

SHARE ACADEMY

The Art of Collaboration

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This booklet provides an insight into the purpose and aims of the Share Academy programme and the context in which it has developed. A series of short case studies of the projects funded and a précis of the lessons learned should provide the reader with a road map for beginning their own collaborative projects. The booklet will conclude by considering Share Academy's vision for the future of collaboration.

Share Academy is indebted to Arts Council England for their ongoing support.

Introduction

Share Academy is a partnership project between University College London (UCL), University of the Arts London (UAL) and the London Museums Group.

The partnership came together through a shared belief in the potential for mutually beneficial collaboration between Higher Education and museums.

In 2012 Share Academy was funded by Arts Council England (ACE) to develop and foster relationships between Higher Education Institutions and specialist museums in London. A pilot study was rolled out between October 2012 and March 2013 exploring the challenges and benefits of partnership working and delivering a scoping study outlining the potential for collaboration in the London region.

Following the success of the pilot project, Share Academy was awarded a second grant by ACE enabling the Share Academy team to spend two years brokering, funding and evaluating cross-sector collaborations. This phase of the project also saw the Share Academy team turning their attentions to the wider landscape, building relationships with other UK based organisations exploring the opportunities offered by collaboration between universities and cultural institutions. In January 2015 Share Academy delivered a successful Think Tank bringing together thirty five key decision makers from the cultural, heritage and higher education sectors to discuss the future of collaborative practice.

Discussions at the Think Tank helped to guide Share Academy: The Bigger Picture, the next iteration of the project, during which the Share Academy team will share best practice around partnership working through existing national networks such as Arts Council Relationship Managers and Museum Development teams. Share Academy will also explore the potential for working with partners beyond the bounds of the existing scheme to continue and expand its work.

The case for collaboration

The early twenty-first century brought considerable changes to the way museums and universities were constituted and understood. Ongoing funding problems for the museum sector had led to a reduction in curatorial expertise and the number of specialist staff, while in the university sector there was increased emphasis on the importance of public engagement, particularly around new research. A focus on student employability led to more importance being placed on practical 'real world' experience as a core element of the learning and teaching process.

In 2008 the Beacons for Public Engagement programme was established to encourage engagement between Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and their communities. Each of the six Beacons for Public Engagement included a museum in their consortium, demonstrating that museums and universities can work well together. Following this, the Higher Education Funding Council for England announced changes to the way academic research was to be funded and assessed. The introduction of the Research Excellence Framework, which was piloted in 2010, required academics to consider the economic, cultural and social impact of their research. Combined, these factors led to a recognition that there were shared opportunities for museums and HEIs working collaboratively.

In a world of ever reducing resources many have seen partnership working as the silver bullet that will help us do more with less, and the cultural sector has been quick to recognise the potential for collaboration with universities. Yet collaborating with organisations that have different priorities and timescales can be a demanding experience. Share Academy was conceived with the aim of exploring the potential for partnership working between museums and universities, and to establish if and in what circumstances such cross-sector collaborations could be mutually beneficial.



Share Academy: The pilot study

In 2012 Share Academy was funded by ACE to undertake a pilot study, investigating the extent to which capacity and resilience within London's small and medium-sized museums could be built by collaborating with sources of expertise in the Higher Education sector. The project also aimed to identify how working with London's specialist museums could bring public engagement benefits for universities.

To understand the perceived benefits and challenges of cross-sector collaboration a scoping exercise was undertaken with academics and museum professionals. A number of challenges were identified including different priorities and planning horizons, different ways of communicating and a lack of understanding of how funding flows through the respective sectors. However, all of those who had undertaken collaborative projects reported having positive experiences and a considerable number of benefits were identified including:

- Access to cutting edge research and new knowledge
- Guidance on business innovation
- The ability to align museums with scholarly work
- Advice on audience development and public engagement
- Continuing Professional Development for staff
- Workforce diversification
- Improved capacity
- Access to collections

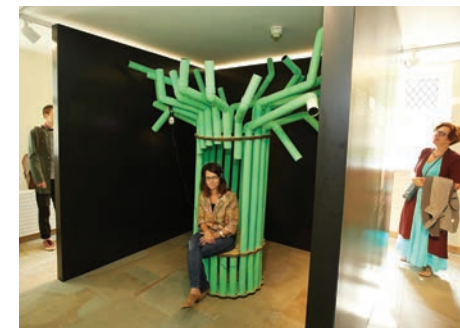


Share Academy II: Exploring what makes a successful collaboration

Building on the findings of the pilot project, Share Academy II was awarded further Arts Council funding to explore what makes a successful collaboration. A series of workshops were held giving individuals from the museum and Higher Education sectors a place to meet up and identify shared priorities. Between October 2013 and March 2015 Share Academy II funded 15 new collaborations with grants of between £3,500 and £10,000. Each project was closely monitored with the aim of discovering the costs and benefits of partnership working.

The Share Academy application process was designed to ensure that all of the funded projects brought equal benefit to both partners and that honest and open discussions were held from the start. Every project was required to provide regular progress reports and to meet with Share Academy's independent evaluator to ensure that the learning from the projects was captured in full. We found that:

- communication is vital to the success of any collaboration. Staff in both universities and museums are incredibly busy, so it can be tempting to rely on emails, but when working with a new partner it's really important to make sure you meet face-to-face.
- agreeing a simple Memorandum of Understanding at the start of the project helped ensure clarity around where any funding would sit and who would have responsibility for spending funds. It also forced partners to outline what each partner would contribute and where and how often partners expected to meet.
- museums and HEIs have different timetables and planning structures, so it's important to check that timetables and planning structures work for both organisations.
- working with students brought a significant number of benefits and challenges. Students can bring enthusiasm and new perspectives to organisational problems. However, it is important to remember that they are learners and may lack experience and require considerable guidance.
- partnerships are labour intensive and not necessarily a way of saving time or money. The tension of different cultures coming together can result in exciting outcomes, but the partnership should be entered into because it delivers on the core priorities of both organisations and not because it is seen as a way to address ongoing resource issues.



Share Academy II: Case studies

The projects brokered and funded through the Share Academy programme have proved that universities and museums have a lot to offer one another.

These short case studies are intended to give a flavour of what can be achieved through partnership working.

thebeautifullestplaceonearth.com

nationaltrust.org.uk/red-house

melaniejackson.net

kierenreed.co.uk

The beautifullest place on earth

Red House was described by Edward Burne-Jones as 'the beautifullest place on earth' and is the only house that was commissioned and lived in by William Morris, founder of the Arts and Crafts movement. After its completion in 1860 Red House became a site for young artists to collaborate and develop their artistic skills and utopian vision.

The beautifullest place on earth, a collaboration between the Slade School of Fine Art and Red House, revived the property as a centre for artistic practice. Artists, art historians, anthropologists and political theorists from UCL worked with museum staff to explore the legacies of politics, aesthetics and utopian visions through a programme of public talks, workshops and artist residencies.



Drawing parallels – artistic encounters with pathology

This project – a partnership between Barts Pathology Museum, Queen Mary University of London and UCL Pathology Collections – responded to a need for serious and balanced discussion around the display of pathology collections.

The project surveyed the attitudes of specialist and non- specialist audiences through a series of practical workshops. Participants were introduced to preserved pathology specimens and encouraged to share their views, developing their encounters through drawing and dialogue. Findings from the project will inform how such specimens are interpreted and displayed at both collections.

artisticencounterswithpathology.wordpress.com

smd.qmul.ac.uk/about/pathologymuseum



Image courtesy of Tony 'TK' Smith

The history of publishing – William Morris and the Kelmscott Press

"If I were asked to say what is at once the most important production of Art and the thing most to be longed for; I should answer; A beautiful House; and if I were further asked to name the production next in importance and the thing next to be longed for; I should answer; A beautiful Book." William Morris

The MA Publishing course at UCL runs a module which provides students with an opportunity to work on a 'real' publishing project. Students received training in object handling, selecting and curating content from staff at the William Morris Society and produced a physical publication highlighting key aspects of the Society's collections, focussing in particular on Morris's belief in books as objects of beauty



wmorrisartistry.wordpress.com
williammorrisociety.org

Keats in London: using the past to inspire the present

Just as Keats was inspired by London, whether it was out on Hampstead Heath or falling in love with his next-door neighbour, this programme of events provided opportunities for people to be inspired by Keats and the city he loved. UCL English undergraduates, postgraduates and staff exchanged knowledge and ideas with staff from Keats House, co-creating a series of talks, walks, theatrical experiences, readings and conversations on all things London and literary, culminating in the One Day in the City literary festival.

ucl.ac.uk/onedayinthecity/homepage
londonshh.org/houses/keats-house-museum.html



Local roots / global routes: the legacies of British slave-ownership

Hackney Museum and Archives have a track record of engaging local communities to explore their heritage in creative and dynamic ways. Local roots / global routes explored Hackney's local histories and the wider legacies of British slave-ownership in conjunction with UCL's History Department and Legacies of British Slave-ownership project.

The partners worked with two local secondary schools to create a performance-based session and interactive educational resource for Key Stages 3 and 4 based on Legacies of British Slave-ownership material. Teacher training sessions were hosted and a filmed version of the resource produced. UCL staff also delivered workshops, a walking tour and a showcase event for Black History Month in Hackney during October 2014.

vimeo.com/116435239

lgr14.wordpress.com/about/project-overview

hackney.gov.uk/cm-museum.htm#VQAj9bGF9Jk



MiCLUES: Musical instrument Collection articuLation for User-driven Exploration with Smart-devices

MiCLUES explored the potential of smart devices to provide dynamic pathways through the Royal College of Music's Museum (RCM) collection according to the interests of the visitor. The RCM and the Department of Computer Science at UCL worked together to develop an app which has the potential to become a rich, portable window into the museum's wider collections, offering opportunities to hear instruments being played and see related documents and images. A small sample from the collection was used to develop proof-of concept demonstrators, which were evaluated through visitor surveys. The project partners are seeking funding to further develop their work.

rcm.ac.uk/museum

<http://www0.cs.ucl.ac.uk/staff/N.Gold>



Molly Spoon archive

This project was a collaboration between Bruce Castle Museum in Haringey and the Department of Epidemiology and Public Health at UCL. They worked together to introduce museum visitors to the concept of a Molly Spoon, a wooden doll used in ceremonies at the Molly Houses of Renaissance London as a symbol of 'coming out' as a new character. Visitors were encouraged to make their own Molly Spoons in an exploration of what it means to create a sense of identity through rituals. The stories around the spoons were archived using Twitter, Facebook and Tumblr, linking the 19th century with 21st century technology.

The spoons were then shown in a free temporary exhibition at Bruce Castle Museum cultivating new collections around personal and LGBTQ cultural history for the Museum and building on Haringey's LGBTQ campaigning history.

mollyspoonarchive.tumblr.com

haringey.gov.uk/community-and-leisure/culture-and-entertainment/visiting-haringey/bruce-castle-museum#about



Image: 'Molly Spoon' by Sadie Lee

Stamp printing plates, dies and rollers – from vault to view

This project gave the British Postal Museum and Archive's (BPMA) access to 3D digitisation and provided UCL with a test-bed for 3D imaging.

Beginning in 1840 with the creation of the world's first stamp, the Penny Black, the BPMA records the history of stamp production in the UK. It holds a large collection of dies, rollers, and printing plates. These objects provide an insight into the cycle of stamp production, but they have rarely been photographed and are unavailable for consultation by the public. This project aimed to combine a number of technologies in order to capture these items as 3D digital objects, which will ultimately provide the museum with a publicly accessible resource.



postalheritage.wordpress.com/category/3d-scanning/

ucl.ac.uk/museums/about/our-staff/hess

postalheritage.org.uk

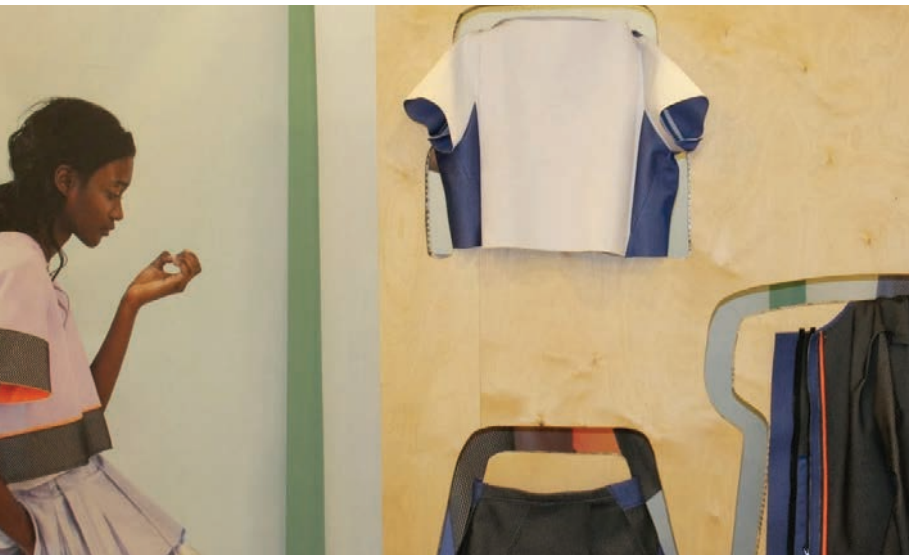
Cultivating style, fashion and horticulture

This innovative partnership between horticulture and fashion resulted in an exhibition designed to inspire gardeners and fashion designers alike.

During London Fashion Week, February 2014, the Garden Museum launched Fashion and Gardens, a new exhibition showcasing work by students on the London College of Fashion's MA in Fashion and the environment and garments created using sustainable textiles and natural materials. Facilitated events, including a panel discussion around fashion and horticulture, a museum late night opening, and workshops combined with an online platform, accompanied the exhibition.

cultivatingstylegmlcf.blogspot.co.uk

gardenmuseum.org.uk/page/cultivating-style-with-london-college-of-fashion



CSM x Foundling Museum

This project saw BA Jewellery Design students and staff from Central Saint Martins making new work based on collections at the Foundling Museum. Their contemporary response to the Foundling Museum's story was shown in Finding, a temporary exhibition held throughout the Museum's permanent galleries. Drawing upon their research and experience, the students also delivered a workshop for local school groups. This unique project resulted in stunning new work, gave staff and students an opportunity to exhibit alongside one another and encouraged undergraduates to communicate their ideas to school students, attracting a wider audience to the Foundling Museum.

<http://www.foundlingmuseum.org.uk/events/view/finding-jewellery-display>

csmbajewellery.wordpress.com



Image: Harriet Williams, Bedtime Stories

Garden stories

Hall Place is a 16th century house standing on the banks of the River Cray. Since the gardens at Hall Place were first created the landscape has continued to change dramatically with the loss of a number of buildings including a boathouse, pigeon house, dairy and mill.

Over 250,000 people visit the site of the Bexley Heritage Trust each year and 90% of visitors to Hall Place come for the gardens. However, visitor surveys have shown that information about the gardens and their history was lacking. This project responded to visitor demand, revealing the story of the changing landscape through an interactive exhibition co-curated by MA Narrative Environment students from Central Saint Martins.

narrative-environments.com
bexleyheritagetrust.org.uk



Inspiration examined

This project teamed MA Textiles students from Chelsea College of Arts with the Museum of Domestic Design and Architecture, enabling students to be actively involved in research exploring how 'inspiration' gained through engagement with museum collections is translated within the creative process.

Video interviews captured the students' narratives, providing a potential model for wider engagement with design collections. Project findings have been disseminated to encourage further engagement with museum collections.

soundcloud.com/paperweight-newspaper
[vam.ac.uk section/v-and-a-research-institute-pilot-project/research-workshops-and-forum](http://vam.ac.uk/section/v-and-a-research-institute-pilot-project/research-workshops-and-forum)



The Vital Ideas Series

The British Music Experience (BME) opened to the public in 2009 with the aim of protecting Britain's rich pop heritage. Initially Ravensbourne College Masters of Design students were commissioned to implement an audience development strategy for the BME, then based at the O2.

However, the students had to adapt when (in April 2014) the BME announced it was closing its doors. The project evolved into a review of the successes and weaknesses in the BME's attempts to grow a community of interest and culminated in a successful symposium, led by Ravensbourne students to explore the role of Open Innovation in developing membership and community building schemes in the small independent museum sector.

ravensbourne.ac.uk/news-and-events/news/2014/10/vital-ideas-symposium



Drawing life

The Grant Museum of Zoology has a long history as a teaching collection and has traditionally been used for comparative anatomy - dissecting the physical form in order to understand its mechanical functions. This project, delivered in conjunction with Central Saint Martins' MA in Art and Science, breaks with tradition by using specimens as the starting point to explore the dynamic relationships of organisms in ecosystems. Science often describes the way animals interact with ecological niches through relatively obscure means, in diagrams, graphs, and equations. Drawing Life investigates how an expanded notion of drawing that links personal meaning to these abstract formulae can help us to better appreciate biological concepts.

[Drawing Life's blog
drawinglifeinthegrant.wordpress.com](http://drawinglifeinthegrant.wordpress.com)

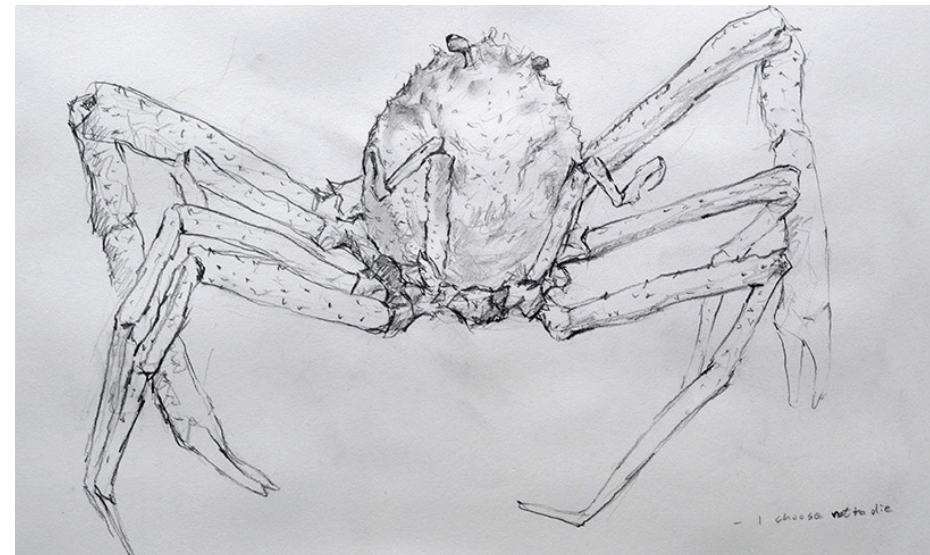


Image: I choose not to die, June Jung

The Peckham Cultural Institute

In this project the South London Gallery's REcreative UK Editorial Board teamed up with Central Saint Martins' MA in Culture, Criticism and Curation to respond to the concept of the Google Cultural Institute which offers mass participation but tends to represent culture in its most narrow and high form. The Peckham Cultural Institute – part think tank, part design studio - aimed to draw a different picture.

A series of study sessions developed a model for representing 'culture' through digital curating and archiving as an alternative to Google's offer to 'host the world's treasures online'. The project co-produced outputs which represented the discussions and interests of the participants and offered a public response to the question 'Why should Googlers be left to decide what is treasure'?



Image: South London Gallery- Facade. Photo by Andy Staggs

Learning

The wider Share Academy programme was led by staff based in museums at University of the Arts London and UCL with input from the London Museums Group. For most museums the world of Higher Education is an obscure and alien place full of unfamiliar acronyms. For universities, the museum sector feels similarly opaque. University museums have a toe in both camps and so can help to demystify the Higher Education sector. However, involving a strategic museum organisation with grass-roots experience and a direct link into the wider museum community is what helped give the project traction and credibility with small to medium sized museums.

Share Academy has shown that participating in cross-sector collaborations brings significant value to those involved. There can be a number of positive and unforeseen benefits beyond the immediate project, including the development of new and wider connections, reaching new audiences, gaining confidence and sharing knowledge and skills. A significant number of Share Academy funded projects have developed a sustainable legacy, from which four key themes have been identified:

Scaling up - The funding provided by Share Academy enabled participants to undertake pilot projects with the aim of developing larger more sustainable relationships.

Scaling out – A number of Share Academy projects are evolving, becoming larger than a single organisation and having a wider impact on society and communities.

Building new relationships – Where good relationships have been formed the good work continues. A number of the Share Academy project partners plan to continue collaborating, building on existing work and exploring new opportunities.

Leveraging further funding – a number of the projects funded through Share Academy have already lodged further grant applications to continue and develop their work.

The success of the partnerships funded through the Share Academy programme reveal what can be achieved when there is a broker or agent to help make introductions and nudge the conversation along. The workshops model gave participants the time and space to identify shared priorities and match those to potential partners.

Share Academy has also shown that small seed funding can have a big impact. Grants given by the Share Academy programme ranged from £4,000 to £10,000 proving that it doesn't take a multimillion pound award to make things happen. Many project participants cited funding as the key to success, yet the expense of administering a small grants programme is an obvious deterrent for many grant awarding bodies. The success of Share Academy's projects and the hunger in both sectors for small pots of money to kick start new relationships may indicate that a revision of policy around grant giving is required.

Share Academy: The Bigger Picture

A number of organisations including The National Archives and Creative Works London are exploring the opportunities offered by cultural collaborations with universities. However, there is little co-ordination of this excellent work on a larger scale and sharing of best practice has been fairly ad hoc.

In January 2015 Share Academy organised a Think Tank on the Art of Collaboration. This was the first step in creating greater connections with those who have the power to support collaborative practice between Higher Education Institutions and the wider cultural and heritage sectors'.

The Share Academy team has secured further funding (from ACE's Museum Resilience Fund) to continue its work with museums and universities on a national scale, working with local museum development networks and ACE relationship managers to help promote greater understanding of the mechanics of good partnerships and share best practice. Share Academy hopes to build and test a digital resource to map existing partnerships and act as a broker for forming new ones.

Beyond Share Academy: The Bigger Picture there is an ongoing need to explore the wider landscape of partnerships with Higher Education Institutions and to look at how funding flows through the cultural and HE sectors. As a result of connections made at the Think Tank, Share Academy is entering discussions with potential partners with a view to taking a long-term strategic view on collaborative practice.



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Web Resources

In order to share some of the best practice identified during the programme the Share Academy team have published a series of resources on:

- Initiating cross-sector partnerships
- How to plan collaborative projects
- Arranging successful student internships
- Memorandum of understanding guidance
- Guidance on project planning and management

Available at www.londonmuseums.org/share-academy

These resources have been widely used by individuals and are being signposted by other organisations including the Collections Trust, Museums Galleries Scotland (the National Development Body for the museum sector in Scotland and the National Archives. The National Archives have also produced a guide to collaboration between the archive and education sectors which draws on Share Academy's work.

www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/archives-sector/research-reports.htm

