



**Arts and regeneration:  
creating vibrant communities**

Front cover image:

Periplum's *The Bell* at Coastal Currents Festival 2007, Hastings. Photo: Matthew Andrews

# Vibrant communities



Arts Council England believes the arts have a major part to play in helping to galvanise community engagement and participation in planning, and in creating a sense of identity and pride.

We believe that the arts can make an effective contribution to creating or regenerating strong, cohesive and vibrant communities.

# Arts and Regeneration:

## creating vibrant communities



Photo: Paul Spencer

The arts and artists have a long history of contributing to places and communities experiencing change. The arts in their many forms are uniquely able to comment, reflect, influence, interpret and inspire and are increasingly recognised as a key part of the process that can help shape new environments and engage communities.

Arts Council England, as the national development agency for the arts, has a commitment to encouraging artistic practice that reflects and responds to national life as we find it today. Whilst many of the projects in this publication have involved the Arts Council in some way, it is clear that many organisations and individuals from non-arts backgrounds are also acting as champions for artistic input within a regeneration context. *Arts and Regeneration: creating vibrant communities* is intended to

provide core information and share inspiration from others who have engaged with the arts as part of a resolution to local circumstances.

In these case studies we wanted to identify a range of artistic practice from across the country and to look afresh at the role and impact of creativity within regeneration. The projects vary in scale and endeavour, but each identifies the very particular way that artists can influence and respond to regeneration. Each illustrates some of the ways art and artists are able to introduce enquiry, delight and responsiveness to initiatives that can sometimes threaten to overwhelm the very communities that they are intended to reach.

We particularly sought to highlight the diverse range of art forms contributing to physical, social and economic change. The visual arts are more traditionally associated with regeneration,

emerging from an established tradition of public art, and some of the featured projects identify the variety of imaginative responses that visual artists are able to make to regeneration initiatives, at all stages of the process. We were also keen to find instances of contributions from other art forms, including performance and multi-disciplinary arts. We believe these have a powerful role in bringing together new and existing communities in a positive and meaningful way – surely the heart of all successful regeneration.

Whilst regeneration can take many years – decades in some instances – to embed itself, artistic interventions are often judged in the short term. By its nature regeneration is never finished. Even in the most successful schemes it could be argued that it is only when the project is completed that the regeneration begins. For this reason we wanted to include projects

from the recent past that have subsequently evolved, establishing enduring identities within the communities amongst which they exist. Successful art often involves an element of risk and perhaps trusting the future is the biggest risk of all.

We hope these projects will inspire and equip you to consider working with art and artists in your future regeneration schemes.

**Felicity Harvest**

Regional Executive Director  
Arts Council England, South East

# Case Studies

## 1 Building local confidence



Pan Urban Extension

## 2 Changing working practices



Barton Hill

## 6 Shaping their futures



Spacemakers



**3 Raising young aspirations**



Being Here

**4 Championing creative enterprise**



Creative Foundation

**5 Hitting hard targets**



The Singing Estate

**7 Exploiting cultural assets**



Ulverston Festival Town

**8 Honouring shared histories**



Up in the Air and Further  
Up in the Air

**9 Capturing the imagination**



Another Place

'Ultimately the work is about creating homes people want to live in and spaces which are not only useful but also feel good to be in.'

Gerry Wall, Art at the Centre





# Building local confidence

Art at the Centre is an award scheme from Arts Council England, South East that aims to embed creativity in urban design and regeneration projects.

- **Project title**  
**Pan Urban Extension**  
– **Art at the Centre**
- **Location**  
Newport, Isle of Wight
- **Artist**  
Gerry Wall and others
- **Commissioner**  
Isle of Wight Council
- **Cost of arts commission**  
£135,000

The Pan Urban Extension involves integrating almost 1,000 new homes with 1,195 existing houses and flats. Currently, Pan has limited community facilities and a poor reputation locally. Residents statistically suffer high levels of ill health and low levels of educational achievement. One challenge for the Extension is to raise aspirations of the residents with a view to promoting cohesion between present and future communities. The project also aims to promote high quality design in volume housing.

Gerry Wall and Ben Coode-Adams were appointed lead artists for Art at the Centre in 2005. They conceived a series of participatory projects called Pan Utopia. One of these was Ideal Home which took place in Architecture Week 2006. Artists, architects and students generated design ideas for the ideal community.

Art at the Centre hopes that some of these ideas such as a geothermal heat system, a landmark building with multifunctional community spaces and a view from every home, will be incorporated into the site itself.

Creative Partnerships Southampton & Isle of Wight supported Art at the Centre by developing the Pan World News project. 100 children worked with journalists and designers to produce a newspaper reporting on world and home news. The project developed skills, confidence and cooperation amongst the children. Island-wide circulation of the paper by the local County Press promoted positive messages about Pan's young people to communities across the island. The project will now be developed through the school's Extended Schools work, independently and in conjunction with Creative Partnerships.



'We wanted to find a creative approach to the challenge of the public realm and particularly the relationship between the high rise and new build, to encourage a sense of pleasure and safety rather than danger and hard corners. David provided this additional perspective, and provided a positive challenge to our thinking.'

Lisa Denison, Regeneration Manager

# Changing working practices

PROJECT sought to encourage the public and private sectors to engage artists in the visioning and design of public space and urban design.

- **Project title**  
**Barton Hill – part of PROJECT: engaging artists in the built environment**

- **Location**

Bristol

- **Artist**

David Cotterrell

- **Commissioner**

Sovereign Housing Group  
(and partners)

- **Cost of arts commission**

£30,000

In one of the 30 commissions supported through this scheme, artist David Cotterrell worked alongside an architect and design team to produce a pioneering and practical vision for the Barton Hill regeneration scheme in Bristol.

Barton Hill is a housing estate dominated by eight council-owned high rise blocks and a smattering of other housing types and tenures. A recent scheme provided a new park and improvements directly around each block but there are still areas of neglect, and residents still felt unsafe and disconnected from the rest of the city.

The need to integrate up to 160 new homes in the space between the existing blocks on Barton Hill presented a challenge to Sovereign Housing Association and its partners. So they decided to

link artist David Cotterrell with their architect from Levitt Bernstein at the design stage of the development. Involving the artist encouraged the design team to explore more fully the potential for public art to tackle the concerns of residents.

An evaluation of PROJECT, produced by Comedia, identified that the engagement of an artist from an early stage in a development project can bring about a positive change in mindset and working practice among the other professionals involved.

Artists for Places builds on the success of PROJECT. It supports artists to work in design, planning and construction sectors to influence the quality of urban design. The scheme is a collaboration by the Arts Council, Arts & Business and CABE.

Sam came to Being Here with a guitar and an interest in making music videos. A year and a half later he had signed with a record company and was performing as a professional musician.

Terry had dropped out of a Performing Arts course at college but found his way back into formal education through his experience of Being Here.

Natalie is a young mother of two who completed a workshop leader training course in dance with Being Here and is now working independently as a workshop leader.



# Raising young aspirations

Being Here was an arts project rooted in the experience and cultures of people growing up in a changing seaside town.

- **Project title**  
**Being Here**
- **Location**  
Southend on Sea, Essex
- **Coordination**  
Momentum Arts
- **Commissioner**  
Arts Council England, East and Southend Borough Council
- **Cost of arts commission**  
£675,000 pilot and main commission programme

A growing population of more affluent workers and commuters sits in contrast to Southend's longer term residents. Teenage pregnancies, exclusions from schools, rising crime and anti-social behaviour are all on Southend Borough Council's agenda and increasing opportunities for local people to benefit from regeneration is an important goal. Working in partnership with Arts Generate and Arts Council England, East, Being Here was an arts-led regeneration programme which focused on the positive engagement of the community's hard to reach young people.

Being Here ran forty individual projects and involved over 1,000 young people in performances, music, films and art works. It recruited local suppliers where possible and developed the capacity, profile and expertise of local artists and cultural businesses through

regular contracted work and Continuing Professional Development programmes. Legacy opportunities were embedded through active partnerships with a range of local agencies including the YMCA, Connexions Service, the Youth Offending Team, the Social Care Department, Sure Start and libraries.

The project has raised the skills and aspirations of young people, and strengthened partnership working with young people's services in the town. From 2002-2006, it attracted 1,228 young, hard to reach participants between the ages of 11 and 25. Over half attended more than five sessions and 60% reported new skills and experiences, some of which were life changing.

A book and tool kit, *Turning the Tide* based on the project has been published by Momentum.



'The Folkestone model is built around encouraging creative enterprise and helping people to establish successful businesses. We believe that by harnessing the energies of creative people and business we can build on Folkestone's strengths as a place to live, work and visit.'

Roger De Haan, The Creative Foundation

# Championing creative enterprise

The Creative Foundation is revitalising the seaside town of Folkestone through targeted investment in property, infrastructure and events.

- **Project title**  
**Creative Foundation**
- **Location**  
Folkestone, Kent
- **Artist**  
Various
- **Commissioner**  
Roger De Haan
- **Cost of arts programme**  
£41.8 million

An independent trust, the Creative Foundation aims to raise skills and aspirations locally, support business developments and create jobs. It also aims to improve the retail, landscape and leisure offer and to place culture and creative industries at the centre of the process. The foundation is renovating 65 derelict properties in the Old Town and has so far attracted 150 new creative businesses to Folkestone. The scale and pace of the work led by the foundation is impressive.

In addition to a £30 million property acquisition and renovation programme, the Creative Foundation has helped to lever £50 million of government investment to improve the educational infrastructure. The Folkestone Academy will provide transformed educational opportunities and the new arts led University

Centre Folkestone will offer the first higher education courses in the town. The foundation recognises the value of building on existing resources and works to support the local literature festival and Metropole Galleries. It is also active in addressing gaps in the cultural infrastructure and bringing new projects on stream. It is developing a new £4 million performing arts and business centre for the town and in 2008 a prestigious sculpture triennale will put the town on the international art map.

The foundation has secured grants from a mix of statutory and voluntary agencies including The Arts Council, Kent County Council and South East England Development Agency (SEEDA). It also has support from commercial organisations and generates income from letting properties to its creative tenants.

Kayleigh found her voice as a soprano in the choir and is now a confident theatre student at her local college: 'Before the Choir I had a vision of myself in a council flat with loads of kids, very young, and with nothing decent. Just scrounging really. Now, instead of picking easy targets, I've picked a harder one because I want to do it.'





# Hitting hard targets

Fivearts Cities, a partnership between the broadcaster Five and Arts Council England, aims to attract new audiences and participants to the arts.

- **Project title**  
**The Singing Estate – Fivearts Cities**

Blackbird Leys in Oxford is one of the largest housing estates in Europe. Mostly constructed in the 1950s, it is home to almost 14,000 people.

culmination of a four part series The Singing Estate. A few months earlier most of the participants had never sung in public before.

- **Location**  
Blackbird Leys, Oxford

Much has changed since Blackbird Leys hit the headlines in the 1990s as a place of crime and violence. These days it presents a very different atmosphere, having benefited from considerable regenerative investment over the years. Resources now include a recording studio, community centre and improved sports facilities. Despite this investment, educational achievement, health and young pregnancy rates remain a cause for concern.

The Singing Estate project was led by conductor Ivor Setterfield, who set out to demonstrate that personal achievement and classical music is for everyone. The project was about personal and community transformation and set extraordinary challenges for each individual and for the group as a whole. Meeting those challenges generated confidence and cohesion, as participants were taken on a process of learning and discovery that was beyond their own expectation. Three months of intensive rehearsal followed by a string of performances expanded the participants personally, socially and creatively. A year later the Blackbird Leys Choir is still going strong and participants are positive about its impacts.

- **Artist**  
Ivor Setterfield
- **Commissioner**  
Fivearts Cities
- **Cost of arts commission**  
£150,000

In April 2006, 40 residents from the Blackbird Leys estate in Oxford gave a stunning choral concert to a packed audience of 5,500 at the Royal Albert Hall. The concert was broadcast by Classic FM and on national television as the



'It was really good to see what we had made. People of all ages use the space. We really got what we wanted, it was our project, in our hands.'

Adele Sadd, Spacemaker

# Shaping their futures

The Spacemakers project saw 16 young people help create an imaginative recreational space for their local community.

- **Project title**  
**Spacemakers**
  - **Location**  
Hartcliffe and Withywood, Bristol
  - **Artist**  
Kathrin Bohm, Project Artist; Cleo Broda, Artist; Calum Stirling, Sculptor; Greg White, Landscape Artist and Mark Rooney, Project Manager
  - **Commissioner**  
The Architecture Centre, Bristol; The Glasshouse, London; Bristol City Council and Hartcliffe Community Campus
  - **Cost of arts commission**  
£202,250  
(£150,000 capital costs)
- Spacemakers took place in an area exhibiting multiple indicators of deprivation. This included high levels of crime and unemployment, poor schools and poor public spaces. The commissioners' aim was to promote the genuine involvement of young people in shaping their environment and to engage them in a project that would directly affect and improve their community.
- A team of artists and a project manager ran an open evening to recruit young people to help create a new public space in their community. The Spacemakers met regularly to research the project, work with the artists and receive training in regeneration, public speaking, planning and negotiating. The Spacemakers generated ideas about what they wanted in the public area, and also worked with the community to consider what other generations wanted from the new space. The artist team wanted the young people to feel a sense of ownership of their place and develop a feeling of community.
- The two-year initiative resulted in the creation of an impressive new public space incorporating a dramatic custom designed shelter and slide, a water channel and benches of different levels. It helped create a real sense of accomplishment and pride among the participants. All 16 Spacemakers reported a positive change in outlook and demonstrated greater self-confidence, improved communication skills and actively considered more ambitious education and career options as a result of their involvement.

'Re-branding Ulverston as a festival town is working. Six years ago, there were 36 empty shops in the town centre – now they are virtually all occupied by smaller specialist retailers.'

Jayne Kendall, Regeneration Manager  
of South Lakeland District Council



# Exploiting cultural assets

The small market town of Ulverston in Cumbria has successfully re-branded itself by exploiting its distinctive cultural assets.

- **Project title**  
**Ulverston Festival Town**

- **Location**

Ulverston, Cumbria

- **Artist**

Various

- **Commissioner**

Volunteer Festival committees,  
Ulverston Market Town  
Initiative

- **Cost of arts projects**

Up to £500,000

Years of industrial and agricultural decline and increasing competition from out of town retail outlets left the once prosperous market town struggling for trade. Ulverston 2000+, a partnership of local councils, development agencies, the local traders' association and other local stakeholders brokered a successful regeneration programme as part of a concerted effort to improve the town's economy. Central to this was the proposal to build on the foundations offered by the many local festivals and a thriving arts and crafts community.

Ulverston Festival Town was launched in 2001. Since then, retail occupancy in the town centre and visitor numbers have increased. At the heart of the project's success is the creative partnership between artists and active community participation. Thousands of people now come

to the town to enjoy the programme of cultural events extending throughout the year.

Local businesses have been closely involved in the initiative and have contributed by investing in the town. Cultural activity has helped to engage local residents and attract tourists to the area.

One of the many festivals is the magnificent Lantern Procession, which was created by the renowned arts company Welfare State International (WSI). The company have been based in Ulverston since 1983 and were a key partner in the Ulverston 2000+ initiative. In 2007 Lanternhouse International, who succeeded WSI, will hand over ownership of the finale to procession organisers, the Lantern Supporters Group. This will empower the community to take increased control over their own creativity.



FLAT NUMBER	USE LIFT
1-4	
5-12	
14-21	A/B
22-29	B/C
30-37	A/C
38-45	A/B
46-53	B/C
54-61	A/C
62-69	A/B
70-77	B/C
78-85	A/C
86-93	A/B
94-101	B/C
102-109	A/C
110-117	A/B
118-125	B/C
126-133	A/C
134-141	A/B
142-149	B/C
150-157	A/C
158-165	A/B
166-173	B/C

'People are as important as places in regeneration, particularly where the physical transformation of neighbourhoods is required. The work of artists is critical to the re-imagining of neighbourhoods up and down the country.'

Paul Kelly, Community Liaison Lead

# Honouring shared histories

Up in the Air was initiated by a small group of artists. Its success led to Further Up in the Air, a two-year initiative involving 25 artists.

- **Project title**  
**Up in the Air**  
**and Further Up in the Air**

- **Location**  
Sheil Park, Liverpool

- **Artist**  
Leo Fitzmaurice, Kelly Large, Neville Gabie (artist/curators) and many others

- **Commissioner**  
Liverpool Housing Action Trust

- **Cost of arts commission**  
£26,000 – Up in the Air  
£117,000 – Further Up in the Air

Artist led project Up in the Air promoted community development and local involvement during the demolition and re-development of tower blocks at Sheil Park estate in Liverpool. Artists created a series of high quality contemporary exhibitions, installations and events which took place in flats and were inspired by the lives and histories of the residents.

Further Up in the Air was developed in consultation with local people and The Sheil Park Neighbourhood Panel and was supported by Liverpool Housing Action Trust (LHAT),

Using empty flats as accommodation and studios, artists lived and worked in each of the three tower blocks in the run up to demolition. In one installation, residents' prized possessions, such as china, furniture, papers and posters, were

used in the artists' work, directly referencing the very personal histories of the vacated buildings. In another, residents marched through central Liverpool displaying their own artwork. For some, this was the first time they had been into central Liverpool in many years.

The artists developed the project organically with the help and support of residents. The projects came at a traumatic time for residents who, although being relocated into improved new housing, were also facing the loss of places that had been family homes for many years. One effect of the artists' work was to promote a sense of confidence and optimism among the new residents at a point of uncertainty in their lives. Over 60 residents participated directly with many more visiting exhibitions and events. Publications available at [www.cornerhouse.org](http://www.cornerhouse.org).

'There has been huge public support for the retention of the Gormley statues. Another Place has proved to be a very evocative project which has captured the imagination of many people and attracted substantial numbers of visitors. It also has enabled me to secure a new package of regeneration measures for this area with Another Place at the heart.'

Graham Haywood, Chief Executive  
for Sefton Council





# Capturing the imagination

Another Place, by internationally acclaimed artist Antony Gormley, was originally secured as a temporary exhibition marking the 2005 celebrations of the Year of the Sea.

- **Project title**  
**Another Place**
  - **Location**  
Crosby Beach, Merseyside
  - **Artist**  
Antony Gormley
  - **Commissioner**  
South Sefton Development Trust/ South Sefton Council
  - **Cost of arts commission**  
£200,000 (not including purchase costs)
- The arrival of 100 life size cast iron figures along Waterloo Beach on Merseyside has attracted thousands of visitors to the area, enormous press coverage and provided a much-needed stimulus to the local economy.
- The South Sefton Development Agency's purpose in bringing the work to the beach was to create a high profile attraction and to increase visitor numbers to the area with a target of an additional 300,000 visitors being set. Developing cultural tourism was identified as a priority in attracting investment to the area and transforming the economic prospects for local people.
- An estimated 600,000 people viewed the work in the first 18 months and it won the award for Best Tourist Experience of the Region.
- In November 2006, the statues were expected to move to New York but after a successful appeal they were granted permanent planning permission.
- People have been drawn to the enigmatic quality of the figures which, as the tides rise and fall, are inevitably and relentlessly submerged and revealed. All of the figures face the sea, staring towards the horizon, towards a mysterious other place, evoking feelings of loss and hope and longing.

# Additional information

## Case Studies

### **Pan Urban Extension:**

[www.aatc.org.uk](http://www.aatc.org.uk)

### **Barton Hill:**

[www.sovereign.org.uk](http://www.sovereign.org.uk)

### **Being Here:**

[www.momentumarts.org.uk](http://www.momentumarts.org.uk)

### **Creative Foundation:**

[www.creativefoundation.org.uk](http://www.creativefoundation.org.uk)

### **The Singing Estate:**

[www.five.tv](http://www.five.tv)

### **Spacemakers:**

[www.architecturecentre.co.uk](http://www.architecturecentre.co.uk)

### **Ulverston Festival Town:**

[www.ulverston.net](http://www.ulverston.net)

### **Up in the Air and Further Up in the Air:**

[www.publicartonline.org.uk](http://www.publicartonline.org.uk)

### **Another Place:**

[www.sefton.gov.uk](http://www.sefton.gov.uk)

# Additional information and research

## Arts and Regeneration

**Arts Council England** is the national development agency for the arts in England, distributing public money from Government and the National Lottery. [www.artscouncil.org.uk](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk)

**Art at the Centre** is an award scheme from Arts Council England, South East that aims to embed creativity in urban design and regeneration projects. [www.aatc.org.uk](http://www.aatc.org.uk)

**Creative Partnerships** is the Government's flagship creativity programme for schools and young people, managed by Arts Council England and funded by the Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) and the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF). [www.creative-partnerships.com](http://www.creative-partnerships.com)

**Arts & Business** brings business and arts organisations together to create partnerships to benefit themselves and the community at large. [www.aandb.org.uk](http://www.aandb.org.uk)

**Academy for Sustainable Communities** is the national centre for delivering the skills and knowledge needed to make better places. [www.ascskills.org.uk](http://www.ascskills.org.uk)

**arts|generate** is Arts Council England, East's partnership scheme that works with the region's local authorities using creativity to address government priorities. [www.artsgenerate.org.uk](http://www.artsgenerate.org.uk)

**Arts Professional** is an information resource and vehicle for sharing good practice. It reaches across the entire spectrum of professional arts activity. [www.artspprofessional.co.uk](http://www.artspprofessional.co.uk)

**Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE)** stands for an improvement in people's quality of life through good design. [www.cabe.org.uk](http://www.cabe.org.uk)

**Communities and Local Government** work to help people and local agencies create cohesive, attractive and economically vibrant communities. [www.communities.gov.uk](http://www.communities.gov.uk)

**English Partnerships** is the national regeneration agency helping the Government to support high quality sustainable growth in England. [www.englishpartnerships.co.uk](http://www.englishpartnerships.co.uk)

**Freeform** provides a range of arts and creative services for the built environment to place art at the heart of urban regeneration. [www.freeform.org.uk](http://www.freeform.org.uk)

**Groundwork Arts Toolkit** Provides inspiration, ideas and practical assistance for those who want to use the arts within regeneration projects and to artists who want to learn more about working within regeneration. [www.artandregeneration.com](http://www.artandregeneration.com)

**IdEA Knowledge** works for local government improvement by providing news and examples of good practice from councils across England and Wales, together with a range of tools and services. [www.idea.gov.uk](http://www.idea.gov.uk)

**John Rowntree Foundation** One of the largest social policy research and development charities in the UK. [www.jrf.org.uk](http://www.jrf.org.uk)

**New Start** is a news-led magazine that keeps readers working to create sustainable communities throughout the UK fully up to date. [www.newstartmag.co.uk](http://www.newstartmag.co.uk)

**Public Art Online** provides information on how artists and creative activity can contribute to the built and natural environment, regeneration initiatives, sustainable development, architecture and urban design. [www.publicartonline.org.uk](http://www.publicartonline.org.uk)

**RDA News** is for anyone working within regional development. [www.rdanews.co.uk](http://www.rdanews.co.uk)

**Regenerate** is available online and in print and aims to stimulate debate and give regenerators the tools they need to do their job. [www.regeneratelive.co.uk](http://www.regeneratelive.co.uk)

**Regeneration and Renewal** is for all those involved in regenerating Britain's deprived communities. It contains news sections covering community renewal, economic development and physical regeneration. [www.regen.net](http://www.regen.net)

**RSA (Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures & Commerce)** supports the work of the arts in examining and addressing social and environmental concerns in an interdisciplinary and international arena. [www.thersa.org](http://www.thersa.org)

Other useful publications:

**Creative Neighbourhoods: the role of the arts in building sustainable communities.** Available through Centre for Creative Communities [www.creativecommunities.org.uk](http://www.creativecommunities.org.uk)

**The power of art visual arts: evidence of impact, regeneration, health, education and learning.** Available to download at [www.artscouncil.org.uk](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk)

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# Image credits

page 4: An outdoor dance class part of the Celebrating Age 2006 strand of Brighton & Hove's Urban Cultural Programme.  
Photo: Matthew Andrews

## Case Studies

page 6: Pan World News project at Downside Middle School. Photo: Gerry Wall. Courtesy of Creative Partnerships and Gerry Wall.

page 8: Barton Hill Unproven Stories. Image: courtesy of David Cotterrell.

page 10: Being Here. Photo: Ruth Knight, courtesy of Momentum Arts.

page 12: New performing arts centre, Folkestone. An artist's impression created by Alison Brooks Architects.  
Image courtesy of Creative Foundation.

page 14: Members of the Singing Estate choir, a strand of Fivearts Cities, a partnership between Five and Arts Council England.  
Photo: Charlie Gray.

page 16: Photo: courtesy of Spacemakers.

page 18: Flag Procession 2006. Photo courtesy of Ulverston Marketing Group.

page 20: Marcus Coates' shamanistic performance, Further Up in the Air.  
Photograph: courtesy of Leo Fitzmaurice.

page 22: Another Place.  
Photo: Ron Davies, courtesy of Sefton Council.

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