

# the Creative regeneration advocate

**“Artists can best become involved at the start of the process, so that they can contribute conceptually to a project - if you use them to bolt-on art work at the end, opportunities are missed.”**

Creating Excellent, CBE, 2003



**“Artists, designers, planners and architects alike must face the challenge of defining public space, as an opportunity to create or improve the sense of community among those who will determine the use, or abandonment of a place.”**

Ethan Kane, *Ars Poetica*, 2004

Increasingly, people working in diverse aspects of contemporary society, from developers to park wardens, are turning to the arts for new ideas, regeneration, problem solving and community bridge building. The employment of artists in these (traditionally non-cultural) fields, where there are other non-art issues and agendas at stake, is becoming the norm.\*

This document explains the different ways in which regeneration workers can use creative practices in their daily work and how an artist can be employed to produce ideas and solutions for a range of projects. **Creative Regeneration** means much more than just the addition of art works which are not always appropriate to the site, the community or the development.

Engaging artists in regeneration schemes can be termed ‘public art’ although public art is difficult to define. There is a changing shift in commissioning public art giving rise to a whole new vocabulary. The following terms are now being used to define this shift rather than public art only including a sculptural artwork:

A **Process-led** project is dependant on the process in which to get to the finished artwork. A commissioner may have certain funding requirements to produce a piece of artwork in a public place, however, the process which engages with the people, the place and the issues are all dependant on the final outcomes and outputs.

**Socially Engaging Practice** is work that examines sensitive social and political issues relevant to specific communities. These can include health, drug and environmental issues, and homelessness. Socially engaging practice is most often temporary or time based and must be part of a larger programme that deals with sustainability.



continues page 2

**Interdisciplinary** projects incorporate the artist working collaboratively with other professionals, eg. scientists, ecologists, health care workers, architects, historians, environmentalists, engineers, anthropologists etc.

The development of a **Multidisciplinary** team within each delivery team will encourage joined-up thinking, pooling of resources and expertise and can result in strategic proposals, a clearer understanding of roles, responsibilities and the regeneration programme, identifying opportunities and gaps and imbed creativity throughout the whole process. The team can be made up of the project manager, Planner, Arts Development Officer, Neighbourhood Management, Communications Officer and an artist.

More artists are being employed as **Creative Consultants** to deliver strategic and integrated approaches to regeneration projects. This can include employing an artist as part of a Masterplanning team to engage with the community and collaborate with a planner and architect for ideas to implement art and architectural proposals.

## Elevate, Pennine Lancashire and Creative Engagement

Significant amounts of public and private investment have begun to change and improve the physical and social environment of Pennine Lancashire. Elevate, the lead agency for housing market renewal (HMR), believes that creative work is essential to deliver best practice in regeneration and design. Embedding creativity throughout the process will produce exciting and feasible outcomes and achieve a higher level of community support.

The role of artists within the regeneration process is crucial; those with vision and who are willing to take risks, test out new ideas and respond to the place in which they are working.

The Elevate Creative Community Engagement Programme seeks to improve the quality and effectiveness of community engagement in the Elevate HMR pathfinder by demonstrating the value of using creative processes to engage communities.

The programme aims to support and improve the way regeneration departments at local authorities approach community engagement and seeks to embed artistic and cultural activity in regeneration. The programme develops creative processes to help residents articulate their hopes for the future and

give useful input to plans, and to encourage local authorities to work with artists to facilitate engagement activity in order to involve local people in the development, design and execution of projects that will affect their lives and neighbourhoods.

## Benefits

The development of Creative Regeneration projects where local people work with artists to improve their own environments can:

- Promote social inclusion
- Develop people's sense of ownership for their environment
- Create a sense of local identity and community pride
- Strengthen a sense of community and enhance social cohesion
- Encourage people's interest in and understanding of, public art and places
- Develop people's creativity, extend their social skills and self-confidence
- Engage communities in shaping their environment
- Enhance levels of civic and social pride through community consultation, outreach and involvement

## Government Policy

Community engagement is at the core of government policy to build safer, stronger and more cohesive communities. The more people are involved, the more likely it is that interventions through major regeneration programmes will be sustainable and successful. Elevate aims to spread good practice in regeneration and reinforce the message that high quality, diverse housing is only one aspect of creating thriving communities where people want to live and stay.

The Government's commitment to improving the quality of the urban environment through urban policy (Urban White Paper, Urban Task Force, Building Sustainable Communities), sustainable development and quality of life initiatives has moved design quality, 'livability' and the environment up the regeneration and development agenda.

The Commission for the Built Environment (CABE), English Partnerships, English Heritage, the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Arts Council for England are all helping to ensure that good design, architecture and conservation practice remain priorities in regeneration schemes.

Within national and regional policy there are few specific references to public art, however, the concepts of good design, sustainable development and a quality urban realm are key.

The key policy points that provide the basis for inclusion of art and artists within the public realm are summarised below\*\*:

- Town planning principles should promote and plan positively for the high quality and inclusive design of all developments.
- Good design should contribute positively to making better places for people.
- Town planning should seek to enhance as well as protect the quality and character of the countryside, urban and historic environment.
- Developments should respond to their local context, create or reinforce local distinctiveness and are visually attractive.
- Specifically commissioned pieces of art can contribute to local distinctiveness and help to create a sense of place.
- Community involvement is vitally important to the planning and achievement of sustainable development.
- Artists can play a wide role, ranging from participation in design teams to designing specific works of art
- Cultural activities can contribute to the social, cultural and economic regeneration of an area if they are meaningful to and "owned" by the local community.

Elevate believes it is the first regeneration organisation in the country to employ a Creative Community Engagement manager. It is a partnership between Elevate, Lancashire County Council Arts Development Service and the Arts Council England Northwest.

### \*Manifesto of Possibilities

<http://wiki.bbk.ac.uk/Buildingcultures>

### \*\*A Place for Art (A Public Art Strategy for Central Gloucester)

For more information about Elevate's Creative Community Engagement programme, please contact **Claire Tymon** :

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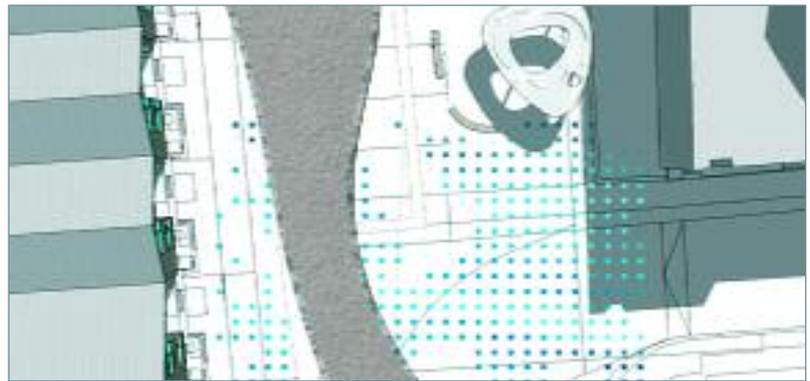
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# CASE STUDIES >

David Cotterrell : Barton Hill Kerry Morrison : Within Grove William Titley : Bright Street/Demolition Street Matt Baker : Glasgow

## Barton Hill Housing, Bristol David Cotterrell

In June 2005, Sovereign Housing Group secured a 'Project' Creative Homes Award, sponsored by Public Arts South West and CABA, to employ an artist as part of the design team for the second phase of an innovative housing development in Bristol.



*Embedded animated lighting project. Created from colour-changing LED fixtures, a diffused grid of light is inserted into the public realm, focussing attention on the new 'Crypt Square'. At ground level, a shift in colour will be perceived across the surface as the hue and intensity of the luminaries slowly change. From an elevated view, the moving image of water can be perceived, rippling and flowing beneath the pedestrians and cyclists.*

Key themes have emerged under the broad headings of Navigation, Heritage and Perspective. As an example, David Cotterrell and architect Justin Owen (Levitt Bernstein Architects) identified four significant 'nodes' in the area. The treatment of these nodal points could greatly influence the way that people move across the park, along the new routes and between the blocks.

But beyond the team's intentions to embed such considerations into the

emerging design, there is an ambition to create a 'legacy' to guide any ongoing physical redevelopment in Barton Hill, and ultimately Bristol, that is already proving the real value of this approach. Barton Hill is one of the prime examples in the UK of how housing projects can rise above an economy of mere purpose and truly benefit from a sensitivity to resident aspirations, wider regeneration in the area, cultural diversity, and a long-term neighbourhood management agenda.

## Kerry Morrison, Within Grove

A process of engagement; what happens if you put an artist on an estate where one third of the houses are boarded up, one third of the estate is derelict land, and three quarters of the gardens are un-gardened?

An Art and Environment project in partnership.



**Outline :** Within Grove is a social housing estate in the village of Huncoot in Hyndburn, East Lancashire which is in decline and in desperate need of development. Many homes have been demolished, others boarded and the surrounding land has been described as derelict waste ground. There have been years of talk about the future of the estate, but no action, and the continued neglect is having an extreme and negative effect on the people living there. Unaided, the community does not have the skills or resources to tackle the problem. The land and housing stock were recently transferred to a large housing association, now responsible for improvements. The question remains – how best to proceed?

### Objectives :

- To develop a long term and sustainable art and environmental remediation project
- To involve the community in activities that outcome in a deeper understanding of environmental issues
- To collaborate with the community and other professionals in the design and delivery of the land remediation

**Partnership working :** To develop a sustainable model of working, the derelict land intervention, *REMADE* needs to engage with the residents and young people in developing a number of design options. The continued development of the residents understanding of their environment through skills and knowledge is important to the future success of the new landscaped area and Within Grove as a whole.

The Arts consultation model developed for the next phase will guide the residents and other interested parties through the process outlined below, taking the project to the completed land remediation program: Process-led (not object-led) art projects can provide a deeper understanding of the complex social and economic dimensions of ecology, and present new ways of seeing, listening, and experiencing.

**Next Steps :** These designs will be developed alongside the landscape architect taking into account all the interventions to date and the future stage 3 workshops. This learning and understanding will inform, what will be a piece of developed land suitable for the space and the residents of Within Grove.

### William Titley – Demolition Street

Direct engagement with a community at the sharp edge of regeneration strategies.

Using video and digital imaging techniques, found objects and current archiving methodologies, the project contributes to the current discourse surrounding issues of displacement in the face of adversity and legislation of the processes of regeneration and renewal of place.



Exploring notions of home, displacement and developed around ideas of location, the self and spatial ownership.

The project, engaging in a sense of place, is informed by a discursive interest in

anthropology, cultural histories, architecture and political theory.

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### The Artworks Programme, Gorbals : Matt Baker

Glasgow's once infamous Gorbals has been undergoing its third regeneration in less than a century. In 1999 the Crown Street Regeneration Project (Tom Macartney) at the conception of the regeneration of Queen Elizabeth Square engaged Heisenberg, a partnership between artists, Matt Baker and Dan Dubowitz to deliver an artworks strategy for the 'percent for art' funding initiative. Heisenberg produced an innovative artworks master plan (a series of artwork commissions; integral, itinerant and public realm) aligned to the architectural master plan incorporating seven separate housing development schemes, the surrounding streets and a public park. In 2002, The Artworks Programme was formed with Lead Artist Matt Baker and Project Manager Juliet Sebley completing the programme.



*'Home Ornaments' by Daphne Wright*

Funded almost entirely by the private sector, the Artworks Programme has commissioned over 20 local and international artists, who, whilst working in a variety of media, are linked by their process-led approach and a practice that responds to social/cultural situations. The works created, both individually and collectively, have played a significant part in placing the culture of the Gorbals at the centre of this successful regeneration process.

More about the artist : [www.mattbaker.org.uk](http://www.mattbaker.org.uk)

Further reading : 'Arcade: Artists and Place-making' edited by Rhona Warwick.

Black Dog Publishing. 2006.

Further information about the Artworks Programme :

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