athique, Simon Persighetti and Phil Smith are Chartwell Dutiro, Nicola Singh, Fumiaki Tanaka and Rachel Sweeney.

<sup>78</sup> Performed by New Perspectives, Nottingham.

Guide to Walking Sideways was published by Triarchy Press in January 2010.<sup>79</sup> Phil's work is not necessarily South West specific, yet pays attention to the land it travels through, creating work specifically for a route or place and weaving in the tales and the idiosyncrasies of particular locations in a shifting place / space.

On our first walk we took the train from Exeter to Dawlish, and walked across mid Devon via the sites of some of The Crab Walks. Phil said:

It's about here that I did my first set of crab performances. Not in these huts, the original huts were smashed to pieces in a storm... Someone said they actually saw my hut flying over the Pirate's Chest and just disappearing.<sup>80</sup>

We aimed for Teign Village, the planned location of one of Phil's Fabulous Walks with Nichola Singh. Phil said:

I thought it would be interesting to go from the beginning of Crab Walks and walk to the next phase of it in terms of development.

On our second walk, Phil and I made a walk around the three parish churches of St. Michaels in the city of Exeter: Heavitree, Alphington and on Dinham Road in the city centre. Phil knew the areas we were walking in well, and has lived in Exeter for many years. Corresponding to Helen, the locations we walked through have exquisitely researched foundations on which Phil's performance practice is built. From discussing the evolution of the South Devon holiday business in walk one, to the story of a clock tower in Exeter in walk two, Phil suggests that the land he travels through is co-constituting with his practice.<sup>81</sup> In "Crab Walking and Mythogeography" he revealed

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<sup>79</sup> [www.triarchypress.com/pages/Mythogeography\\_Guide\\_to\\_Walking\\_Sideways.htm](http://www.triarchypress.com/pages/Mythogeography_Guide_to_Walking_Sideways.htm).  
[www.mythogeography.com](http://www.mythogeography.com).

<sup>80</sup> Phil later clarified that the Pirate's Chest is a café.

<sup>81</sup> Phil uses the actual land as example; where he is becomes part of what he is saying or performing. In

he has come to understand “that a site might – and might be encouraged to – perform”.<sup>82</sup> On walk one, Phil said: “we’re coming to a fabulous place which is why I came this way... we could nip in just for me to show you the history hut which is what our performance piece was based on and Katie’s actual piece ended up here.”

Phil’s work forms a multi-layering of memory, observed from plural positions. His identity as an artist reflects this and to some extent has a fragmentary, flitting quality to it. Phil references Doreen Massey in his work, and offers a diversity of intellectual positioning and locations paralleling the constellations of understanding of space offered by Massey. Yet for me, Phil’s work suggests that place is indeed important (whilst it acknowledges that place itself is unfixed, constantly changing via the actions and interactions which take part within it). Our walks became part-guided tour, part performance, part mythogeography, part telling of story. As Phil explained on walk two, “Autobiography is an essential part of Mythogeography.” Phil said:

If you’re a high-flying academic who uses the VIP lounge etc...cruises in at the last moment, has an espresso, falls asleep reading their papers, you miss the texture, the accent of the airport, you don’t use the bus...or hear a Bristol accent. If you’re insulated from these things, you miss the experience, the detail of it... That’s why I don’t feel any identity question around working in the South West...obviously it’s very particular: If we were walking in Switzerland it would feel very different. So it’s not like places are all the same, but at the same time it’s not to do with identity really, it’s just to do with difference, and any of those places could be a starting point or a worm hole to many other places.

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our first walk on the site of The Crab Walks, Phil reached for a piece of earth to illustrate a description of Hindu-ism. Appendix 27 details conversational extracts from walk one, and Appendix 28 details extracts from walk two. Phil demonstrates a relational concept of place which is discussed in Chapter Four.

<sup>82</sup> Phil Smith, “Crab Walking and Mythogeography”, *Walking, Writing and Performance*, p. 81.

The four artists have individual opinions and relationships to “place” and to “South West”.<sup>83</sup> Phil unlike Helen, does not see a rural / urban divide to the South West, stating: “the countryside is so managed and so part of the city.”

I questioned Phil on the distinctiveness of the South Devon area. He had begun working in Dawlish because of The Crab Walks, and family holidays as a child:

That piece of work... was conceptual rather than had any connection to the actual place. I tried to think about where the places might have been that we would have come to along this part of the coast. Then just set off. My initial intention was...just to get going, and just perform along the way.

Phil had intended to make performance walks with an artist called Sanjay Shelat who was simultaneously offered an opportunity to travel in Peru. Phil observed:

For me it was holiday, that was the identity, and one of the interesting things about doing The Crab Walks...I set out to do it with Sanjay and we were going to walk together... just before we were going to do it, Sanjay...had an offer to go to Peru...He went ...Suddenly I had to rethink the whole nature of it, so it became much more of an autobiographical discovery out of which I would create some sort of *performance*. I went looking for these holiday places, and couldn't find them. That's what was interesting in a way...I knew the names of the places we'd stayed in Paignton, and I knew we'd been up and down the coast, and thought I'd go to these beaches and I'd remember them...There was only one place that I really recognised...So what began as a very non-autobiographical thing that would have been shared with Sanjay, became kind of autobiographical.<sup>84</sup>

I asked: “Thinking in terms of your own place here, and your way of working here...do you think that that's quite special or do you think you can do that anywhere?” Phil answered: “No, I can do that anywhere”.

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<sup>83</sup> This links to the varied opinions of the artists discussed in Chapters Three and Five.

<sup>84</sup> Phil clarified that even though it was kind of autobiographical he “walked a lot with other people; with Tom Davies who was picking up sounds, and AnjaliJay who directed my piece.”

Phil suggested in walk one that he often undertook time-consuming work which he felt ambivalent about, and an Artsadmin type of organisation in the South West was needed.<sup>85</sup> Phil's "fantasy" was to be able to offload the responsibility of administration (such as paying public liability insurance, or organising health and safety). Phil observed:

It's not terrible. I wouldn't say I'm collapsing under the stress of it all... A lot of the early part of the work that I did is in a collective or cooperative setting, I never would have dreamt of setting up something on my own.<sup>86</sup>

I questioned whether relinquishing administrative control may affect the individuality of his practice. Phil said

I don't necessarily believe that I'll do it better than they [Artsadmin] would... I think the individuality would be there in different contexts, so I'm not 100% sure where... one's own control of that is so fantastically important.

Phil also struggled to find time to seek out what he described as "interesting opportunities", and to make a "proper application" to those opportunities, thus creating a situation which he described as being "at the mercy of invitations". Phil felt that saying "no" to invitations becomes hard "unless you really don't like the project... you are likely to choose it on the basis that you might not get asked again."<sup>87</sup>

The choice for Sanjay (Peru or Phil?), described earlier, evidences the impact of unplanned choice on the artist and their collaborators. Sanjay's decision forced certain

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<sup>85</sup> Please see Appendix 1, CPD providers, for description of Artsadmin.

<sup>86</sup> Phil added: "Well I say that, that's probably true, although I did play a part in setting up something but it wasn't my initiative and I was sort of helping out, and continue 25, nearly 30 years later to play a part in that organisation [TNT], but I wasn't the initiator and I never ever carried it ... I always dipped in and out of it." Appendix 27 further details Phil's comments regarding what has changed in his working practices and how that relates to what he may need.

<sup>87</sup> I said; "Hence the Peru / Phil Smith conundrum for Sanjay?" Phil replied: "Absolutely, I wasn't unsympathetic to it, but I did see it as a significant choice."

changes onto Phil. Phil described that “arbitrary catalytic moment ... On the one hand, you can look back and say, ‘Ah I see the structure or reasons why that happened’, or at the same time there are these moments of almost arbitrary choice where you could have gone one way or another, and yet the consequences of that are enormous.” Phil pointed out that he could give me “stories of catalytic moments”, or “stories of structural explanation” because both exist simultaneously.

Phil described the effect on him of ArtsMatrix CPD advertising:

It feels like I get constant stuff from them, offering me some kind of workshop...I get these emails...they invite me to go to various seminars, day workshops etc, around management or setting up companies, blah blah blah. In 1980 without any seminars, myself, Paul and a couple of other actors set up a company [TNT]; we work now hand-in-glove with a bigger American operation which handles basically all the administration. Although that is a separate company, Paul is the artistic director of it, so I think we can say that if we put the turnovers of those two companies together...in terms of the productions that we put out through the other company...I would say a turnover of about 3 or 4 million pounds, and no-one’s ever, ever been to a seminar!

Similarly to the other three artists, Phil was not “at *all* cynical or dismissive of ‘technical’ help”. Continuing with his experience of TNT, he observed:

We’ve got a good accountant who I think gives us simple straightforward advice, and keeps us on the straight and narrow...But I think once you start to be driven by management priorities and not by artistic priorities, and I know that they’ll say, “no no no it’s all about how the management can help the artistic priorities”, I don’t believe it. I think it works when your managers are actually part of your art.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Phil stated: “TNT also relies on other professional people, we have our actors and stage management people, costume designers, set designers, those sort of people, but no-one’s permanent, everyone’s freelance, it’s all contract by contract stuff.” (Although in practice some people work repeatedly for the company - a number of people have worked on these contracts for over 20 years, so although there is not permanent company, some of the key roles: director, composers, dramaturg, writers, choreographer, costume designer, etc. have been mostly filled by the same people for the past two decades.)

Phil pointed out:

I think if anybody had ever given us advice, it [TNT] wouldn't exist anymore, because so many of the decisions would never have been taken, and some of them have lost our parent company a lot of money in the past.

Phil's observations are similar to those Helen made in her "rant". Alyson also made corresponding remarks. Perhaps most importantly, Phil stated: "It's all about making the art work, and I don't believe that that's what advisors do always." The effect of certain generic strands of CPD opportunity appears to lack value for experienced artists.

Phil said:

The last thing I feel like I want to do is go to a workshop about pretty much anything. Unless you told me certain names, if you said: Marina Abramović is coming...but the idea of going for advice on how to order one's work, I just feel, "don't tell me about that". If you want to take it over, if you want to run it or supply services to it, then great.

I suggested that there are many "work smarter" arguments given, of which I am personally unsure when they are aimed at experienced artists. Phil agreed and feared that he would spend a day "and then I'd come away with a piece of A4 paper on which I would have written down a series of headings, and that'll be it and it will sit on the desk somewhere for a bit until I finally clear up the desk and it gets tidied away."

Phil suggested that CPD generic consultancy and advice is a "great growth industry" related to the changes that have taken place in administering public money for arts support, and that the culture of straightforward "policing" of funds based on trust and honesty with a simple contract obligation to correctly spend money, appears to have disappeared,<sup>89</sup> replaced with social targets for arts practice, and criteria which in Phil's

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<sup>89</sup> Phil also made the point that this had "no correlation whatsoever to the amount of *free* work that people

opinion, are not led from artistic principles. This creates a lack of shared values and a split in which artists are working alongside “people who don’t have a moral or ethical connection”. It appears that between a CPD advisor and an artist there is a potential clash of values. I asked Phil how these may merge, and find a language that can be shared and make sense to artists. Phil said:

You won’t...If you do, you’re already losing...the eccentricity...the willingness to set yourself at some personal loss in order to do certain things which really in terms of most of the mores of society don’t really connect; where you can’t say this is for the social good in any real sensible way. All you can say is this is about following a passion about communication ...Once you begin to really define it, it disappears and then you’re in trouble...

Phil suggested that once a definition is forced, it creates a falsity about what one is doing and why. He continued:

...and the thing you meant to do you can no longer cover up under that definition, so you can’t do it anymore and all you’re left with is the definition that you’re not really interested in.

I suggested that CPD agencies could sometimes appear to be “feeding their little monster of development”. Phil answered, “Yes, yes, that’s exactly my feeling, that that’s what all the agencies are doing it appears to me. If you put all the money that’s spent on the wages of all the people, and all the facilities and whatever, and just gave it to artists, I’m not convinced that you wouldn’t get better work.” Alternatively Phil thought the idea of “just sitting artists down together”, in an informal network, having conversations could be “fantastically useful”. He remembered the Artistic Director of TNT describing an informal meeting that a senior Arts Council person had arranged:

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in the arts are constantly putting in”.

He said “it was just very inspiring to be with all those people... it was an inspiring time.” They all did quite intense work together and I’m sure some work really did come out of it.

Again, this is relevant to building social capital, linked with the opportunity of letting practice happen without prescribed outcomes.

Phil stated he rarely used mentors: “I’d be pretty resistant to any sort of advice that wasn’t invested.” For Phil, an example of “investment” in a project was his dramaturgy role for *Hidden City*:

as far as I’m concerned, it’s my project, not in the sense like “it’s mine”, but I’ve invested in that now, so I don’t want a thing where I come and deliver pearls of wisdom and then go away.<sup>90</sup>

Phil does use a form of mentoring (but would not describe it as such): for example, using external directors on both *Crab Steps* and *Crab Walks* he said: “They would tell me off a huge amount for self-indulgence and make me cut things that I really didn’t want to cut, and that was very good, really really helpful.” Collaborating with people is a development experience for Phil, as it is for the other artists discussed in this chapter. Phil described how through working with Katie Etheridge and Anoushka Athique<sup>91</sup> he progressed his own practice, and identified a need to work with more visual artists: “I don’t have the [visual] skills...to take things to the next stage.” He revealed:

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<sup>90</sup> Phil further clarified: “This is not always good, it can mean with some people, one is far too proactive, they would see it as far too invasive. Whereas for me I’m quite happy for people to take or reject. I might think they were wrong or right to reject, but in that situation I would feel I was asked to contribute, and the idea of enablement I think is sometimes a dodgy one, not all the time, sometimes I think there is a degree of manipulation which disables, which can actually take away from the person the very kind of initiative which they need in order to develop their work, and that by having them enabled, that in the name of enablement, what kind of occurs is that someone develops for that person what could be a very successful model of work but essentially what happens is, you see them, people’s careers take off, but the trouble is they are now stuck in that model, and that someone very very efficiently, very perceptively has created a very successful model for them *but* you kind of feel that it’s artistic and aesthetic death.”

<sup>91</sup> On the *Mobile Machinoeki*, *Tales from the History Hut*, and the *Fabulous Walks*. Appendix 27 details Phil’s description of working with Anoushka and Katie.

Anoushka created a museum that I had on my back, and I wore it like a rucksack...It was like a little world...On my own, and with four days to do it, I might have that idea, but unlike Anoushka I wouldn't have a clue how to go about actually making a version that would work.<sup>92</sup>

However this kind of collaboration costs money: "For me to raise the money to do that is tough. This time I've managed to get money for seven other artists as well as myself, but I'm only really going to work with one of them directly. And that's fine." Phil identified the need to work with others who can bring contrasting skills as "probably" the overarching need in his practice, although he observed that in some respects, Wrights and Sites have that already.<sup>93</sup>

I asked Phil how he might take a next step in collaborating: "Is it about the money, or time, or both?" Phil answered:

It is definitely about time. I could just stop and make time, I could say "Right, I'm not going to just keep doing stuff because there is a sort of self-perpetuating thing." So for example, A La Ronde; I've done that for two years now, I don't get any money out of it, it's a tiny amount, and certainly there's no connection to the time it takes to do it. On the other hand it's fantastic to work at that kind of property, and because of that it gives me connections to a whole load of other people who are working in historical interpretation etc. Having done the one I've just done, I immediately get the email back, saying "...do you fancy doing something next year perhaps on the flora and fauna of the place? Steven the gardener thought..." etc. That's the real potential.

Phil's work at A La Ronde evidences the importance of, in Bourdieu's terms, social capital, and is symbolic rather than economic. Phil's engagement with this particular place offers potential for artistic development.

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<sup>92</sup> Appendix 27 provides further detail.

<sup>93</sup> However Phil also said: "Our skills are a bit similar, in some respects although not in all... there's a complementarity about it, but none of us really have the visual arts range, the crafts skills. So obviously the money to be able to pay them [other artists with visual arts skills], to fund those things, to produce the objects, the resource, the production of it."

Corresponding to Helen's and Mariele's needs, Phil needed his own website and was working on the mythogeography website through the support of University of Plymouth and an MA student. He observed that he lacked skills to develop his own website, and had consequently delayed the site by prioritising other needs for which he already had the skills:

The prospect of me learning how to put up a website, learning how do it all properly, with everything else, you just back off... I don't need to learn anything particularly new to write this next academic paper, so I'll go and do that now.

We also discussed how complementary skills can be added via a family member or partner. Phil observed: "It's so much easier when someone else does it, and I like sharing it out to other people, where there is a little loss of control." In a basic summary, it appeared that Phil needed time, artistic collaborators with knowledge and skills different to his, more funding or income to pay potential collaborators, and an Artsadmin type agency.

Phil observed:

I do not necessarily see a use for the word 'artist'. It is a term of convenience really... Certainly when I was writing plays in the 1980s I still think I would have seen it as politics by any other means, rather than art. I wasn't trying to create a specific aesthetic experience, I was trying to create a series of political experiences for people."

I asked Phil whether the term "creative enterprise specialist"<sup>94</sup> meant anything to him.

He observed: "Well I assume it's about making art into a business which of course artists, if they're going to survive, do anyway." I asked Phil if he felt he had a "career".

Phil considers it "not a very coherent one... I'm very ambivalent about it. It would be

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<sup>94</sup> This was the current title of ArtsMatrix advisors at the time of our walk.

nice if I could successfully interview for one of these jobs that would give me £30,000 a year, in which I know there would be a lot of marking.”<sup>95</sup>

Similarly to the other three artists, Phil has various part-time lecturing posts which allow some financial stability but generally not a loyalty to an organisation. At Plymouth University, Phil’s two year contract was finishing. He pointed out: “that’s been very nice to be guaranteed something for two years...but it is only two years, so its only a nice amount, it’s not a life changing or worth securing amount.” To some extent lecturing also provides a source of otherwise inaccessible information. Phil observed that “one is loyal to people”, to collaborators, respected colleagues, and students,<sup>96</sup> that it is about doing what one is interested in.

In the eight months between walk one and two, I asked what had changed for Phil. He said:

There doesn’t feel like there have been any kind of massive individual ruptures or ructions, or huge changes of direction, but things have definitely developed in different ways. For example, I would say

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<sup>95</sup> Phil clarified that this would be something like a university lecturer job, but there is a tussle between being employed at a University and trying to be an artist at the same time. He said: “Something that would look like a real job, or if someone came along and said we’ll give you twenty grand a year as long as we can tell you what and with whom you work within reason, then I think I’d probably buy into that. But on the other hand, having said that, I have those cardboard folders that lean up against the leg of the table, they’re all ongoing projects, they could be a module I’m teaching, they could be the Fabulous Walks, it could be a novel, it could be whatever. I think there’s about twenty of them there at the moment. So the sheer never-ending-ness of it to look after twenty ongoing projects even if some of them I don’t look at for a couple of months, until the paper’s published etc.. There’s always someone coming back on email and saying you’ve forgotten to put your filmography on paper, or could you add your bibliography, so there’s always something extra to do until they are finally published. Or they’re finally performed or whatever. They’re never quite over, and having so many of them in some ways it would be nice to have somebody that was handling that, and me just being able to really focus on one or two things at one time. On the other hand, that does rather contradict the whole philosophical basis that I’m working at, so the whole mythogeographical approach which is this excessive layering, excessive texturing, just having all these different simultaneous projects, that’s kind of part of it. Also people who actually have the security of those jobs, often look to me to be completely exhausted, so although I might be doing all this stuff and working long hours, there is the degree to which a change is as good as a rest, so if I’m a bit bored with something, I can just open up a different folder, so I don’t just feel that I’m weighed down by one thing that relentlessly churns on.” Appendix 27 details further observations.

<sup>96</sup> Appendix 28 further details his comments.

Wrights and Sites is a bit stalled at the moment.<sup>97</sup> ...I'm very very busy on the teaching front.<sup>98</sup>

Teaching feeds Phil's practice. He commented that by preparing teaching modules "I remind myself and see connections that were there." Phil observed:

When you make your *big moves* aesthetically, the temptation is to always overemphasize the break from something before. In order to make the change you overemphasise how violent the change is. So part of it has been about remembering where those things came from and that maybe there's more continuity than at the time you wanted to talk about.

Phil reflected that it is surprising what one remembers if there is time or a need to do so.<sup>99</sup> However Phil felt he needed to think about the following year "whether I want to teach *that* much", stating that it "really squeezes" other aspects of work he may want to do.

I asked "is there anything that's been particularly challenging over the last eight months?" Phil answered: "I suppose the challenge has been to kind of manoeuvre myself into a position to do what things I want to do." Phil had also applied to ACE for a summer project similar to the Fabulous Walks, and had been unsuccessful.<sup>100</sup> He said:

I think that is a problem when people are trying to jump through ridiculous hoops to make it relevant to fit funding priorities. That's where you can start losing interest in your own work, because you've bent it. The Fabulous Walks and the priorities that I was trying to do...fitted rather nicely. When I wanted to retrench it a bit this time,

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<sup>97</sup> Appendix 28 details Phil's observation.

<sup>98</sup> Phil observed, that in Exeter: "I think I've taught three modules this year...I've done devised theatre (that's the 2<sup>nd</sup> year), rough theatre and now I'm doing physical theatre assemblage, which is kind of physical theatre looking at dramaturgy, Eugenio Barba kind of dramaturgy."

<sup>99</sup> Appendix 28 further details Phil's comments regarding teaching and research. Additionally following Phil's comments on the draft version of this section. Phil observed: "I'm far more interested in academic discourse than comes across here. I think because you were addressing me as an artist, I have tended to underplay my genuine commitments to research and to teaching."

<sup>100</sup> We discussed the Fabulous Walks in walk two; Appendix 28 details this conversation.

give less people more time, that didn't fit their priorities and to try to pretend that it did rather twisted the description of it.<sup>101</sup>

It is clear that one does not always know where funding, collaborators and other events are going to come from, and one's own artistic needs do not necessarily fit the artistic (or other) priorities of the funding agencies. I explored with Phil the idea that you do not know what you might need until you need it, and if you push an articulation of that need you may limit what you get out of it. Phil answered:

The question that would arise is that whether this being prepared for the unpreparable actually helps you to stave off problems or whether it's just a question of recognising them.<sup>102</sup>

Phil discussed the mythogeography symposium that had taken place in October 2008, and speculated on what might have happened if it had taken a different direction: "If five people had said I want to sign up to a mythogeography-type of thing, that might have sounded like a little research core."<sup>103</sup> He observed: "What is relevant is that it did not happen, and I think it is significant...I wasn't aware quite how important that moment had been." Instead, a relationship was developing (which had occurred via a personal contact) with Triarchy, a small publishing organisation, to publish a book about mythogeography.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> When checking over this description Phil added: "But, it should be said, that may not be why the application was rejected."

<sup>102</sup> Phil gave the example of a conference paper which he realised afterwards was completely back to front, and commented: "The question arises, right, o.k., so could I have known that before? Or is it just simply a question that you just have to be open to criticism or open to the feeling that it's gone wrong...I'm just wondering whether it's possible, or whether one should have seen that coming, or whether one should be experienced enough to kind of not have that problem, or whether it simply is a question of once the thing that's happened that you're unprepared for has happened, then you should be prepared to respond to it." Appendix 28 also further details Phil's comments regarding planning, or the "unknown".

<sup>103</sup> Appendix 28 further detail this. The Symposium was jointly organised with Roberta Mock and Chris Hall.

<sup>104</sup> This has now taken place.

Phil and I discussed the issue that once a project is successful, it is easier to market a repeat or similar project, yet the artist may want to move on. Phil observed on the Crab

Walks:

Having done it once, people came, they said they really enjoyed coming to the beach huts to do it. What do I do now? Do I now for the rest of my life, go round beach resorts doing this tale of exploring?

When I suggested that Phil put his work first and income at least second, Phil agreed “mostly”, but occasionally he would do work for income not artistic merit.

On walk one we were astounded to see a peacock looking at himself in a road corner-mirror (see *Figure 7*). Later, when I asked Phil what would be an appropriate image to use in my thesis, he said: “The peacock. It’s fairly ironical, isn’t it, of what we were doing.”



*Figure 7.* Peacock admiring itself in a convex mirror during walk one with Phil Smith.

## **Building social and symbolic capital, “navigating moments”**

For Phil, Helen, Alyson and Mariele there is a fine balance of earning a reliable income, and being able to create time to take un-planned or previously unknown opportunities that arise, or to research and develop their practice. None of the artists felt that they were elevating through a hierarchy of a career, but were instead in a continuum, navigating moment to moment. However the pace of that, the speed of momentum, was changeable. For example, Phil did not perceive an evenness of momentum, or any logical progression to his practice. In common was a lack of a ready-made career path, and no even paced continuum. All the artists create a tailored one-off or series of pieces which are not commodified into repeated patterns. The desire of other beach resorts to have their own “Crab Walks”, Mariele’s comment that she could make a living endlessly producing her tank pieces and other comments by Helen and Alyson suggest that the symbolic capital of bespoke creation is higher than economic capital.

All the artists offered their support to other artists or artist-led networks in a variety of ways: through teaching, facilitative workshop practice, or through routes of their own making. All demonstrated connectivity linked to the building of a trusted and respected reputation. Helen observed that work offers do “very much come out of people knowing my practice and asking me to contribute... Those things happen at times that you are unable to plan in, you have to trust that they come along.” When we discussed the “piloting” of one-off initiatives which mean that the opportunity for another group or individual to benefit is lost, Helen responded: “I make support for artist-led opportunity not institution-led.” Alyson had also evidenced the impact on her Migrating Stones project of our “pilot” funding culture.

As demonstrated in Chapter Four, both Massumi and Bourdieu take into account that our minds are not separated from our bodies. If we consider the idea of “knowing how to travel”, or “going with the flow,” and think of experienced artists as an accumulation of their ongoing experiences and practices, intertwined with events outside of their control, CPD must relate to learning to practice one’s practice within an *uncertainty of where you are going*. It must foster a state of being “comfortably uncomfortable” – that is, with a need to develop the dispositions of confidence and endurance that a way *will* be found, and a practice continued to be made. Both Phil and Helen use the word “suddenly”: “suddenly I had to rethink”; “suddenly I had ten extra sessions that week”. It seems to me that non-artist-led CPD currently makes little space for these “suddenlys” and that these do not become any more foreseeable the more experienced an artist gets.

## **The business of CPD**

As well as dealing with life events and, in Helen’s case, a significant amount of grief, there has been a sense of humour and mischief pervading all the walks. Helen’s “rant” was done with a wicked humour, yet clearly and articulately set out what she felt she needed in a few sentences. The simple answer: administrative support to free her up to spend more time on her artistic practice, and most definitely not a marketing course. This humour appears to be lacking in CPD, and it appears that the *business* of CPD is not working. The artists discussed here are extremely experienced and yet found challenges in understanding the acronym CPD, the language of CPD, and what CPD can offer them. CPD is also difficult to “locate”. For these four artists what they need is not necessarily available when they need it, and what is available, may not be needed at all.

There is a demonstrable lack of trust in and respect for formal courses unless they come from those with specific and respected experience. CPD was viewed as a *business* and *economic* support mechanism and consequently disconnected from the artist and their process of making artwork.

All four artists assumed that organisations offering generic CPD (such as ArtsMatrix) would not be able to offer them anything of “relevance”. None had attended ArtsMatrix training courses. Helen had been waiting to hear whether ArtsMatrix were funding her to mentor other dancers. It seems that short training courses, for example in marketing, are not needed. What *is* needed is the ability to “buy time” to practice better, or to gain support for administration. All also evidenced an awareness of the artificial separation of their practice from their professional development particularly by CPD agencies.

Helen pointed out that what was of real importance to her was in my attached appendices, but that did not fit the central subject matter of the thesis. I think this demonstrates one of the issues that I have had with this research, the splitting off of the questions regarding CPD and artists’ actual continuing practice. Phil observed that the focus of my questions created an artificial spotlight on particular articulations that may or may not be important, and under different circumstances would not come to light at all, and certainly would not have been considered by him with the same concentration.

Helen was aware that the ease of talking to me meant her spoken words were not created with the care that they would have been had she considered them as written words. My transference of our conversations to the page again created a false focus for CPD need which is actually interwoven and inseparable from the rest of practice.

Alyson similarly commented that a thought on one day can be contradicted the following day, so in conversationally discussing practice and progress, what may be

articulated on one day, may have lost all importance the day after.<sup>105</sup> Mariele observed that projects she had discussed with certainty in our walks had now disappeared, and echoed Alyson in the shifting prominence of items discussed. By continuing to alienate practice by focusing exclusively on CPD and career, the challenges of data collection on artists' professional development are still present despite walking and talking.

## Conclusion

When I first decided to focus on land-based artists, I was attempting to find a way in which I could research experienced artists on their territory, on their choice of path that "did away with the desk". Using the metaphor of being on a journey, and the reality of walking a journey, I wondered how artists would *really* talk about their CPD needs and careers, and whether the idea of CPD was relevant at all. I wanted to listen to and engage with their narratives in a literal momentum of movement paralleling the physical and theoretical momentums of their practices. The artists' control of the walk over land created a framework for my research enquiry which traced a path over a choice of discussion and triggered exclamations and buried fragments of past activity and what was now important to them, in addition to creating a space to discuss future possibilities. Rather than focusing completely on "CPD need", "mid-career" or "South West", a conviviality of paced and expansive conversation developed my understanding of four individuals' needs and their lived connection to the land and working spaces around them. By spending time walking our discussions went deeper and ranged outside

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<sup>105</sup> Alyson commented that she felt disappointment in "how inarticulate I am" although later in a personal email to me commenting on the appendices said: "I'm quite in awe of what you've been up to - it must have taken so long!" She had particularly liked certain quotes detailed in her appendices.

of the boundaries that I would normally experience by statically sitting during a one or two hour interview by phone, in a café or at a desk.

Other research to map CPD need (as detailed in Chapters One and Two) has mainly used questionnaires, desk-based interviews and focus groups. What Phil might call “Mythogeography” is evidenced here in the individual narratives, networks, connections and heterogeneous relationships to certain people, and to sites or places within the South West. These are personal relationships, or a “simultaneity of stories-so-far” (Doreen Massey). Each artist had unique relationships to particular places. Helen stated that “my bones belong here” (the Jurassic coast); the area is a fundamental part of her practice. In “The Storm Trilogy” Alyson writes:

These borderlands are where I live –  
life elsewhere is not life  
but a giving away of something essential.<sup>106</sup>

However this poem is not about a place in the South West. For Phil The Crab Walks unintentionally ended up being autobiographical but he resisted the importance of connection to *the* specific places. Alyson observed in our walk in Leigh Woods, “I could come here and sleep and relax in this place. I have total permission. The only encouragement if you like, is, an acorn grows into an oak. How does an Alyson grow into an Alyson?” For Alyson this question is at the heart of what CPD should be about.

All four artists found it hard to generalise an answer to the question “What do mid-career artists need?” What we did discuss appeared to be the question of how one nurtures and develops an internal confidence, making work professionally on a day-to-

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<sup>106</sup> Alyson Hallet, “The Storm Trilogy”, The Stone Library, Peterloo Poets, 2007, p. 17.

day basis, finding ways through the challenges of practicing as they arose, whether one called oneself an artist or not. Phil felt that my writing down of some of his comments had created an imbalance where

I'm approaching everything from the point of view of an artist and that is only (in my head) a small part of what I'm interested in being... It all sounds far too reasonable to me. And too problematical – in reality things I address here as problems, I would circumvent by changing masks until circumstances changed.

The label “artist” also, for Phil, isolated a part of his practice from the whole.

Yet the walking and talking *became* CPD. All four artists pointed out that the walks with me had been useful; for example, Phil observed: “it is useful to have these chats for me; you don't necessarily get these chances to reflect.” The spacing and flow of our conversations over time enabled a durational reflection. When I returned to the date of our last walk with each artist, there was always surprise about the time passed. The discussions I had with these four artists emphasised to me the difference between a continuously evolving practice and the stop-start provision of training courses. Also highlighted were the differences in value between those practicing as artists and those practicing as CPD agencies, where artistic capital is often secondary to building economic capital.

By the final walks I threw away my questions, and trusted these experienced artists. Their confidence and awareness in their own practices has built with their experiences and I wanted to fully engage with that momentum. Their activities are inter-dependent with the opportunities and organisations in the South West and wider, and their ability to practice *better* relies on many factors. However I cannot homogenise need for these artists except in a “time, resources, space, money” manner. Flexibility and fluidity in

approach are clearly needed. I did not want CPD to have a dominant voice and a distinct language which represented economic values that tend to be lower down the artists' priorities. I would like to see recourse to many voices. At present it appears that whilst the artists trust their respected peers, the language of CPD and the "cultural industries" evokes an alienating authority that is mistrusted.<sup>107</sup>

Massumi observed that we *are* our participation. We need to go with the flow. These artists do this; they articulate through practice *and* through language, yet not through a CPD language. Their languages name through doing, not by attempting to define and own. The artists' dispositions of trust, a wherewithal and awareness of the need to have confidence in their practices allows them to accept financial and project insecurity, the unknown, and an unfolding of a mix of pro-active and re-active practice opportunities. Consequently their needs are defined and redefined throughout. Because walking and talking is co-constituting with land (as discussed in Chapter Four) and is about participation, there is no separation of the need and the doing and the place and the talking. It is all-inclusive. If need is separated from practice, then the artificially focused answer which Phil described, tends to predominate.

I advocate walking as one of a number of ways that could be a facilitative process for those who provide or advise on CPD for individual artists. I believe that *inclusive* CPD can be created which allows "room for manoeuvre" not constrained by language or the perceived value of certain capitals in certain fields. It is possible to imagine a pluralistic and multi-articulated ecology of arts training provision which re-interprets CPD to be about how artists best navigate the unknown in their everyday practices, and where

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<sup>107</sup> Three of the artists remarked on how much ACE, for example, spend on large-scale commissioned consultations

CPD is a co-constituting part of a potential of best practice rather than as something separate from and cutting through the artistic field. I attempted to answer my research question, not by seeking resolution in the language of CPD, but attempting to use walking as a method which could centralise the voice of the artist.

## Conclusion

### CPD Policy, Provision and Practice

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To be bound up with what you are doing, to be at risk in it, to be exposed by it...An endless making-do is one's only hope for progress, in which dogma never prospers, in which the surprises of improvisation, mistakes and of changing one's mind are the only certainties worth clinging to.<sup>1</sup>

Tim Etchells

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<sup>1</sup> Tim Etchells, *Certain Fragments. Contemporary Performance and Forced Entertainment*, London, Routledge, 1999, pp. 22-23. Tim Etchells is the Artistic Director of Forced Entertainment Theatre Company.

In this thesis I have presented empirical data from research with artists and CPD providers detailed in Chapter Three, reinforced by research with artists in Chapters Five and Six, and have analysed the needs of experienced artists who are based in the South West of England. In Chapter Two I described how I have tested out different methods of interviewing artists and how I intended to centralise artists' voices in this research. In Chapters One and Two, I analysed and provided a policy review of CPD and related documents in the UK over the past ten years, in addition to mapping CPD provision and policy in the South West. I have explored in Chapter Four, theoretical literature, and reviewed its contribution in relation to CPD provision, and applied it to my understanding of the practice of experienced artists in the South West region. In doing so, I also explored the idea of region, the role of language, and the role of CPD policy and provision in the South West. I aimed to make a contribution to policy-making and have examined policy and its impact in Chapters One and Two and throughout the empirical chapters of Three, Five and Six. Finally, this conclusion offers recommendations regarding future CPD policy and provision for national and regional consideration.

## **People and place**

In the introduction to this thesis I quoted the original collaborative doctorate application to the AHRC which explored the reasoning for "mid-career" research:

...it is at this stage that artists usually "give up" feeling isolated and alienated, "in a rut". CPD for a mid-career artist usually needs to focus on establishing himself and his art as a "branded" business able to "sell" both the artist and work in appropriate contexts.

In Chapter Three, I interrogated this statement through interviews with artists and CPD providers. The artists in Chapter Three (and those I researched in Chapters Five and Six) wished to focus on “practicing better” and needed meaningful languages for their own unique development, owned and used by them, rather than the business of “branding” and marketing. The CPD providers were more likely to use the acronym CPD and focus on issues such as marketing. None of the artists detailed in this thesis intended to “give up”. When alienation was discussed, ironically this tended to be an alienation from the language and practices of CPD. All the artists had a wherewithal and ability to find, participate in or identify a need for a network or relevant development when and where applicable. All fourteen Reflective Practitioners, whom I researched seven years ago, continue to practice now. In the duration of this thesis, no artist discussed here has stopped practicing; it is what they *do*, what they participate in. It is their practice, not merely their business.

When I first drafted Chapter One in March 2008 I discussed the delivery agency for CPD in the South East, All Ways Learning, which ceased trading in 2008. I used this to demonstrate the unsustainability and instability of the CPD sector. A more shocking demonstration of this has been the demise of the collaborating partner of this PhD, ArtsMatrix. ArtsMatrix went into voluntary receivership in December 2009. It is indicative of the South West region’s apparent inability to sustain the agencies that are set up to provide to artists or the wider arts ecology, that the artists who are represented in this thesis have sustained their practices for years and, as self-employed people, artists’ “businesses” are in better health than a number of the organisations who receive funding to provide infrastructure to support artists to develop their sustainability.

My analysis of CPD policy documents and reports regarding CPD provision in the South West region has evidenced that the region has delivered a number of well received artists' CPD "pilot" initiatives. However most of these schemes have not continued. Reflective Practitioner, the Contemporary Crafts Fellowship, and in the end, ArtsMatrix itself, are good examples of disappearing one-off delivery for short-term durations. These schemes created opportunities for a small number of experienced artists to significantly develop their practices.

My research has demonstrated that artists have always sought to develop their practice and address gaps where new skills may enable them to move their work forward. It is *the provision, language, and methods of communication from policies and delivery organisations that change*. A need for artists to practice, experiment, explore, notice, question, challenge, or decide when external support is needed to mirror, mentor or market does not disappear. However it may not always be termed CPD. CPD may have been given validity by the organisations and networks described in Chapters One, Two and Three, and indeed by those creating this PhD opportunity. However, the agencies describing, representing and promoting CPD have a tendency to change their terms, disappear altogether, or anecdotally "move goal posts", creating an arbitrariness which has significant consequences for the feast or famine of potential opportunities for artists to access relevant professional development at relevant times. This is particularly important to already experienced artists who might be called "mid-career".

At the beginning of my PhD research, a friend who is an artist who has practised for over thirty years said, "The answer is easy. I need more money, a new truck and a generator." Another artist said "that won't take you long; it's time, space, money". That all artists have their equivalent time, truck, space or financial issue related to their

practices is already known. Chapters Three, Five and Six evidence that artists do need time, space, money, and crucially, support from others with respected experience on an “as and when I need it” basis. Providers already know what, in general, artists need and that experienced individual artists need different things at different times. In this thesis, Chapters One, Two, Three and Five reference the positive findings for a number of CPD schemes in the South West region including the success of Reflective Practitioner, ArtsMatrix Mentoring Schemes, First Stop Shop and the CCFS. Appendix 4 details findings from 2003 regarding national comparator schemes to Reflective Practitioner.

The funding to provide for these known needs is however lacking for experienced artists and mainly spent on generic delivery linked to understandings of value and economic imperatives. It appears, ironically, that funding is available to continue researching the question “What do you need?” I would suggest that instead funding needs to be reallocated or created to deliver part of the answer. In Chapter Two, I discussed MusicLeader South West research in which their consultation was met with disappointment by artists who wanted “money to practice” rather than “yet another training initiative”. The question of need is defined by the organisations that deliver general CPD, yet needs for artists are identified via their practices. Policy makers create detrimental conditions for artists by encouraging “pilots”.

The constant emphasis to create “pilots”, and a need to prove “additionality” and “difference” to gain funding to continue to run successful projects creates a culture of short-termism where opportunities may not exist for long enough to become embedded or continual. Often funding is given on the evidence that there is an “additional” need or an innovative new approach to address an existing need. By the time one has researched and found the right “needs” to be addressed, and the funding to provide a

practical solution to that need, the zeitgeist of what the creative industries sector has deemed fashionable may have already moved on. There is little space in this way of working to deliver to individuals, or for individuals to lead the development.

Consequently artists miss relevant, never-to-be-repeated opportunities which were successful in supporting risk taking and innovation. If these initiatives are not able to embed and develop, the opportunity for another group or individual to benefit and undertake that opportunity is lost.

Artist D in Chapter Three suggested that ACE pays consultants to repetitively advise “the same people across the South West on the same funds that everyone knows about and is going for anyway”. In Chapter Three I came to a conclusion that the wealth of information, advice, and guidance on CPD available in the South West is unique to the South West, but that the provision that the guidance signposts is not always appropriate, continuing, or even accessible to experienced artists. The South West is a region of huge division; local distinctiveness has created pockets of opportunity for certain artists working in certain art forms for certain amounts of time. Excellent partnerships appeared to be working well in some places, yet were lacking in others, and were often one-off such as CCFS or Reflective Practitioner. I noted a shortage of individualised funded opportunities outside of formal education for experienced artists to take risks or network with experienced peers. The region has travel challenges associated with poor public transport in some areas, a mix of cities, towns, large areas of little population and a perceived competitive territorialism from both providers about artists and artists about providers. ACE in the South West (in turn beholden to DCMS and governmental policy) has also perhaps created further problems by supporting and partnering a

continuous “pilot” approach rather than advocating to SWDRA or DCMS for sustaining the long-term initiatives which are known to work for experienced artists.

Theoretical exploration of space, place and region in Chapter Four supported my understanding that all regions have porous constructed boundaries within which the practices of artists and providers mutually influence each other in a multiplicity of working patterns. Every moment is a unique combination of circumstances and a network of social relations. Artists in the South West influence space and place as much as providers do. They help produce the region as a “place” by their set of practices. These include: Wrights and Sites’ “misguides” initially produced around Exeter; Phil Smith’s “crab walking” around Teignmouth and Mariele Neudecker’s potential public art work for Bristol Harbourside discussed in Chapter Six; Stroud Valley Art’s negotiations as described in Chapter Three; Jenny Beavan’s work around Buell Driers in St Austell in Chapter Five. All are examples *of*, and produce *what* the South West *is* in the here and now, at a particular point, on a particular day, in a particular place.

I discussed Allen, Massey and Cochrane’s arguments for a reframing of the construct of a “region” in Chapter Four. Massey’s metaphor of a doiley evoked the uneven patterns of development in any region. Crang has suggested that place is “time-thickened”. The South West is distinctive, and has a “time-thickened” nature from the engagement of those who work in on and within it. Helen Poyner in Chapter Six makes something of not working within the “urban” cities of the South West; for her the South West forms a unique environment from which to practice.

Through my research process, it has become clear that the practices of artists are individualised, in momentum, in parallel with the places and spaces they inhabit. Artists evidenced that they are not necessarily place-specific in their practices or their career. Artist D in Chapter Three and Phil Smith in Chapter Six demonstrated a certain ambivalence about the South West. Dance-based artists participating at a South West-based symposium in 2005 observed:

Place can profoundly affect the work but the work isn't necessarily about the place.<sup>2</sup>

Place forms the particular “just then moment,” the “now” of artistic activity, and space is temporal. The artists get to “where they’ve got” (Jenny Beavan in Chapter Five) at particular points, at particular times on particular days. Their process of *sustained* interaction with their practice and the practices of others is resolutely non-linear, and from their engagement with each other and their practice, value is drawn; it cannot be placed *upon* or understood through one stereotypical interpretation of the standard practices of a standard artist in a particular framing of place. The interrelationship of people creates place. As Doreen Massey argues, there is no place without people.

## **CPD policy and provision**

In the introduction to this thesis I discussed the limitations of the term “creative industries”, and used Demos’ description of the “social soup” of activity which comprises this “industry” and the “markets of meaning” operating within it. I noted that

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<sup>2</sup> Foundation for Community Dance, “Working at the Edge of what is Possible. A Conversation” summarising the key themes of the Country Dancing Symposium, Dillington House, Somerset, 27-29 May 2005, at: <http://www.communitydance.org.uk/metadot/index.pl?iid=23444> (accessed 10 September 2007). This was one of a series of meetings staged by the Foundation for Community Dance across the country to feed into the Framework for Community Dance. Ironically titled, the symposium was aimed at movement practitioners working in the South West of England.

contemporary cultural context is influenced by CPD providers within the arts ecology as well as by politics, economics and wider social concerns. Artists practice through complex networks within the framings of a plurality of institutions, training deliverers, organisations and others. Chapter One explored the historical context and origination of CPD in arts administration (named and made significant by ACE) in the cultural sector in England. I suggested that on the basis of documents discussed in that chapter, the priorities of CPD policy changed rapidly and reduced artists' practice to a function of economic growth. The sector itself demonstrated instability.

In subsequent chapters my data and case studies have evidenced that artists can be alienated by the "industrial" concept of CPD. I also suggested that CPD providers such as ArtsMatrix become organisations operating within commercially orientated "business-like" frameworks bridging between "creatives" and "industry". It is the packaging of organisations into income earning and salary paying (therefore needing to earn more income just to pay staff) that creates the *business* of CPD. A business needs to generate money; that money is then only available to artists in *packages* to do certain things, and rarely for one-offs (or only when that one-off itself becomes a package). This has led to the creation of a number of "pilot" schemes which have not been repeated. Without the prevailing industry bias, perhaps potential exists for engagement with a different understanding of CPD and different possibilities for experienced artists.

The historical context of CPD is then, in the cultural sector, one set up by administrators. The official shape of CPD in the South West in the last five years has been driven by the founding of ArtsMatrix as an independent company born from Creative Skills who dovetailed with ArtsMatrix as the other "official" South West CPD provider. Despite the demise of ArtsMatrix, the value of their CPD delivery has been

recognised alongside other providers by the reports detailed in Chapters One and Two and in the comments made in Chapters Three and Five. Appendix 4 details an extract from my report on comparators to the Reflective Practitioner Scheme discussed in Chapter Two.

The naming of CPD has legitimised it, and has separated what was already a valued and necessary element of professionally experienced artists' practice into a specialised economic commodity, a viable business function, giving CPD both symbolic and economic capital and placing a powerful label on what artists do everyday yet uncorrelated with experienced artists' needs. The acronym CPD is potentially exclusive and excluding, a term that is used more by providers than it is by artists. As demonstrated in my conversations discussed in this thesis, experienced artists perceive the business of CPD as disconnected from their practices and process of making artwork and continue to explore and gain funding to develop artist-led CPD but rarely describe it as such. I evolved methods during my research process to excavate and understand the context of artists' narratives (what is negotiated, what has to be navigated), and used them to inform and exemplify my theories about CPD within an arts ecology. I chose to leave the narrative of what artists said in as raw a state as possible; I felt explicit theorisation overlaid onto their narratives would occlude and de-emphasise their voices. CPD appears to work better for experienced artists if it is led by them, and heterogeneously set up, in their languages, in a way which allows for different artists needing different things at different times.

Providers of CPD appear to frame and narrate artists' stories, and alter their language, to suit the available policy agendas, creating fashionably themed temporary definitions in order to gain funding for CPD provision and to survive as a business. Chapter One

described how the term “skills development” is used interchangeably in policy documents with “CPD”. In Pierre Bourdieu’s terms this is a “powerful” use of language, which may be the “right” language to use to achieve funding or impact on cultural policy, but it creates a false separation from practice. It may also change the way artists reflect on what they know, how they build experience, and how they name and narrate that. The extrinsic need of providers affects the intrinsic value of CPD. How artists are perceived, and what opportunities are then available to navigate and negotiate, are affected by how provision is constructed, communicated, and mediated. Sian Ede in Art, not chance (discussed in Chapter Two) highlighted the debilitating terminology of the creative industries sector, suggesting that “eviscerating language” is used to describe the production of art which “defies analysis”. Language is a defining and powerful factor in how artists orientate through a feast or famine of potential opportunities. Despite contemporary emphasis on the significance of artists’ voices (see McMaster’s Creating Excellence report as an example, discussed in Chapter One), where conversations take place, and who is party to them are important.

Applying Bourdieu’s ideas now to the field of CPD, it could be suggested that artists are expected to adjust their ambitions so they end up only desiring what the field can realistically offer them. The providers’ knowledge and perception of the limits of the field leads their advice and potentially stunts their ambition or vision of what might be possible for the artist. With all the goodwill and expertise in the world, the advisors of CPD can only advise from their own experiences and knowledge. This is valuable but not necessarily what artists *need*. ArtsMatrix advisors occasionally demonstrated in Chapter Three that they had low expectations of artists, and in Chapter Five the expectations on the crafts Fellows paralleled the stakeholders’ expectations of what was

needed for successful economic growth in the crafts market. However, the individualism of that scheme did allow the Fellows to partly choose the orientation of the Scheme and prioritise artistic development over capital growth which in turn aided the symbolic status of the providers because of the unplanned positive outcomes which unfolded as the scheme took place. In Chapter Six the four artists tended to ignore the provision of CPD, instead providing or finding their own development for themselves and for others.

Artists with experience are exceptionally good at navigating the unknown. Yet the *business* of CPD appears to expect artists to articulate their development needs in the context of already known markets and pathways. By the nature of their practices, artists sometimes “flounder”. Those who admit to not knowing the direction their practice might take next can be seen negatively. Experienced artists also have different capitals and dispositions (Bourdieu) to those recently graduated or “emerging”. They have learnt, by doing, to live with instability. To some extent this instability has to be endured and an internal confidence in their chosen way of life developed. They may have acquired both economic and symbolic “profit” or capital and be linked to wider institutional, political and economic processes. Some of the artists in this research aimed to develop both their symbolic and their economic capital.

Administrative “gatekeepers” such as ArtsMatrix create definitions for artists, fixing and plotting artists’ roles and future routes. Ultimately, the *core* of an artist’s practice is their individuality. The CPD of experienced artists is more likely a bespoke need than that for emergent artists, unrelated to “off the shelf” agency provision. Embedded continuing initiatives which are specialist, immersed in one art form or a collective of art forms, and usually artist-led, are more likely to provide for that bespoke need.

Separate specialist generic organisations for CPD may be useful for emergent artists, but unless these organisations are able to pay for, and can embed and deliver bespoke packages year on year, they will make little impact on the development of experienced artists. Some things experienced artists need are the same for all self-employed people (for example, financial advice, website and marketing support). However, these are secondary needs. Distinctive to experienced self-employed artists is the need to nurture their skills base of artistic practice.

In Chapter Five, crafts practitioners demonstrated their need to be continually in a process of practice. Artist H discussed being “comfortably uncomfortable” in Chapter Three. The artists represented in Chapter Six needed support *throughout* the continuum of their artistic practices. Artists develop through experience an ability to acknowledge what is temporary and understand the project by project nature of freelance practice. Phil Smith said, “You learn not to fall apart if it doesn’t happen.” These are everyday practices. I have established that commonality of need is unlikely for more experienced artists.

CPD operates within a field where powerful symbolic capital is also attached to delivery, related to “market forces”. ArtsMatrix chose how they wished to develop CPD in the South West, driven by these market forces, by funding priorities, and by the agendas of other organisations. ArtsMatrix, whilst similar to All Ways Learning in the South East, fulfilled a distinctive function in the South West and had been set up to be a “first stop” for CPD. However latterly, before receivership, ArtsMatrix had chosen to market itself to the other UK regions including London. The organisation was generally not led by the agendas of artists. ArtsMatrix are, of course, only one example of CPD delivery. Artists’ heterogeneous needs create challenges for CPD agency provision. It

is a challenge to fund a highly individualised (and therefore potentially “expensive”) need for different things at different times. Timing of need, approach and development of artists’ practice are also difficult to plan. Artists need “both, and”; they need one-off opportunities which enable a spontaneous take up of need when it is required, and they also need those opportunities to be locatable and continuous so that they know where and how to approach them at the specific time of their need.

In Chapter Four I discussed both Bourdieu and Massumi and the link between the body, the mind and social *habitus* and *practice*. This theoretical approach applied to CPD suggests that CPD has to bridge the subjective and the objective and thoroughly integrate within the habitus of artists. To ask questions of an artist about CPD need which are not questions regarding their participation in their practice creates a false separation between their doing and their being. The power of “being done to” is too often expressed in the language as well as in the context of CPD training courses.

Social encounters *are* CPD. As Massumi says, “we are our participation”. Artists’ inter-relationships and practices are all part of their *continuing* development, and are not only for short-term durational funding bids. Experienced people need individual attention, separately and together when working collaboratively. Artists *need* to have conversations about their practices and what they are producing. They need dialogues with people who can aid them in their choice of work, point out weaknesses from their point of view and so on. Mentoring has formed a topic of discussion throughout my research as a valued method of providing uniquely tailored and respected support to artists.

CPD creates a powerful boundary in that rather than being part of the everyday practices of an artist, CPD has become a field in itself; the *business* of CPD. So an artist's own expertise as a practising person is different to the expertise of CPD, and yet not always valued as highly in the field of CPD. Artists' knowledge tends to be learnt experientially by "doing" and within particular social contexts. There is a need to be nurtured and sustained over time, which recognises and utilises the longevity of an artists' practice in order to practice "better". A mentoring relationship takes the shape of a returning conversation and a peer cohort is a conversational network. Helen Parrot's "challenging conversations" and Peter Petralia's organised conversations around mid-career "show and tell" discussed in Chapter Two are both provisions by experienced artists for themselves or for other experienced artists. Artist-led and DIY initiatives discussed in Chapter Five create spaces for encounters, for possibilities, for challenging conversations, through ongoing practices foremost, not always articulated in words.

Artists then continue their conversations, creating meaning through talking and through a coherence developed from exchange rather than from one which is gleaned from achieving certain common goals which can be used as outcomes for policy makers. Everyone should leave a discussion or workshop in some way changed, yet no-one owns the conversation; this is the manifestation of an ecology, rather than an economy.

## **Career**

In Chapter Three, Artist H observed that what was of interest was collaboration with others and the audience for their work, not "a career path move." In Chapter Six,

Alyson Hallett stated that if she is to engage with the idea of provision of CPD, then providers have to be interested in her work as an artist and that career is unimportant. Mariele Neudecker felt that agencies were disinterested in the work of artists, focusing instead on the artist's career. Viewing artists' lives as a career can prevent seeing the real continuum of their practice. "Mid" career does have some meaning for some people, yet the idea of a career at all for artists is elusive and misleading, and as discussed in Chapter Four, is outdated, assuming a fixity to that which is unfixed. Experience does not necessarily constitute one step up after another, or "arriving" at a successful destination. Alyson Hallett discussed factoring in surprise; placing art into CPD "rather than it being these tramlines towards a successful future". Fabrizia Bazzo in Chapter Five discussed the sense of limit that the idea of "arrival" imposes.

The idea of a clear career path dominates many of the CPD policy documents discussed in Chapter One. Policy appears to consider artists' careers more than the artist or the processes of their art. Creative Britain suggests that we need to "untangle" creative career paths.<sup>3</sup> The implication in considering artists' career is that their art making will somehow follow; this again, has the effect of separating art-making from the artist. Yet, artists have "portfolio careers" and exist without single employers. There is little storytelling in policy documents, and my exploration of Bourdieu's theory of language of power evidences that policy creates a construct of language which does not need to address what the artist is saying, because the artists' voice is not heard at this level. What is missing are the "suddenlys" which Phil Smith and Helen Poynor demonstrated in Chapter Six; the changes in direction; the generosity of conversations, networks and exchange which are not merely commodities or contributors to economy. For many

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<sup>3</sup> DCMS, Creative Britain, 22 February 2008, p. 7.

artists the value of their practices lies inherently in the journey of their life practice. Mid-career then, if it is to do with anything, is to do with life. In the introduction to this thesis, I quoted Alistair Mant: “You *are* in effect, what you have managed to do, whatever you had in mind.”<sup>4</sup> The artists discussed in this thesis are in it for their lifetime. “Career” reinterpreted might mean your sense of ongoing momentum, the knowledge you have, what you do and what you are seen to do.

Helen Poyner in Chapter Six demonstrated that when life happens in mid-career, you can adapt your practice, but you have to keep going, because you are in momentum, it is what you do. If life happens to an emergent practitioner they may give up their practice. Many people do stop practicing earlier on, but the artists I talked to did not. In conclusion then, what makes a mid-career artist, is someone who has to deal with the events in their life without giving up their practice. Mid-career is a certain kind of fiction; it gives the assurance that we know what something is, when it is, in effect, always evolving, in a continuum of practice. I would recommend using the term “experienced” in preference to “mid-career” because of this reason, and because the language and meaning of the term “experienced” (Esther Leslie) discussed in Chapter Two, resonated more readily with the artists with whom I talked in Chapters Three, Five and Six.

## **DIY and artist-led CPD**

LADA (Live Art Development Agency) suggest that:

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<sup>4</sup> Alistair Mant, The Dynamics of Management Education, p. 20.

Conventional ideas of training, research and career development are often unable to effectively address how artists are supported in their artistic and professional development where process is not only critical but also inherent.<sup>5</sup>

From the comparison of the efficacy of the initiatives discussed in Chapter Five it appears that artist-led CPD such as LADA's DIY-scheme in its sixth year in 2009 is more reliable and sustainable for experienced artists than the schemes delivered by organisations such as ArtsMatrix, and has an embedded continuity and model of good practice that is committed to artists. It is also more likely to deliver what is needed. An artist's professional knowledge is beyond the limits of most generic CPD advisors' knowledge of practice. Artists understand project by project lifestyles and the integration of life, work and practice. Peer experience, artist leadership and development can be more reliable than the provision of organisations such as All Ways Learning and ArtsMatrix. A DIY artist-led approach in partnership with other providers in the South West appears to be a more effective way to go forward.

LADA published the report of DIY 6: 2009 in mid-November 2009, after Chapter Five had been written. In their findings they comment that:

DIY 6 again demonstrated that artists are extremely well equipped to conceive and manage complex and often demanding professional development initiatives. The role of the host organisations in DIY 6 was therefore to *facilitate and advise* rather than to control or lead.<sup>6</sup>

In the future, LADA plan a grander-scale evaluation report, in order to further advocate the DIY model in other art forms. They suggest that "the principles and form would

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<sup>5</sup> LADA, "Why a live art development agency?" at: <http://www.thisisliveart.co.uk/>, (accessed 9 January 2007).

<sup>6</sup> Live Art Development Agency, DIY 6: 2009. Professional development BY artists FOR artists. "Summary Report", August and September 2009, p. 4, my emphasis, at: [http://www.thisisliveart.co.uk/pdf\\_docs/DIY6\\_Report\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.thisisliveart.co.uk/pdf_docs/DIY6_Report_FINAL.pdf), (accessed 23 November 2009).

successfully translate to other artform practices.”<sup>7</sup> LADA are building both social and intellectual capital by sharing their findings and advocating their own processes.

## **Administrative support**

Artsadmin in London simply describe themselves as an “artists support agency”.<sup>8</sup> Their language does not conjure up an industry or utopia for artists; they are simply stating what they do. ArtsMatrix’s mission, by contrast, was “to foster a highly skilled creative workforce equipped to sustain a living in the arts and creative industries.” They also stated that “ArtsMatrix helps artists make their dreams come true”.<sup>9</sup> The difference in language to define and deliver professional development opportunity is stark. I have long held a belief that all the regions in the UK arts ecology could benefit from Artsadmin type organisations who support artistic production by providing advice and administrative support. An Artsadmin in the South West could benefit artists in performance disciplines and could extend to other art forms. Artsadmin allows artists to pursue their own specialisms through providing administrative support to the artist, rather than developing or encouraging attendance at training courses which support learning how to be an experienced administrator instead of an artist.

In Chapter Six, all four artists were capable of administering their practices, but in order to create time to further develop their artistic practices they needed certain administrative tasks done for them (for example, website development, general tour booking or administrative duties). Helen Poynor needed CPD to support her to develop

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<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>8</sup> Artsadmin are discussed in Chapter One and are also detailed in Appendix 1.

<sup>9</sup> ArtsMatrix, “About ArtsMatrix”, at: [www.artsmatrix.org.uk](http://www.artsmatrix.org.uk), (accessed 20 August, 2009).

her own artist-led initiatives to pass onto other dancers; she did not need a marketing course. It appears that money would be better spent developing a South West based Artsadmin or on support which, like LADA's DIY 6, recognises the need for facilitation and advice rather than a control or leading position when working with artists. This is in contrast to developing a generic CPD agency which developed itself over and above the artists it purported to represent.

CPD agencies do have a place and administrative support is important to artists' practice, yet in order to specifically consider experienced artists, organisations need to look *outside* a basic toolbox of skills. Currently these "toolkits" can be perceived as more important than the practice. A consistency and clarification of the role of agencies is needed regarding what they can and cannot support for experienced artists. This has to be more than a "one-off" opportunity. I have established that artists need support *throughout* their careers. In Chapter One I evidenced that actually there is very little continuing provision in the South West, but instead a huge range of one-offs, pilot providers and a diversity of approach, and a perceived need for an organisation which could translate the "information jungle". This was one of the reasons that ArtsMatrix came into existence. However the perceived need to adhere to the development rules of the "market" created in ArtsMatrix yet another provider that was unable to support experienced artists with consistent individualised provision when they needed it, and could only create one-off packages for experienced artists when and if enough evidence for further development funding was achieved. I also evidenced in Chapter One that funding appears to be available to continue to research already known need.

Without the creative industries model, perhaps an engagement with a different understanding of the potential of CPD for experienced artists is possible within an

understanding of an arts ecology rather than a creative industry. New economics foundation (nef), an independent organisation, has set out a proposal suggesting that governments should measure the subjective well-being of people's quality of life, their experiences, feelings and perceptions; rather than a singular focus on economic indicators. nef suggests that a rigorous collection of this data would "provide a new way of assessing societal progress, based on people's real experience of their lives."<sup>10</sup> It appears that a new way of delivering to experienced artists would be to base CPD on artists' feelings and perceptions of their way of working and real experience of their practicing lives, rather than merely on the number of value added artistic products they have made. Understanding of needs must not be limited to the existing understanding and vocabulary of CPD providers.

## **CPD practice**

How artists' practices are represented is significant and the status of an artist links to whether relevant CPD is available. It appears from the case studies of the artists in Chapters Five and Six that an admittance of vulnerability or need could adversely affect their professional status, and because arts organisations are closely linked together, word of mouth spreads quickly. It seems ironic that an experienced artist is more likely to achieve the kind of CPD offered by the Crafts Fellowship, discussed in Chapter Five, if they articulate and narrate themselves as already extremely successful, and appear almost not to need professional development.<sup>11</sup> The status of who is funded reflects

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<sup>10</sup> New economics foundation, at: <http://www.nationalaccountsofwellbeing.org/info/about-nef.html>, (accessed 1 May 2009).

<sup>11</sup> Anecdotally, a friend who practices full-time as an artist has recently received over £30,000 from ACE for "organisational development". When I asked how they had achieved this, they observed they had put on a suit and pretended that they had all the answers.

back on the funders; artists with existing successful portfolios create additional status or “symbolic capital” for those that fund them. The status of that organisation’s support is also mutually important to the artist, perhaps more so than the provision itself.

Individual artists are rarely able to drive policy. The territorialism of policy and provision evidenced in the South West has created a situation where it is unlikely that artists will complain about or challenge an agency’s approach, as the artist’s funding to develop their CPD and / or their practice comes from these same organisations. This is one of the reasons that many of the artists researched in Chapter Three wished to remain anonymous; they did not want to fall “out of favour” with the funded organisations who may support or are likely to support them.

Mentoring, peer-led group work, laboratories for cohorts to risk and experiment, critical feedback on practice, networking, and practice-led development itself are all recognised as part of an artists’ development. However the potential benefits of, for example, invigoration, inspiration, refreshment tend to be unquantifiable. The accounts of individualised CPD (for example, the positive findings detailed from ArtsMatrix Mentoring Scheme evaluation) show that bespoke support at the right time can make pivotal and groundbreaking differences in artists’ practice. Yet the policy and practice in cultural funding institutions and sector skills agencies still generally expects a basic kit of development tools to provide artists’ CPD. The need to tailor an individual solution to individual issues, and allow the flexibility to identify issues arising across both practice and business is not unique to those in mid-career, but perhaps more necessary than for an emergent artist.

When experienced artists embody and narrate their knowledge without the construct of CPD their articulations of practice are sometimes tacit and not necessarily articulated through a spoken or written vocabulary nor easily transferred, shared or translatable into CPD terms. The weight of expertise of artistic project by project practice could counterbalance the policy which excludes individual stories of artists in momentum and forces a different kind of outcome setting by informing, enlivening and challenging the status quo characterised by lowest common denominator training courses. Policy needs to account for momentum, and yet recognise that in itself it needs a considered consistency.

I deliberately chose to make walks with the artists discussed in Chapter Six. That I felt able to dispose of my questions in the last walks with the artists is connected to my trust in their experience. Part of my own facilitation methods is to be *prepared* to throw away the preparation, and to do so from a position of professional experience. I feel this is the case for professional artists as well. Having the experience and confidence to be preparedly unprepared is something that is akin to professionally experienced practitioners of any creative practice.

CPD practices could use walking as one method to extend the limited methods of articulation currently advocated within artists' development. Longitudinal professional development is little funded and costly to implement, however durational practices which value the returning conversation which may take place over an extended period of time could benefit an artist far more than a single encounter. Talking over time is not unusual in CPD practice (mentoring is one way of engaging in multiple conversations over a longer period of time), yet using momentum, walking, and the potential of being outside of institutionalised buildings is, as yet, not standard practice. A continuity of

approach, which is located by consistency and reliability, and has a long-term commitment to respond to individual artists' needs rapidly and with trust, is absolutely in contrast to the one-off workshop.

## **Concluding recommendations**

Part of the answer to the question of “what do mid-career artists need?” is to trust artists, and allocate funding which responds to their needs when they signal them. To trust in experienced artists involves a genuine acknowledgement that it is perfectly acceptable for artists to state “I do not know, yet”. To foster this understanding requires recognition that value is not necessarily found in an end product, or in short-term evidence, or in the constant “piloting” of new and “additional” schemes. This need to prove “additionality” is detrimental to experienced artists. The following recommendations for CPD policy makers and providers summarise the analysis of my empirical data, exploring the professional development needs of experienced artists in the South West:

- 1) Use the term “experienced” artist in preference to “mid-career” artist.
- 2) Support practising artists to develop initial discussion at the research stage of any planned CPD policy for experienced artists and fund action research into artist-led professional development practices rather than evaluation of generic CPD need. This may both change the end language of CPD and also begin to create policy which is more directly effective for experienced artists.

- 3) Understanding of experienced artists' practices must precede an understanding of their CPD needs and this has to be open-ended and developed *with* artists, trusting them, walking with them if appropriate, investing in them, rather than communicating with artists in a limited CPD vocabulary. Policy makers should be concerned about providing the right conditions for artists to develop their ability to practice to the best of their potential in addition to using language which communicates directly rather than one which dilutes artists' stories via the voices of expert outsiders or one which needs to be "bridged" or "translated". I advocate walking as one of a number of facilitative processes for those who provide or advise on CPD for experienced artists.
  
- 4) Reallocate existing funding to deliver on experienced artists' needs, and make any newly created funding support artists' leadership of professional development by adopting the practices developed by LADA in DIY artist-led professional development culture. This, and TACA in the South West as a DIY artist-led approach are the alternatives discussed to CCFS in Chapter Five. I would also recommend developing a South West based Artsadmin organisation. It appears that money would be better spent developing this or on support which, like LADA's DIY 6, recognises the need for facilitation and advisory roles rather than creating a controlling or leading position when working with artists. A DIY artist-led approach is in contrast to developing a generic CPD agency which developed itself over and above the artists it purported to represent.
  
- 5) Investigate a nationally held budget for mentoring which details available experience and expertise by location, and utilises the cohorts of artists who

have previously been mentors; this might be one way to fund specialised CPD for experienced artists. Government funded bodies such as Creative and Cultural Skills, ACE and CC could hold the money, but a-n, LADA, dance development agencies and so on, could equally administer it, or a collective of artists themselves. Artists should be able to lead the process if they wish to. In this way, an artist based in the South West, for example, in Swindon, could gain a mentor from London or Birmingham (as these are nearer in location than for example, Penzance or Dorset), and vice versa, or could choose purely on specific expertise needed at the time, rather than on a regional bias.

- 6) During my research the value to experienced artists of well developed practice-based MAs and PhDs has been evident. The durational and critically challenging processes which these schemes represent could be further recognised by CPD Policies working outside of the University frameworks, and policy could further recognise the value and expertise of University-based artists when developing CPD policy. Any new South West based CPD funding could look to working more in-depth with Higher Education providers.

It appears that I am arguing from two opposing points of view; that a reliable sustainable infrastructure should be there for CPD when artists need it, *and* that this is simultaneously able to respond on demand and fund spontaneity. I think both are possible if trust and respect of artists replaces the current tightly controlled and administrated situation. A rigorous administration of funding is possible which is also available to be given trustingly to artists by artists, rather than by administrators who potentially control both the status and power of the artists' future output. This does not mean a loss of rigor; it may just mean less goal-orientated processes. There is therefore

still a need for an agency in the South West which can *facilitate* and *advise* on CPD but it is important that it is responsive to the needs of experienced artists and trusts artist-led practices, and is consequently a different sort of agency than the one ArtsMatrix became. Based on my research, its operational principles and criteria for what it funds would be based on a broader range of professional development values with and for artists, not always linked to objectives or outcomes, but to artistic principles and practices.

Current policy on CPD in the South West has attempted to homogenise the influence of people on place and vice versa, and create provision for artists' professional development based around commonality of need. CPD policy leading to provision for experienced artists in the South West in the future needs to understand the diverse intersections of people, place and practices and recognise the value of artists in leading and delivering provision. It also needs to recognise the value of artists needing different things at different times. In this way artists may be able to partake in their own development both as leaders and participants.

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