



Adventures in Art - Lessons learned running an art fund

**FUTURE'S
VENTURE**

FORWARD

This is not a handbook. This is not intended to be an authoritative story of running an art fund, just an attempt by a few passionate people to do things differently, more ethically, when funding artists.

The adage 'art for art's sake' rings true. This is a reflection and some unpicking of what we attempted to do with the Radical Independent Art Fund, albeit whilst still in the throes of delivering on it, and trying to work towards a timely finish. We, and by that, I mean the Trustees, Advisors and Fund Managers, always said it would be time bound, that once the money was gone, it was gone. This was not about sustaining ourselves as an entity above the work we do, or about us being all knowing (we are not and there is still lots to learn), but an attempt to see how we could be more equitable in giving money to artists and art practice, not projects and outcomes, but real people, with real lives, who wanted to do their work supported financially, without the burden of outputs, outcomes, audience development (whatever that is) and proof of quality and viability. We especially wanted to help those who may find access to mainstream funds a real challenge, either because of the work they do, or because they didn't fit the mould to be able to complete a standard application to a mainstream funder.

What do I mean by that? Well, anyone who has ever completed an online application for Arts Council Funding for instance, will tell you, you need a degree in form filling, even for a small amount. You need to know their language, use their tools of application and generally be able to write a short dissertation to get support. Who decides what 'quality' is? Those in positions of influence are not representative of most people, and certainly not diverse. Where does that public money come from? Taxes and National Lottery Funding. So, in effect we pay it. Many of those who contribute through The Lottery will never have a voice in how the money is spent, or what quality means to them.

But enough of that, we are here to talk about our own experience, the highs and the pit falls (of which there are a few), where we found a balance of ethos, action and financial support. One thing of which I am immensely proud, even though we have some things of which I am not, is our ability to be flexible, to things on a case-by-case basis. Rather than say no, come up with an alternative if we could. We changed our approach every single year to try to reflect what was needed, to make things simple, to keep artists front and centre of the process, and to make that process as flexible, supportive and about process not product.

This is our story. If you fund an artist, they will always make art. Yet most funding goes to institutions. Most funding is about the continuance of those institutions above all else. Including the artists, without whom, and on the back of whom, those institutions exist. The story of the starving artist is real, and this is why.

Alison Surtees – Co-Founder and Fund Manager,
Future's Venture Foundation

1. AN ETHOS, A BUILDING AND A LEGACY: HOW IT ALL BEGAN

John Fox and Sue Gill, along with Roger Coleman and others instigated a loose association of artists, known as [Welfare State International](#) (WSI). Between 1968 and 2006, the entity worked in radical art practice, through outdoor spectacle events, bringing art out of theatres and galleries, opening up to the public in community spaces, at the time considered revolutionary. In much the same way as healthcare and social care was for all, the founders believed so too should art. The collective consisted of artists, musicians, engineers, performers and lots of pyrotechnicians. Mass participation through lantern parades, and engagement in designing, developing and performing in the process, was at its heart. Passing on knowledge, sharing experience and creating spectacle all formed part of the tradition of Welfare State, and formed the basis of other organisations. One of which, Walk the Plank, hosted one of the Foundation's gatherings in 2019, both of the Directors having previously been part of the Welfare State International family. A family is often how it is described, and this underpinning principle has a thread through from then to now. The thread that connects all incarnations, and holds the tradition, passing the torch on doing things differently, with care and through sharing knowledge. Making art accessible, available and free. You can listen to the fuller history of Welfare State International on our website, as told by John himself, over two parts, [here](#).

WSI moved to a permanent base in 1988. In 1992 it gained ESF support to construct its crook barn performance space, landscape the old playground and 'unculvert' the Town Beck (the first such action in the UK). In 1999 WSI gained Lottery Funding to renovate the building that became named, 'Lanternhouse'. John Fox was Artistic Director and Sue Gill was Education Director. In 2006 they closed WSI and the company/charity (Galactic Smallholdings) handed its assets over to Lanternhouse International; a new company with new executive directors and Board of Trustees. Some members of staff continued to work for this new charitable company. At this stage, they were annually funded to deliver activity by Arts Council England, as a National Portfolio Organisation (NPO). The entity was funded for a further 6 years, until 2012, when Lanternhouse International lost its ACE NPO status and had no viable plans to programme arts-making, a requirement of its Articles & Memorandum of Association.

Over two years the remaining two trustees, Denis McGeary (Chair) and David Haley, together with the staff, developed several unsuccessful business plans for ACE to diversify income generation. These included unsuccessful approaches to the district and county authorities, and many trusts and foundations. Finally, all the staff were made redundant. On two occasions, staff and local artists in Ulverston were offered the buildings to take on, but no one came forward to do this, as many of the existing staff and artists had already moved on.

As the buildings were costing £32,000 a year to maintain, David and Denis decided to sell off all the capital assets and use the money to start a new company or a trust fund. David Haley therefore set out to write a manifesto for a new arts fund, as a starting point for conversations with ex staff and local artists, that initiated a process of discussion around a new entity, one that would in effect try to operate outside mainstream funding, focus on artists and process and real engagement. This manifesto was then published in The Guardian, as an ad to attract a consultant to move the process forward

Subsequently, they engaged the help of Richard Povall and Alison Surtees to undertake the development of the new entity, scope the focus and artistic ambition, and sell the assets to establish the fund. The first meetings took place in November 2013, and by 2014 the work had begun.

Manifesto – The Short Version!

This manifesto outlines the basis for a new arts charity (Future's Venture Foundation) arising from two legacies: that of Lanternhouse which closed in 2012, and before it the world-renowned Welfare State International. The charity has been endowed by the sale in early 2015 of property owned by Lanternhouse International.

We use the notion of 'Outcasting' as our underlying philosophical approach: Outcasting refers to that which is cast out: waste material, the rejected, other. We seek to support outcasts from conventional arts funding and outcasts from the strictures of normalized social and political expectations. We are casting out old associations, casting seeds, and casting out a fishing line reaching out for new members, associates, partners, and collaborators.

The art we make:

- Changes the dominant social, environmental, economic and political narrative
- Maintains a radical voice and focusses on content and process rather than 'outputs', 'outcomes' and 'impact'.
- Explores methods of genuine participation without compromising the autonomy or integrity of the artist
- Intends to make a difference: a positive contribution to society, the environment and culture
- Promotes sustainable living, rather than sustainable development
- Listens, responds and reflects
- Is not subject to the limitations and coercions of public and most other funding agencies
- Maintains a dialogue for futures thinking, exploring the potential to work between, across and beyond all creative disciplines
- Seeks partnerships, collaborations and networks
- Adopts adaptable processes and forms of engagement appropriate to the needs of the situation
- Remains dynamic, organic, ecological and rhizomatic in its approach throughout its life.

Richard focused on the sale of the buildings and establishment of the Charitable Foundation, along with development of an equitable investment policy, to ensure that capital from the sale could be securely and ethically invested to meet the needs of the fund. Alison undertook consultancy with artists who had worked with the organisation and supporters, to scope the new work of the Foundation, establish the artistic vision and write the aims and objectives for the new Charity. Over 30 individuals were consulted in the process, both nationally and internationally. In keeping with sharing all, here is what happened at the start.

The Consultation Process

From the outset, discussions had centred on a time bound entity, that would last for 7 years. The thinking was that we should not aim to gain more funds beyond those we generated from sale of buildings, but to simply work with an ethos to give as much money as possible in support of artists, rather than establishing an entity with the purpose of sustaining itself first and foremost.

Our initial proposal was distributed to over 30 identified participants for consultation and input. The purpose of this process was to:

- Inform of the closure of Lanternhouse International and the immanent start-up of a new Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), Future's Venture
- Discuss the Manifesto drafted by the existing trustees of Lanternhouse and secure input on artistic intent/vision and feedback on development of the new entity
- Secure prospective Trustees, deliver 2 meetings for inception and identify structure and process for the new venture.

Of the 30 identified participants approached, 20 engaged in the consultation process via email, telephone interviews and face-to-face meetings. The consultation process took 3 months from February to May 2014. An interim brief was then prepared for the existing Trustees, and 2 inception meetings were coordinated for prospective Trustees, for briefing and opportunity to shape structure and process of the new venture. This work enabled us to move towards the final stages of Phase 1 of our development plan.

Consultation Feedback

What is in and what is out?

The difficulty many respondents felt with input, on what was perceived as a very passionate manifesto, was that most were finding it hard to really understand what this could be, as the parameters were so vague and all encompassing. Whilst there was recognition that this was to ensure as broad a remit and reach as possible, it was also a hindrance in that there were no clear distinct 'areas' or 'hooks' on which to hang ideas. This could prove to be problematic as without these external parameters of what is allowable and what is not, how would artists be sure their proposals were going to hit the mark, and not waste time developing ideas or plans that would not in fairness stand a chance of getting funding.

Recommendations:

Work with trustees at respective meetings to establish the parameters of the funds, to ensure we receive the best possible proposals of ideas that do not either waste the time of those pitching or of the trustees in deciding.

How do we know if it has worked?

Although many interviewed welcomed with open arms the idea of not ticking boxes and stepping outside current trends to monitor and evaluate every last element of activity, there was a sense that this could mean that money would be given away to projects and that there would be no learning or indeed a sense of no one having to say anything, and in that case how do we know what has been successful, how do we share that, and would that ultimately not mean we had no idea if our 7 year project had achieved our overarching aim.

Recommendations

For those with an academic background, there has been much discussion with regard to partnering with universities to research in partnership the activities undertaken (particularly with SURF team at Salford University and Falmouth) This should provide evidence of what has worked but what is clear is that we absolutely need new ways of doing this, and that we discuss clearly what the markers for success will be and why they are important. This will take some time to resolve, and in part we had intended that symposium in Open Space format would provide some of that, but long term how do we capture this? As there is distinct interest in this field at this level, it would be advantageous to develop the links with universities further to establish new mechanisms of measuring success and sharing what has been achieved (note steer clear of over used terms such as 'best practice' and 'sustainability')

What is the process for funding?

As the initial brief was about generating thoughts around big ideas and blue sky thinking, many wanted to understand better what the nuts and bolts of the process would be in terms of securing funds that would become available. There needs to be a clearly defined process of how, when, where and what will happen.

Recommendations:

The Trustees will develop a mechanism and process for giving funding, and as with evaluation, this must also be process driven, in line with aims and simple. This will be discussed at the relevant meetings in June and further developed at a later stage by all trustees.

How can we input to the process outside of being a Trustee?

Many of those we consulted with would like to continue to give input to the process and ideas of the organisation and it's thinking. They are keen to input when time permits and want to be able to offer this support on an ad hoc ongoing basis.

Recommendations:

Set up an artist/creative forum, this could be virtual, but allow input from a range of interested parties, and provide an opportunity to feedback and shape the growth of the activity delivered. This can be discussed further with all Trustees once everyone is officially signed up to the new entity.

Artistic Vision and Intent

There was much input from the respondents and Trustees and the respective meetings around vision and intent. From the attached minutes of the Trustees meetings, and from the feedback through consultation the following is a draft outline of the Vision and Intent of Future's Venture.

Vision

Future's Venture will enable artists to produce work of merit that is radical, cutting edge and takes risks, that cuts across disciplines and sectors, society, environment and technology, and enables a response to set challenges of the modern world. The core ethos is that process is as critical as product, if not more so, that taking risks even in the face of failure is important to learning and understanding in art.

Intent

The new entity will exist for 7 years, and we will fund up to 7 projects of merit each year. We will challenge the norm and establish a process that, if successful, could be modelled for future activity. All funded work should be produced outside of any external pressure of government or mainstream funders to drive agendas that are in opposition of artistic practice. In this respect, we will only fund projects that we can fully financially support, to ensure that there are no conflicts of interest. We will fund projects over multiple years if required. We want to fund projects that may not normally access funds, this could be first time proposals for new and emerging artists, or radical, leftfield proposals from artists of repute that are deemed too 'high risk' for mainstream funders.

Structure

Our key aim with Future's Venture is to secure as much money as possible for artistic works. As such we have established a flat structure, that is not bureaucratic in design or set up, is minimal in cost to manage and administrate but ensures that due process and legal obligations are met. The structure of CIO will enable the organisation to function more freely than a traditional charity, and as a Foundation Model, voting will be completed only by Trustees. This will include decision making on grants and funds as well as administrative and legal obligations.

To date we have established a virtual office with a PO Box for all correspondence, which is based in Manchester. There will be no physical office and therefore no overhead of running and manning a space. However, we do acknowledge that there will be administration of the fund and organisation, and will therefore look to employ a Trust Administrator on a part time basis (6 days per month) to manage and maintain this obligation especially during the **Grant Cycle**,

Process

Our aim for funding is that we reach as wide as we can across a range of artists, sectors and collaborations, within the means of a small organisation. In this we recognise that whilst we would ideally have an open process of application for any funds or grants, we could not effectively administrate and assess hundreds or thousands of applications for each round. We also recognise the need to not over burden artists and creatives with lengthy application processes, as well as providing a financial parameter to enable them to make the best judgement on their ask for funding and preparation of budget. In each call out therefore we will announce the overall pot available and state that we will only fund up to 7 projects, but they are based on merit and not a set split of the pot available. There was a keenness from Trustees to make the initial pitch for funds restricted in terms of words and application method. This ranged from:

- 50 – 100-word limit with all applications hand written on a postcard.
- An initial event to kick start applications – and process of calls for submission at which challenges would be set
- Twitter applications with open votes from public – however again this would mean mass application and if voted for via Twitter could just lead those with the most followers getting through whether or not the idea is of merit
- A long list would be allowed of 49 projects, which was perceived as viable in terms of assessment and administration.

With this in mind, two ideas have been proposed by Trustees, with the final decision to be made at the next meeting. Both of these ideas follow an open process format.

- **Completely open with lottery selection**

We put a call out for proposals through usual channels and accept all proposals sent in. We then empty them into a barrel and at random select 49 for the long list to take to next stage. It was also suggested that Trustees as artists and practitioners should use their extensive networks to promote the call for submissions, as most artists within these networks tend to be those who are not accessing finance from ACE or other mainstream funders, and would be our target audience in terms of applications. This would also provide a social media aspect to the process that would enable us to track interest and see where we reach out in terms of those expressing interest and formally applying for funding.

- **Completely open with a maximum number of applications**

This principle would work on the premise that we will only accept a limited number of proposals and once that number was reached we would close the application process. A feasible number for this was set at 100 applications from which we select 49 to go to next stage. This would mean artists etc have a timeframe by which to get their ideas in, over which applications would not be seen.

- **Closed Process with Selection of Candidates by Trustees**

Trustees will be asked to nominate 7 artists to put forward proposals upto a total number of 49, from which they will select a short list of 7 proposals for funding. This gives a maximum and manageable number of bids to read from which to select the ones to be funded. This would not require a second phase, but is highly subjective, and may present other issues with people if they are not selected, or indeed criticism for cronyism as we all select the artists we like and want to give money too.

Open Process – Long List to Short List

If we choose either the first or second option above, a long list of 49 projects will be taken to second stage of selection, at this point, those on the long list will be asked to submit a bid in whatever format suits their intentions – written, video, a piece of art etc, and provide a sensible budget. From this, the final 7 funded projects will be selected.

Caveats to the above:

- We need not fund any project if the Trustees feel none meet the ethos or aims of the fund.
- We can fund over several years, but will not expect artists to apply annually.
- We will allow the artist to give a timeline for their project and corresponding budget. If this can be funded from one year's fund it will be so.
- A rolling finish date for projects of over a year in length will be allowed, and they will not incur financial penalties if expenditure runs over anticipated dates providing the project is achieving aims.
- We would look at a maximum fund each year to one project of 50,000
- We will not accept match funding for projects so that we can ensure they are not skewed by other funder's outcomes and agendas.

Reflective Practice – Knowing how we did?

It is appropriate to set some method of reflection that can inform the trustees and those in our networks of how we are doing during the 7-year programme. This process will be quite natural for the artists and their work, and we want to encourage a wide and creative range of ways to do this including blogs, video diaries or written reflections, art pieces themselves and part of the whole artistic process. These would then be shared across either social media platforms or some form of Creative-Commons site. (Dave Carter has expressed an interest in looking into this in further detail)

This practice has been mentioned several times by prospective Trustees, and using a range of techniques suited to the artists can enable us to see how things are going. Also with blogs and video we can enable the trustees to provide support if needed. Having a linked Trustee to your project can be beneficial in supporting an artist who may have some issues or blocks or wants to ask for guidance/advice.

Getting Trustees on Board

The following intent was set as a discussion point for consultation with prospective Trustees, one of whom was based in California.

We are proposing a seven-year creative project with a working title of 'A Future Venture'. The work we propose has funding in place, and few restrictions on its shape and creative manifestations. At this stage there is a great deal we do not know, and just a few things we do.

*Primarily, the project to be guided and informed by ecological thought. We see this as a way of being and a set of practices that enable artists to approach their work in a way that is in tune with, and pays particular attention to the world around them. By world, we might mean a landscape, a community, a group of people, a place, a city. The **'what'** is not so important; the **how** is the essence. It's about an open-ness, about maintaining a dialogue, about caring*

about process at least as much as product. This project has its roots in the local as well as the global and will look to engage on an international level as well as national.

Ultimately, we want to challenge the dominant narrative that prioritises product over process, instrumentality over content, postcode over need, box-ticking over real engagement, breadth over depth. A true ecological engagement is one that is holistic, eyes wide open, where art results in new learning, new ideas, and genuine changes in perspective and connection between the most disparate elements. Ultimately this is a social engagement, in the broadest possible sense that may be as much about understanding a landscape as a neighbourhood.

So, what is it that we're looking for? We're looking for a group of people who will join us on a journey of making, thinking, reflecting and sharing. We will have money to produce projects and money to bring people together, but it is not just about that. We want to be able to show what's possible without money, too.

We hope that a handful of you will also be interested in serving, for no more than two years, as Trustees to help guide the project. The current Trustees of Lanternhouse International, who have made this project possible, will retire around the end of this year, so we need just a few people who will make the commitment of time and energy to help steer the project forward.

In our early process, we had envisioned international reach to fund artists, and this became a key challenge from the outset, and certainly one of our failures at the start, and one we had to quickly change to be effective. After the first round of applications, we realised international work was simply not feasible with the footprint and funds we had available. We simply could not be effective in this area. As a first learning point, this was sizeable. Our eventual work fell within then confines of Great Britain.

The formal CIO structure of Future's Venture Foundation was established in 2014, and the inaugural trustees were:



L - R Michael Barnes-Wynters, Ruth Daniel, Dave Carter, David Haley, Tony Lidington Richard Povall and Sam Bower



Alison Surtees took on the role of managing the funds and administering the charity, with Richard Povall securing the initial investments with medium risk shares in ethical bonds, in keeping with the ethos of the Manifesto. The first calls for funding were distributed in autumn 2014, with the first round of funding contracted in February 2015. Future's Venture Radical Independent Art Fund was born.

Alison Surtees

Reflection and Evaluation

We had much discussion about how we should know if what we did worked. Everything from PhD students to formal evaluation, peer to peer evaluation, creative evaluation and simple reflections from artists themselves on the process and outcome. Over the time of funding, several different methods of evaluation and reflection took place. Formal evaluation in round 1 from an external consultant, informal reflections from artists, written and video, formal video interviews (taking place at events) and written feedback and artworks all encompassed our wish to think differently about value and impact of funding. Much as we had fluidity in our funds, we also wanted to champion this approach in our evaluations.

2. THIS IS WHAT HAPPENED

As outlined in the consultation process, we recognised that capacity would be an issue from the outset. To all intents and purposes, the funds we had available were small in the grand scheme of things, and we had purposefully made the entity agile, with only one freelance worker, managing and running the organisation and administration of the funds. There was never any intent with this in mind, that we would have an open call for anyone wishing to apply. We simply could not have dealt with the applications, nor given them the support and detail they would require to best assess them. Additionally, we also felt that in funding an artist, we should commit to supporting them beyond the funding, and agreed that each Trustee would provide some mentoring for the selected artists if required. The Trustees were matched as mentors based on compatibility with the projects being funded and skills that could be useful to the artists. However, we still needed a maximum number of applications.

The number will be 49: 2016

This would be 7 applications per Trustee, and 7 Trustees, keeping in line with our 7 years anticipated operation. In reality with the start-up and close down this would become 9 years from initial meetings with Trustees in 2013. The intention was that we could fund up to 7 artists or collectives in the first round. In line with keeping things simple, we literally asked for people to send their applications on a postcard, with up to 250 words, but also expressed that any other format was welcome. Interestingly, no one used video. In general, artists had become so indoctrinated into the need to have written applications, that even the offer for different formats felt wrong, many adding much more information with their 250 words, some did do artwork with their applications.

The applications were long listed after an initial read through from Trustees, and reduced to 20. At this stage, Trustees suggested that they simply go for the top 7 voted applicants, for ease. However, The Fund Manager/Trust Administrator suggested that we actually needed to re-

read proposals again, rather than the top 7 from the initial run through, giving every chance to applicants for a fair reading. The long list was reduced to 7, this was not 1 from each Trustee. It was the best 7 applications overall. In a bid to give more scope for artists to share their ideas and access funding, we then interviewed all 7 shortlisted artists. They could do this informally, this was not a presentation as such, but a chance to share their thinking and give more detail to what they wanted to do. Interviews took place in Manchester, and we covered the cost of travel for those attending, and accommodation if needed.

In sitting in the interviews, it became apparent that some projects were outside our remit, or felt that they could be funded easily through other means. In addition, there were a couple of artists that we felt needed to pilot and test their ideas first before going to a full programme. To enable testing, artists still need funding, and to this end, Trustees immediately actioned a smaller funding pot for this purpose. Although initially we had said artists could apply for up to £25,000, we eventually funded 2 lots of Development Funding at £5,000 each and 3 other projects for the full amount they had applied for. This left 2 projects that the Trustees felt could secure funding elsewhere easily, or had not clearly expressed what it was they were doing. A reflection on this point would be that perhaps we should simply trust the process and take the risk with the other two proposed projects.

Artists Funded in Round 1



Ria Hartley's work focused on developing her ideas for performance based on personal experience, themes of domestic abuse, originally intended to work towards graphic novels for working with young people on these subjects. The R&D enabled the development of the ideas and testing of performance and towards workshops with other young people.



Farzana Khan brought the concept of work that had been started with Platform Arts, and wanted to extend the work with BAME young people around issues of corporation's appropriation of art through finance. R&D supported delivery of training and development with 20 young black and brown youth to deliver their own event and activism on issues.



Richard Dedomenici is focusing working on a miniature house, to site in central London, unnoticed, as a means of drawing attention to the housing crisis and cost of living in the capital. As a form of protest through action, the project is now in design and build stage, and will be documented in film along the way, and especially after siting to see how long it takes before it is noticed and/or removed.



Wallace Heim's work focuses on the MOD's firing of plutonium shells into the Solent and the resultant ecological and social impacts for local communities in Scotland and The Lake District. The work weaves stories into an engaging radio play of key characters of the sea, the land and the people, alongside a sublime soundscape of audio textures



Bill Posters Brandalism

The team of artists and activist wanted to bring together artist activists from across Europe to share tools, practice and ideas. The success of subvertising and the desire to get designers to switch sides continues apace. The movement is still campaigning on climate change and capitalism/corporatism, with further actions in the planning

Formal consultation feedback from Round 1

Semi-structured interviews were conducted via telephone/Skype with the five artists. The interviews were conducted between February 2016 and May 2017. All the interviews were anonymised and recorded (audio file or note form) with the consent of the participants. The interviews centred on a number of themes including:

- How the artist became aware of the funding call.
- Their understanding of the criteria to apply and aim of the fund.
- Experiences of the funding process (postcard/ proposal document/presentation)
- Understanding/experience of the development grant
- Experience and opinions of the mentoring process.
- Previous experience of funding bodies and securing funding.
- Difference in Future Venture's funding process to other funding bodies.
- Suggestions on improving the funding process.
- Experience of the process overall.

Initial observations.

There was some difficulty in arranging interviews with some of the artists due to lack of communication on their part. In particular, one artist postponed the interview until the end of April despite initial communication being made at the beginning February. From email correspondence this reluctance to appeared to be due to the artist's misunderstanding of the purpose of the interview. The artist seemed to be under the impression that the interview focused on project outcomes and impact and therefore delayed the interview until the project was more advanced.

Equally, another artist did not respond to emails from the evaluator, their mentor or the Trust's administrator on a number of occasions. It took four months to secure the interview. Thus, issues regarding contact with the artists perhaps highlights the need to better explain the evaluation as part of the grant making process when funds are allocated.

Mentoring:

All respondents considered the mentoring process to be a positive aspect of the process and welcomed the opportunity to engage with mentors and peers. In particular, the sharing event in November was viewed as useful as it facilitated peer learning and networking with fellow

artists and mentors. This was particularly important for the artists as commented that they often work in isolation. However, there was a general consensus that the mentoring process was not clearly defined in terms of scope, capacity of mentors, number of sessions, expectations of the mentoring and responsibilities for setting up and maintaining the relationship. Thus, some of the respondents felt that they had not been able to maximise the support of the mentors due to the informal nature of the process. Furthermore, some artists noted that the mentors may lack the appropriate knowledge, contacts or skills to support specific arts projects.

Positive experience

All of the artists considered the experience as positive given the informality of the funding call and subsequent stages. Three artists commented that the recommendations to apply from colleagues, peers or contacts from existing networks or members of the board gave them the confidence to apply. Equally, participants felt the stages of the funding and access to mentors for guidance on their application and presentation was reassuring. Finally, the ability to learn about other projects and connect with fellow artists was also cited as a reason for artists considering the overall experience to be positive.

Development grants

Both artists who were awarded development grants considered that this funding award was unclear. For one artist, they expressed confusion about the funding, including, the remit of the funding, expected outcomes at the end of the process and access to further funding. She felt there was miscommunication about the purpose or expected result of the development grant. The other awarded artist expressed disappointment at undertaking a laborious process including overnight stays and intercity travel to subsequently be awarded only five thousand pounds.

Equally, both artists expressed confusion over follow on funding. One artist assumed that the development grant would lead to access to the possibility of further funding and stated the need for more robust process in terms of structure and timelines to facilitate this. In contrast, the other artist was not aware that they could access further funding after the development grant.

Previous funding.

With the exception of one artist, the remaining four artists had previously received funding for their artistic work. Funders included the EU, the Arts Council, Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, National Lottery, arts festivals, Southbank, the Barbican and the BBC. Indeed, one artist reported that they had submitted their idea to a festival who had been keen to support it, but only on a small scale. Equally, another artist noted that they had previously secured funding for similar small-scale interventions.

Application process.

Given that the artists had prior experience of applying and securing funds for arts or academic projects, they felt that the process was relatively straightforward compared to other funding applications. However, the artists did comment that the process was laborious due to the number of stages, time required to prepare, proposals, presentations and budgets and travelling to meetings in other cities. One artist also noted that many artists struggle with writing proposals and there are many artists who have dyslexia. Similarly, two artists considered

that the process could be challenging for emerging artists as they may have little or no experience of writing proposals or delivering presentations.

The budget could be sent to show what money was required. The second phase after shortlisting was to gather any additional information that might be deemed useful. The interviews, informal more a chance to talk about the project plans in more detail. There was no request at any time to do a formal presentation, just to come and tell the Trustees about their project ideas. Likewise, the evaluator expressed all artists felt the process was straightforward, but equally laborious. The stages themselves were not stages for the artists, more process for the funders. Long listing to shortlisting were internal processes, but the timescale was reflective of the voluntary nature of Trustees and their available time to read and properly assess applications.

Many of the artists who applied did send a multitude of work along with their 250 words, so no matter how we expressed this should just be an idea on a postcard, it seems that application paperwork is so deeply ingrained in artists, i.e., that they must provide detailed plans and budgets and presentations, that even when expressly only asked for 250 words, they still felt compelled to do this.

With regards to development funding, the decision to award this money was taken on the day of the interviews. This was a way of still being able to fund an artist to develop their project further, and not simply turn their project down altogether, if it was felt to have value. This ideally should then have been clearly iterated on the day too. Whilst feedback was confusing, it probably comes too soon after funding was received, and before discussions with Trustees could take place. One artist funded for development, did come back and was awarded a further grant to further their work.

The biggest challenge with the evaluation, is that it only assessed the application process, and didn't follow up with what artists did with their funds or indeed if the funding was useful. This came subsequently with their own reflections at the end of their work. In addition, we had identified an artist practitioner to do a peer-to-peer evaluation process, but this never took place due to commitments of this artist. As a result, processes of reflection overtook evaluation as the main method of feedback.

Although many artists funded talked of receiving funding for other work, what is not clear is why the work they approached us to fund was a challenge to secure funding from mainstream funders? This appears to be missed and is important to telling the story.

Overall, in the first round, we recognised the need to change the application process, make it multi-media in approach to allow applications from neuro diverse candidates to be more easily put forward. We also felt that Trustees should be more involved in supporting applications from artists they were putting forward, so that mentoring began before proposals were pitched as well as after funding secured. In this respect, we recognised that a smaller number of people would be proposed for funding, but that they would be more supported in the process. Round 2 would therefore have a maximum of 3 applicants for each Trustee, and require them to reach further out, and see if currently funded artists could help identify more people to consider. With this seed sown, we wanted to see if we could develop funded artists to take the lead in reaching out to other networks we didn't know. To be Artist Alumni funders,

taking the mantle of identifying and funding other artists they felt needed support, especially from less well represented sectors of the arts world.



By the end of this year, it was increasingly obvious that the administrative processes required further support. As a result, we brought in Cathy Brooks to the position of Finance Manager, who joined in late 2016, in a freelance capacity. Cathy was central to working with Alison in maintaining the financial management of the funds, investments and day to day financial control.

Cathy Brooks

A change at the top

Recognising the difficulty of providing support and the lack of funding opportunities for international artists, Sam took the decision to stand down from the Board of Trustees. At this stage, it was important that we reflected more the target audience we were out to reach with funding, and Michael Barnes-Wynters brought forward Keisha Thompson, then working with Contact Theatre and a freelance artist in her own right as a poet, writer and performer. As a young black woman, well connected in the arts world, this was a great boost to the Trustee Board.



Keisha Thompson

The number will be 21: 2017

Working from the feedback and the input from round 1, and the realisation that to be effective as volunteers, the Trustees had to be sure they had the capacity to manage the application process, there was recognition that a fewer number of applicants needed to be sought. Also, we very much wanted to be sure that reaching out through networks could be done via the artists we had funded already making suggestions, and the trustees themselves and their own networks.

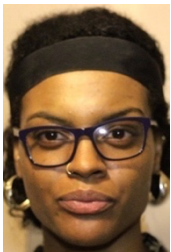
With the ideas seeded from round 1, we set about approaching thinking about how we could be more targeted with our approach to finding artists who needed support. Using networks of trustees, their networks and wider participants and artists already funded. This meant for the 7 Trustees, they each had to find 3 possible artists to support. This also meant doing more work, as Trustees, actively seeking those to fund, and helping them to apply to the fund, by shaping ideas and supporting pulling together of information. We also decided that the process could include film applications, and that all we needed was a simple one-page application and a budget sheet. In the appendix to this report, the application criteria are added for further reading.

Again, it was interesting that of all the applications put forward, none used video as a means of telling their story for funding. We also noted that for those who applied there was still the same anxiety about process, and worrying that they had not included enough material. So deeply entrenched is this thought about funding applications that even when there is more freedom, people feel they should have done more. One element we kept was the interview/pitch process, where artists could spend some time telling us more about their work, and allow the Trustees to make informed decisions with regards to who to fund. All Trustees

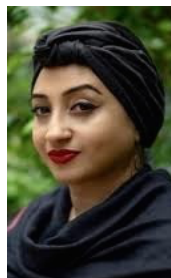
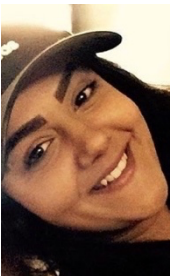
were mentors, so any artist they brought forward, they would be supporting them throughout the process of application and during delivery of their projects or artistic works.

As the Trustees were more closely involved in the application process, in support of their artists, they were better paced to recommend which they felt was more ready to move forward with their idea. All proposals were circulated to the whole board, and they shortlisted 7 applicants for funding. In this open process, not all artists put forward by trustees were proposed, some had no artists selected at the final decision, but offered their support in any mentoring capacity that may be useful going forward. Five artists/collectives were funded in round 2, across a diverse range of art forms and practice.

Artists Funded Round 2



Naomi Gabriel and Humaira Ahmed were given a development grant to develop their practice in community art through music and spoken word as well as personal development in enabling skills to continue this practice, from sound engineering to project management. With these skills they have been able to set up and maintain 'What you saying' A spoken word night on issues affecting youth in South London



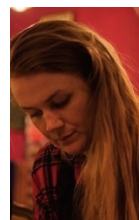
Hafsah Aneela Bashir and Nikki Mailer have worked together in capacity of writer and director and wanted to develop their ideas around voices less heard. Cuts of the cloth is a solo performance piece that looks at the challenge of difference and being a Muslim woman in today's society, where the use of head covering is polarising discussion on women's rights, religion and human rights.



Dan Glass has been a strong advocate and activist around rights within the LGBTQ+ community for many years, using powerful cabaret and performance to make statement on issues from HIV and Aids to Holocaust survivors and trauma. The work we supported enabled him to profile the human rights issues of LGBT especially from countries where being gay is illegal.



Robin Doyle wanted work with existing community arts practitioners to gain experience in the teaching process and insight into good forms of practice and engagement. Connect with visual arts protagonists, such as Brandalism, he has broadened and developed his creative network and practice with a view to possible future collaborations.



Joanna Roy, Jessica Loveday, Sophie Mahon. Their focus is very much on how curriculum and the pressures of rigid timetables and lack of access to arts is impacting the very nature of education. Their project saw them work closely in schools with young people around these themes to then develop a site-specific installation in an old school hall of specially constructed visual, audio and sensory art pieces, designed in collaboration with the young people.

Hedgespoken

This project was to take place in a rural setting, completely off grid with the artists moving from village to village in a van delivering performance and engagement activities firmly rooted in the heritage of traveling performance of old. It was an attempt to look at environmental impact from a perspective of art without walls, and low impact. For various reason this project didn't come to full fruition, and more can be found on this later in the report.

First Artist Get Together

We had always intended to bring artists together to build a network and share practice. Our first attempt at this was low key. Bringing the artists to Manchester for a day of project sharing, dinner and networking. There was real value in enabling the artists to share their projects, receive feedback from their peers and also connect with others. What we lacked was scope for a wider sharing opportunity with the wide arts community, and at these early stages of development for FVF, we also recognised that capacity was another issue for us. Recognising that Trustees are volunteers, and have other jobs to deliver on, often meant there was not the full engagement for artists and wider opportunities to connect to networks. This was very much a small gathering and baby steps for us.

Feedback from the artists funded was on the whole very positive from this round, and they felt better supported through the application process being nurtured by a Trustee who could help them shape their ideas.

In this round, we also decided to continue with the offer of development funding, so that we could support artists to get where they needed to be with skills, capacity and support. To this end Naomi Gabriel and Humaira Ahmed received funding to help them get training in project management and new technology, something they had wanted but was out of their financial reach. It was felt this would be more appropriate to their success, and give them skills that could be incorporated for the future as well as help them realise their aim of working with marginalised youth through spoken word.

Artist reflections

A part of the funding contract, we asked all artists to reflect on their work and process and share with us what they learned or realised. For many this was a relief from the report writing of other funds and constant need to be monitoring outcomes, outputs and impact. However, with that said, getting those reflections was problematic. Some just didn't do it at all, others ended up writing reports. Only a few used artistic methods of feedback and review. Whilst anecdotal evidence was great from artists speaking directly with mentors and the Fund Manager/Trust Administrator, it often felt laboured to get some form of feedback. The acknowledgement for many was that they didn't know what to do, wanted guidance and clear format. Where we were trying to untie those rigid evaluative processes for artists, it seemed that many still needed that to help them produce something. This was also a requirement to secure their final 10% of funds (bearing in mind we paid 90% up front). More on this later.

There were still issues with selecting artists too, and we knew we had more work to do widening our reach, really looking for those who may otherwise not be supported, or would never think to access funding. We needed to adapt again, and shape the process further, to really get the best from the process and for the artists. This again led to another change at Trustee level.

We recognised we also needed to encourage more of our artists towards our aim of becoming artist advisors.

Change at the top 2



At the end of round 2, Richard Povall decided to stand down from the Board and organisation to focus on his own practice. Another place became available on the Board, and we therefore looked to broaden our diversity again, with Tony Lidington proposing Rebecca Hillman, applied theatre practitioner and lecturer.

Rebecca Hillman

The Fund Manager/Trust Administrator was aware of the extra hours and work that Trustees were doing in their exploration and support of artists, without recourse to payment, and this was starting to impact their own work. For this reason, she suggested devolving the Board to a two-tier system. Those who could be a Trustee and put in the work unpaid, due to full time employment would remain as Trustees, and those who were self-employed, and therefore could be supported financially to do more of the outreach and engagement of prospective artists, could form an Advisory Panel. Over time with the intention for the majority of the outreach to be through the Panel, and to extend the numbers. In addition, we were still keen to see the idea of artist advisors come to fruition, recognising that artists would need some development themselves to take on this role. A full brief and role document for the Advisory Panel s in Appendix 2. The first members of the Advisory Panel were Tony Lidington, Ruth Daniel, Michael Barnes-Wynters and David Haley.

The number is flexible, dependent on capacity: 2018

Re-invigorated by the Advisory role, the members were much better placed and able to spend longer periods of their time reaching out to networks, visiting prospective artists and supporting applications. We also wanted to explore more the themes of social engagement, political activism and really look at environmental and sustainability concepts. The task for all now, was to research, identify and support applications that coalesced more clearly around these themes.

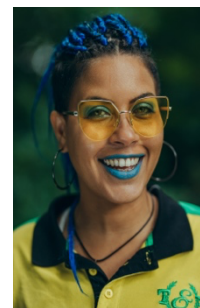
Keeping with the reduced application process, we continued offering video applications for ease of access. Again, no one used this method. It felt very much as if there was a fear that if applicants used video, it would be treated less favourably than a written application, despite the listing of this format as equal to written. Highlighting this deeply ingrained idea of written applications and over burdensome processes. Artists often complain of the process of application to mainstream funders, but it would seem that for many of us, it is so deeply rooted in our knowledge and expectation that we do not step outside this process to imagine a better one, and when we do, we still rely on old methods as 'real' applications.

In this round, a couple of artists that were being supported required extra time to reach their desired application process and concept. In our ethos of openness and support, we ensured that Advisors continued to work with them in developing ideas beyond the application deadlines of round 3 for future access.

In our original thinking, we also expected that artists would be with us for 12 months, then move on. However, we unintentionally grew a family. Always believing that we could connect people, especially artists and help them grow a network of support, we didn't realise this would be as time consuming as it became. More about this later, but enough to say that artists didn't just come, get funded, deliver then leave. We had said all along that there was no claw back if not completed, this was never about time. In fact, one project took the full 7 years to come to fruition, and is still not quite complete. All of this was part of the journey, process as much as product, if not more so. Often, we think that success is simply completion on time and on budget and end product done. It is the biggest single factor in the lack of risk taking now in arts, and we are the poorer for it. The expectation to complete to pre-determined outcomes, over a pre-determined time is unnecessary and often diminishes the art and practitioner.

In this round we also decided to fund a previously funded artist, who initially had development funding. Although this had not been intentional, it felt appropriate as a follow-on mechanism for those we chose to support with development funds. For this reason, the number of artists we funded increased to 9. Both Fund Managers felt that it would benefit those being funded to meet in person where possible and go through the requirements for the funding, making the administrative process easier. These meetings took place towards the end of 2019, and enabled networks to be established and support to be offered.

Artist Funded Round 3



0161 Community came together to build on the good work established with Anti-Fascist festival 0161. The aim being to take to the streets and work in communities where racism is an issue, out on the estates with young people to share their skills and encourage community. This focuses on radical walking tours, community fun days and training to handle difficult confrontations.

Sarah Weston and Isaac Rose developed work in community theatre practice and open access, through a piece with local residents of Ordsall in Salford. This engaged community in shaping the play, and as performers within it. Bringing the voice of the communities to the stage in an unusual setting opening possibility for co-creation

Ria Hartley (Righteous) From initial development in round 1, Ria went through self-healing from trauma that led her to want to better understand herself, how she worked, why she worked and how she could do that differently to support herself and others. Ecologies of Care is the result, a process aimed at changing the requirements of funders, sponsors and more around the arts. Ria became the first artist to be funded twice through FVF, securing full funding for this second project.



Jamil Keating is a passionate activist, using his skills in performance and art to work directly with those in detention centres seeking asylum. The fund piloted an approach to use art to tell the story of asylum, through direct process, working with legal teams, the detainee and the artist, so that the hope, on release a final art piece can be taken with them. There is no pre prescribed idea of what will be produced, or even if the detainee will be freed.



Nova Studios, Matt and his team are finally bringing together a documentary of seminal art sound pioneer Paul Burwell and touching on his Bow Gamelan Ensemble, which he established with Ann Bean and Richard Wilson. It is a long overdue look at the artist, his work and his influence. The work is circulating the film festival circuit soon



James Brady has been working to produce a video essay of the ZAD Camp, which is facing real prospect of eviction, and the artists at the core of this. Originally pitched as a book, the idea of a more readily accessible format means wider possibility of distribution and understanding, which is being followed by a talking tour and



Maya Chowdhry uses cutting edge VR and the everyday to challenge concepts of food and ecology. The fund supported development of an app and VR tech for people to better understand the food they eat, where it comes from and the impact it has on the environment.



Nathan Geering developed a method of support for people with visual impairment using breakdance as a means of injury prevention and to improve spatial awareness. It ended with participants taking part in public performances. The performance was also audio described using the Rationale Method of Audio Description, which utilises the skills of a beatboxer to give a richer soundscape to people with visual impairment, all of which Nathan has developed.



Mahboobeh Rajabi, Iranian Artist wanted to help other previous refugee and non-UK artists, to help remove the label of being a refugee, to have an opportunity to work professionally in a creative and friendly atmosphere, that realises their already outstanding work, and engages with equity and parity, through new works and co-creation

Taking pause, a fallow year, but not really: 2019

After the third round, it was felt that we needed to regroup and take stock, and also that we wanted to focus on doing an event, something we had said from the outset, should be a celebration of the work done to date, and a chance for all artists to come together, share, and widen their network of contacts. Despite this, we did end up doing a fourth round of funding, to support the two projects that were not quite ready for round 3. So, we rolled this as a fourth round. Our other big commitment was an event.

The event was substantial and involved not only artists we had funded, but a curated programme of artist interventions from a wider community, performance pieces, discussions and evaluation of the work to date, finally engaging artists in shaping our future and how things could and should be done, more of that below.

This year was dedicated to really thinking about what we could do as a funder to support artists and their practice. What new areas could we work on, or should we simply be content with just funding and mentoring artists. These questions felt appropriate in this year after 3 years of funding. We also recognised that artists were staying with us, some because their work was not finished so maintained connections and mentoring support, others to maintain connection and link to a network. We had a growing family that we wanted to continue to nurture.

This was a story still being written, and reflection was required to understand the needs of the artists, to continue to challenge our own thinking of funding and what we could do.

Two lots of small grants were assigned to two projects, both specific to sectors of the community that are underrepresented and funded. Both were presented to Trustees and approved for funding despite the fallow year. Whilst Dolly and Caroline were clear on their project idea, we introduced further mentoring through another funded artist, Dan Glass. He had experience of public activism and was able to provide more specific support to the needs of the project. It also gave Dan the desire to further work with FVF as an Artist Advisor.

Dr. Topher Campbell is a well-established artist and academic in his field, and this funding enabled the development of safe space to share work at the forefront of Black Queer art and culture. He worked more widely on action and brought sharing to the wider artist community internationally as well as UK.

Artists Funded Round 4



Dolly Sen and Caroline Cardus. This work centred on disability rights, and a performance piece aimed at sanctioning the DWP, to raise awareness of the treatment of disabled people by the agency. Dolly as lead artists and Caroline as Producer



Dr. Topher Campbell, Rukus, Salon A quarterly Black Queer Artist Salon, based in London, Manchester and Birmingham. Sharing work, networked to global artists and presentations

The big gathering

A full evaluation of the first large event is attached in the appendices. For the purposes of this reflection, the focus is on the reason for bringing artists together and the impact of building solid networks of support and fostering sharing. During 2019, the focus for the Fund Manager/Trust Administrator was the project management of the first full Artist Gathering in conjunction with Michael Barnes-Wynters as curator, with the support of Tony Lidington.



This took place at Walk the Plank in Salford, as a link to our heritage of Welfare State (Walk the Plank was a direct descendent of this work). Welfare State had been built on the concept of celebration, community and engagement, and Tony felt that we should try to continue this theme and bring artists we had funded together to share their work. In addition, we invited a number of Welfare State International members from across the years, as a bridging of past and present, including John Fox, who gave an impressive opening address and Q&A, that set the scene for the weekend. Two days of exchange, sharing, workshops and artist interventions followed. Attendees came from across the country, and wider artists communities and organisations.

A special commission of a further piece from Bill Posters was also unveiled that engaged people in the use of technology on social media that drives feeds, and how social media entities are creating toxic environments. The piece enabled individuals to become those entities, and see how they are manipulated online. Spectre as an installation went on to develop further and gain other installations.



Spectre- Bill Posters

General feedback overall was that the event was a brilliant opportunity for people to get face to face, and spend time immersed in art talk, expression and exchange. We covered travel and accommodation and food so that as many of our artists could attend as possible as well as the wider community and commissioned artist interventions. Enabling people to spend time together, both at Walk the Plank at the Hotel and in other activities, such as a walking tour, were greatly appreciated. Many artists can be isolated in their practice, many also do not get opportunities to connect across art forms, so this provided an opportunity to do that. We used this time to reflect on our work to date, and more importantly to gather the thinking of our funded and wider artist network to come up with where we should focus funding for future rounds. Identified areas were around age, both ends of the spectrum, location and reach. A full event evaluation is enclosed in the Appendices.

During the weekend, we recorded interviews with a range of artists and trustees, and those reflections can be viewed on our [website here](#).

What do we value most?

The main reflection is that bringing people together in this way has real value, not only for artists but the wider community, agencies and other stakeholders. There is a lot of talk about listening to artists and reflecting their needs, but not many major funders really do this, and certainly fall short in their application processes as a result. Connection is vitally important to securing other support for artists, a network that helps them to gain more work, collaborations and peer mentoring and learning opportunities. Certainly, for any funder looking to develop their understanding of the artist they fund and the impact it has, regular events such as this should be part of the calendar and offer available. As we move to online more and more, opportunities are becoming more available, but they cannot replace face to face connection, and making them accessible and open is really important to fostering a healthy artistic community that is seen as valued and valuable. The value of individual artists is often placed lower than that of institutions, and yet the whole of the artist infrastructure relies on the artist themselves as creators. We know that funding does not equally come to artists directly, and this is the single biggest challenge for funders, and we would ask 'Why not?'

All of these points feed into risk, and the lack of risk taking that has seen larger institutions gobble up huge sums of money, when there are still artists unable to pay their rent. It is this point of value that brought the process of support to artists into the forefront of our thinking. We had set out from the outset to ensure that we funded artists, not organisations and not projects per say.

Artists becoming funders

In so far as extending our reach to new networks and finding more artists to support, development of the Artist Advisors was propelled forward. The intention had been to engage more of the funded artists in supporting reach to others to fund, but this had to be a proposition that was also supported. Therefore, we asked 10 artists who had expressed interest if they wanted to move forward and become an Artist Advisor, and on approval, we developed training to support their mentoring skills and knowledge.

The training was delivered in person and for one artist online for access reasons. Being a Mentor was delivered by Estelle Neuman, and helped artist advisors understand their responsibility as mentors, what was expected and how they could mentor others, as well as

expectations of artists they would bring forward for funding. The budgets for artist advisors were much smaller than those of the rest of the Advisory Panel and Trustees, but we recognised that sometimes a small amount of money was all that was needed to make a difference for artists at early stages of their process. Each Advisor on completion of training was allocated £2500. They could fund up to 4 artists, or fund one artist, but they had to do the work of reaching out and identifying those to fund, and be able to support them in the process. The full Advisors Handbook is in the Appendices to this report. More reflections on this process are covered later, as we look back on the process and how it impacted what we did as a funder.

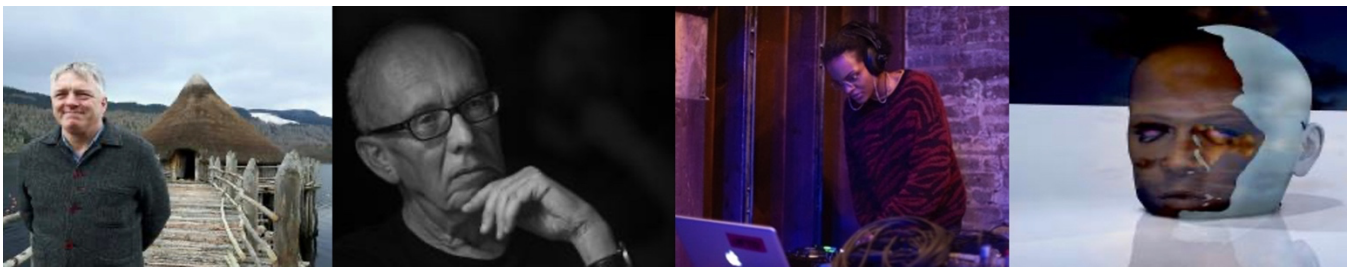
Artist Alumni Advisors



L-R Dan Glass, Dolly Sen, James Brady, Naomi Gabriel, Humaira Ahmed, Robin Doyle.

Change at the top part 3

In keeping with the aim of continuously changing and bringing in new people, so that we extend our reach, Dave Carter stood down as Chair of Trustees, and Keisha Thompson took on this role. In addition, we added another person to our Advisory Panel, Roney Fraser Monroe, brought forward by Michael, an artist, provocateur and producer. We also bolstered the Board. Tony Lidington was considering stepping away within a year, and therefore brought forward Mike Benson, based in the North East and Scotland, the aim was that this would extend our reach ever outward. The Fund Manager put forward Phil Sams, who had been mentoring artists at London College of Fashion, as a recently retired scientist who was making links between science and art and had good connections for artists. The two came on board towards the end of 2018, and in readiness to see the 5th round of funding. Finally, in line with our intention to grow artists and provide them with opportunities to engage in the process, beyond artist alumni, we offered a place on the Board to Naomi Gabriel, who was working to become Artist Advisor and was keen to take a place as a Trustee.



L-R Mike Benson, Phil Sams, Naomi Gabriel, Roney Fraser Munroe.

Taking stock during this year, focusing on getting more people involved in disseminating funding and widening our reach was crucial. Towards the end of 2019, everyone was out scouting for new talent, under represented artists and those who may never have been funded before, or were facing challenges to access. Firing across Trustees, Advisors and Artist Alumni Advisors, we felt that this would enable us to grow our reach and support more artists. A decision on funding amounts to be reduced was reached, so that we could impact more artists. Therefore, our top amounts were now £10,000 rather than £27,000, and each trustee/advisor was able to call on that amount whether they funded one artist or more. Added to this was the allocations to the Alumni Artist funds of £2500 each. We were tipping to the end of the fallow year and in a much better place to ramp up activity.

The number is growing: 2020

We headed into 2020 with optimism, at this stage blissfully unaware of what was to come, only slight murmurings. We had discussed artist support and issues with mental health, and after consultation with those we had funded, and prospective new artists we knew we would fund, we took the decision to offer a 2-day Mental Health First Aid course for 16 artists. This course was to provide Mental Health First Aiders for the alumni, and would also support trained artists to assist in their wider communities and families around mental health. Looking back on this now, it was very appropriate considering the incoming issues of the Pandemic. The training took place in January 2020, with 16 artists attending from all over the country in Manchester, and was delivered by Alison Surtees as a Mental Health First Aid Instructor. The feedback from the course was fantastic, as artist felt capable of knowing what to do in a crisis, where to sign post for support to others and more confident to deal with their own mental health and others. It also showed us that providing access to other training was vital to the wellbeing and development of artists, who would not be able to afford such training and development themselves, but would gain a lot from access to these opportunities.

Extending artist support

Research and input from artists started to shape what the offers could be, including offers from artists themselves, in areas of knowledge exchange on a peer-to-peer basis. This was a turning point for FVF, as we began the journey of really cementing the community, and an approach to support that did not exist in other funding mechanisms. It proved to be a life saver during the Pandemic when people were isolated further and needed access to others. A schedule was subsequently developed, and a programme of online training sessions began as lock downs took hold. Here's the initial list of opportunities, which provided a huge range of skills, knowledge and support opportunities for artists. All those that went ahead were also paid for the delivery., another key area we were absolutely committed too. It provided opportunities for those who had lost their income in addition to supporting connection.

Session/Lead	Description/Content
Radio and TV Station online Pasha du Valentine Artist Alumni	This session will look at setting yourself up to broadcast online. Using Radio or TV and how to monetise your work. 1. Content, from mainstream to niche, from video to audio 2. Platforms, free or paid for. 3. Tips on user friendliness 4. Good editing, is it needed?

	<p>5. Branding</p> <p>6. Sharing and the importance of social media.</p> <p>7. Keeping control of your copyrights</p> <p>8. Live feeds, the pitfalls and benefits.</p>
<p>How to make something out of nothing</p> <p>Ruth Daniel Advisor and ex Trustee</p>	<p>This is an inspirational talk that captures how revolutionary artists and change makers around the world are using art to change their communities. From a female rapper in Zimbabwe to Palestinian painters, to media ninjas running an alternative network across Brazil, these radical subversive creatives are using art to transform the communities and world around them.</p> <p>At the end of the talk, Ruth will talk about tactics to apply these ideas in the UK.</p>
<p>Strategic Activist Planning</p> <p>Dan Glass FVF Artist Alumni and Artist Advisor</p>	<p>Strategic Planning</p> <p>We need to arm ourselves with a glorious toolkit of strategic creative tactics for social change if we need to challenge injustice in the way that it challenges us and the planet's safety at large. We need effective, sharp and mass-empowering actions to create the change we need. Too often programmes for positive social change don't reach their potential as we don't create the necessary time for strategic planning.</p> <p>Specific Skills – This talk / training will share key tools to win including 'What constitutes a win', generating 'Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound (S.M.A.R.T)' programmes for change, building milestones, aims + activities and outcomes, critical escalation techniques, unexpected alliances of strength, capacity building, visioning exercises, deepening inquiry, collaborative organising, action learning and praxis and so much more to create effective actions for social justice where we still have a smile on our faces at the end of the day!</p>
<p>'Crisis = Danger + Opportunity: Integral Critical Recovery, or how we want the world to be after the pandemic'</p> <p>David Haley FVF Advisor and Co-Founder</p>	<p>This session is an opportunity to explore what I consider to be the most pressing issues of our time and to question how we as artists may engage.</p> <p>Post Covid19, how will communities re-engage with the climate emergency, species extinction and the on-going consequences of past, present and future disasters?</p> <p>How may we consider community scale, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) resulting from multiple disaster events? While much research and effort has been focused on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), much of this concerns efforts to alert or prevent reoccurrence or recovery of material infrastructure. There is little research dedicated to recovery from disaster that focuses on the psychosocial impacts of such events on vulnerable communities. Driven by the agendas of aid agencies, insurance and political expediency, the 'disaster industry' reflects contemporary social and economic preoccupations with fiscal values and political expediency.</p>
<p>We are not born digital</p> <p>Maya Chowdhry Artist Alumni</p>	<p>An online workshop exploring how we can use digital tools and methods for creating and disseminating our art both now and in the future. Maya will outline the differences between digital born work, digital adaptation and digital distribution and share tools for digital creation and collaboration. There will be an opportunity to ask specific questions.</p>

<p>Mental Health and Wellbeing</p> <p>Alison Surtees Trust Administrator, Fund Manager and Co-Founder</p>	<p>Structured sessions to look at tips and hints to help with your wellbeing and mental health during lockdown.</p> <p>Also on offer are more informal connection sessions, if you would prefer that state in the next box.</p>
<p>Back to Basic – Finance</p> <p>Cathy Brooks Finance Manager</p>	<p>Managing a spreadsheet – using Excel and running budgets</p> <p>Doing your tax returns</p> <p>Basic finance management</p>
<p>Self-Producing</p> <p>Keisha Thompson Chair of FVF</p>	<p>This session will explore what the role of the producer is and how that applies to your own work. Most artists will find themselves taking on the role of self-producer without knowing or valuing it. During this interactive session, I will draw on my experience as a producer of my own work as well as working for various organisations and venues. The aim will be for you to acknowledge what you need to support you work, how much of that can/should be done by yourself and when you might need to bring in other people.</p>
<p>DJing Skills using Recordbox</p> <p>Mica Coca Artist Alumni</p>	<p>This session will go through tips and hints to DJing using digital tools and specifically Recordbox, which you can download from using this link</p> <p>https://rekordbox.com/en/?gclid=Cj0KCQjw-r71BRDuARIsAB7i_QMyoDnBiNGf-k-yP3iB4APqIN0ykbco8F5YNWTCZMRuRbHCRyPebicaAhaOEALw_wcB</p> <p>Mica will talk you through key elements and advice on use.</p>
<p>Comedy Workshop</p> <p>Saph Mac Artist Alumni</p>	<p>As a recent graduate of the Comedy School in Camden. Sapphire wants to go through with the class the fundamentals she learnt on how to write stand up. How to write that makes people laugh. She'll share the tips and tricks that she learnt on this 7week course on what she's picked up since.</p>
<p>How to Make Money While You Sleep</p> <p>David Parrish</p>	<p>The art of generating cash from creativity or Profiting from Intellectual Property or Intellectual Property: Dangers and Opportunities</p> <p>DESCRIPTION</p> <p>A short interactive webinar about intellectual property for creative, cultural and digital entrepreneurs with David Parrish.</p> <p>The webinar will cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An overview of Copyright, Design Right, Trademarks and Patents • Some practical and inexpensive ways to protect your work • How to make money while you sleep by licensing intellectual property.
<p>Editing with Final Cut Pro</p> <p>Matthew Norman</p>	<p>A masterclass in using edit package FCP, and effects for use with Super 8mm</p> <p>If you are wanting to do this class, I will be sending around a list of questions to get an insight to your current level so it can be tailored.</p>

Widening the pool, whilst keeping everyone afloat

During the back end of 2019, all advisors, Trustees and Artist Alumni had begun the process of selecting artists they wanted to work with, and in February 2020, we began the funding and support. We acknowledged that there would be difficulty for many with Covid, and moving deadlines. We therefore took the decision to contract as and when people were ready, rather than our usual method of contracting everyone at once. This meant we had time to spend with artists doing an induction.

We now had artists being supported from years 1 – 3 and new artists from this round, as well as the upcoming Artist Alumni. Administratively and capacity wise, this increased the work of the Fund Manager/Trust Administrator who was the sole point of contact and connector. The Finance Manager's work increased in contracting and payments. We were mindful of cost of giving away funds, knowing how much mainstream funders pay for the administration of the process, often using most of the finances to support staffing. We wanted to try not to get to a point where it was costing us more to give away money than the amount we actually gave. Part of the success with this was the investments we had made in medium and low risk ethical shares, which had returned for us investment that was effectively covering the cost of the administration at this time. Although markets overall were shifting, it was still generating enough, even with draw down for funding at this stage. We calculated that contribution of funding artists and the advisory support meant that the best value for the investment was going directly to the artists.

There was a concerted effort to look to engaging the artists themselves in selection process. The newly formed WhatsApp group helped many of our funded artists stay in touch, seek support or advice, and give feedback on ideas for future funded programmes. We still felt that there was not enough being done around sustainability, and this became a focus for some activity in round 5.

Artists Funded in Round 5 – main programme

Isa Fremeaux and John Jordan

After Art was a programme of sustainable art practice for artists in FVF delivered remotely online via Zoom, helping artists to expand their practice but being sustainable and focusing how they can make change in their local environment. This was very much based on the concept of ZAD (Zone to protect) which both Isa and JJ were heavily involved in establishing and where they were based.



Ama Josephine Budge

The Apocalypse Reading Room, is an online space, an on-site library curated by Ama Josephine Budge: a world of talking stories in the face of environmental social collapse, a gathering of all books we may need to change the end of the world.



Chris Chalkley

The People's Republic of Stokes Croft is an artist collective in Bristol, and a touchstone for those needing space and access. The funding helped them to get into a position to be able to show the work they were doing and secure a larger pot of funding to continue in their space and support other artists to thrive.

Humaira Ahmed and Daisy Barratt Nash

The funds helped the two poet and spoken word artists to continue the work they were doing in communities of South London, with young people, around activism and finding their voice through online session, and more importantly keeping people connected during the ensuing pandemic, which affected those who were already marginalised even more.

Kiva Corrigan

Kuumba Collective is a collective of young black artists focused around music, who need support to formalise their work and set themselves up ready to support their community. Based from NIAMOS centre, they had a space but not much else, and lacked the confidence and experience to apply for mainstream funding. This provided the step up to their agency and the tools to continue to thrive.



Sean Burn

Creatively known under the name of Gobscore, this project was to enable Sean to realise their artistic potential with support as a disabled LGBTQI+ artist with additional access needs. This has since enabled the additional support of others and a successful application to DYCP with ACE England.

Shabnam Shabazi

A visual arts piece built around the ongoing trauma and issues of treatment of people of colour in custody, and deaths. The project was 2-fold in making a short that reflected the issues, and followed by round tables for discussion on the subject. As a highly political and topical area of debate especially during the pandemic and rise of the Black Lives Matter movement, sensitivities were required and the production and subsequent screening were done online.

Simon Poulter

Parallel State is a concept of a parallel space of existence for artists and communities built on mutual respect. The funding supported commissions of work to keep artist, communities and wider connected, giving online space for performance, discussion and debate through artistic provocation to assess the times and new ways of working.



Ayanda N'Dlovu

Cryptamnesia was a dance performance piece led by Yandass, that needed access to filmmaking to showcase the work onto virtual platforms and raise the profile of the artists involved. This enabled Yandass to bring the right team together to realise the piece, record and edit it for wider distribution encouraging new audiences to dance and expression.

Dan Glass

As a receiver of a second pot of funding, this programme was about extending Dan's activism work with the LGBTQ community, and bringing awareness to the challenges still faced, through a programme of events, provocations and public shows. This was a follow on from the work of previous rounds, and a lean towards the Section 28 Agenda and impacts heading into a seminal year for the removal of the Act.

David Tovey

You fucked up my life was a project exploring David's very personal journey from addict to artist and his relationship to his past, PTSD and Homelessness. This was the first funding he had ever applied for, having successfully put on the Homelessness festival and other projects with nothing. A performance ice set against video that connected him to trauma from his time as a serving army member, and impact on his life after being forced to leave on the grounds of his sexuality.

Grow Camden

Another artist space collective and one that was on the precipice of closure needed support and funding to help them apply for larger funds to maintain their existence. The funding and development helped them to go on to secure the money they needed to remain open at critically challenging times.

Mahboobeh Rajabi

Building on the development funding and support, Mahboobeh set about realising the potential of the Artist Hub to connect artists from refugee, immigrant backgrounds to bring about true co-creation. The funding supported access to space and facilities to trial programmes of action an intervention.



Pasha Du Valentine

Dominarstist consisted of a range of artistic interventions looking at the objectification of women based on the immersive experience of the artist in the previous 3 years as a dominatrix, and the views of those she encountered. The work compiled online, written, film and sculpture amongst other areas.

Artist Alumni Funded

Because now we are really getting into numbers, the best place to view the artists is online on our website [here](#).

Dan Glass awarded small pots of funding to:

Ray Malone looking at the impact of single parenting and the income trap through art and online projects, **Sapphire McIntosh** developing her work towards street activism, **Alex Janaszewski** developing her artistic practice, **Levi Hinds**, **Sam Hampson**

Dolly Sen supported two artists:

Lotte L.S. and **Jet Moon** (accessibility and disabled rights for specific sectors of the sex worker community)

Humaira Ahmed funded three artists:

Daisy Barratt Nash to work with elderly in care facilities affected by Covid using spoken word, **Esi** (Miss Yanky) to establish and work further on the Mental health and spoken word project exploring identity and heritage and managing her care responsibilities as a single mother (Ghanaian) and **Serena Hussain**, to explore her work further and gain confidence in the spoken word arena whilst managing her responsibilities of a job and kids.

James Brady supported one artist through the project Dongas Sketchbook publishing the work of the artist eco-activist **Jai Redman**

Naomi Gabriel funded two artists:

Ian Anantharajah to deliver his Beats and Eats project, recognising the lack of engagement with communities of Croyden and the low incomes forcing people into poverty, so engaging through music and food. **Kimberley Ann** to develop their creative process.

Robin Doyle funded two artists:

Bee Watson mixed race identity and the difference in rural areas of this dual heritage and **Stewart Crewes** around future place setting and community agenda setting neighbourhood plan.

Change at the top part 4

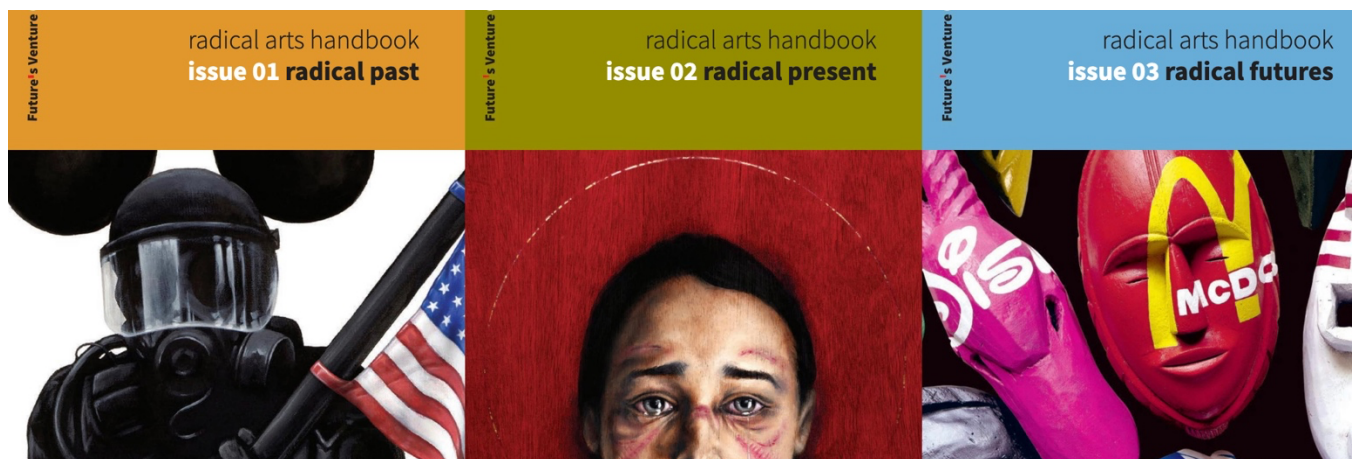
Tony Lidington took up on his commitment to step back after 12 months to focus more on family and work. In his wake Rebecca Hillman also stood back, with work commitments overtaking capacity to commit time. And finally, Roney also stood down as advisor to work on his own projects, although stayed committed to completing the Tryptic of Handbooks. In the final year of funding, areas of the work proposed by Tony and Roney were taken up, such as smaller amounts, and wider ranges of people not yet funded.

During this funding round, we saw the worst of Covid 19 and the impact it had on those we were supporting, it was such an immensely positive time for the artists and the valuable work they were all doing to stay connected, from their projects transferring to online, to using opportunities provided via FVF for personal development and connection. Complete flexibility was given in terms of how the funding could be spent or managed, and the time it took to deliver and complete work. It was a massive undertaking, and we still had our commitment to review the work and activities and provide a space to come together in celebration. Zoom it seemed was the platform of choice for all of us, and became our platform for our first fully online gathering towards the end of 2020.

Radical handbooks

Whilst this was underway, our Advisor Roney Fraser Monroe, was looking at how we reflect on practice and share work in more meaningful ways than just digital, and that sometimes we need to have physical artefacts that tell the story of the journey of the fund. With this in mind, we commissioned Roney, Michael and David from the Advisory Panel with the support of James Brady to produce and publish a series of small handbooks, with three clear themes, Future's Past, Future's Present and Beyond Future. The three publications would be done over the ensuing 18 months, and would commission work from our existing artists, reflections from Advisors, Fund Managers and the wider artistic community. Sharing provocations, insights and work they were involved in. This would become part of the legacy of the fund and be a piece of artwork in its' own right that reflects on the process of the fund.

Trilogy



Online Gathering



In an attempt to build connection and combat isolation that a lot were feeling, we developed and delivered an online event over 3 hours, with talks, performance and breakout sessions. There was so much we still had to know about Zoom, and how to support people at arm's length. The programme of development and mental health work continued as ongoing methods of engaging but the major event really tested our capacity, and what we could do online effectively. Despite the challenges, we managed to comfortably host 50 individuals over this period, and keep them engaged actively through breakouts – helping us shape the final round of funding and what was missing that we had but yet tried, to conversations with other funders who joined this process (Film and TV Charity, ACE {account managers} Local Authority Arts and Culture teams, Art Quest, Jerwood Arts)

It was no coincidence to host this on November the 5th, as we were all still experiencing issues with what was happening externally, not least because earlier that year we had faced actual Brexit, we were still in the grip of the Pandemic and facing mounting challenges financially especially for those whose work had stopped or reduced as a result. This was a chance in some ways to question some funders, to seek support and to share some joy in the performances and find connection. The feedback from the event was very positive, despite a few technical hitches. We brought captioners to support access, encourage audio description and helped artists to connect with each other. As 2020 progressed we realised that for many this was the only method of connection they could experience, through rural isolation, disability, vulnerability and mental health challenges as a result of Covid 19. A vital part of our support in this year was not just financial but in providing safe space for artists to share and get support.

Final round lockdown: 2021

Feedback we had had from our first physical event and our second online event, showed us gaps in provision that we were somewhat overlooking. In that we should look to do smaller pots of ease of access, and fund artists to survive. Also, that we should really focus on those most affected during this time. Whilst our fund pot was much smaller in this final year, as we divested from our investments towards our closure, we realised we had the potential to make substantial impact at a smaller level but for a greater number of people. In our final round of funding, we supported 40 artists with £500 sums, that could either pay rent, buy food or simply allow them to exist. We spent a long time speaking with our funded artists, reaching out to new networks, using our Artist Alumni, Advisors and Trustees and the wider artistic community for the main fund pot. We also set aside funds for the Artist Alumni to consider for funding, including if they wanted to nominate themselves for support. We had 10 pots of £500 for this purpose, we knew a lot of artists we already supported were struggling. Finally, we discussed

and set aside funding for legacy projects, things that we knew would have impact beyond our doors closing in March 2022.

For our final round, we opened up further avenues of application to include WhatsApp voice Notes, Video Blogs on WhatsApp, video content and short written pitches. There was not a requirement to budget, or propose a project idea, but just to say how the funding would help. We received 67 applications of which we funded 40, so almost a third of applicants were supported. 10 of our alumni benefited from a further pot of funding and three legacy projects were identified and supported:

- Equipment for Michael Barnes-Wynters, as a former Trustee and Advisor he was returning full time to freelance practice and needed support to access equipment, and we also knew he would continue to mentor many of the artists we supported.
- 0161 Community to support them purchasing a container for future project activities in communities of need, including a food bank which they set up in support of Key Workers and local communities.
- In Place of War – 100 Agents of Change Seed Funding, for young artists/activists to be able to set up their own projects in their own communities in order to make change. The small pot funded supported the next generation of changemakers.

Artists funded round 6

This is really a list, so many to add, but we covered as broad a range as possible to help those who wanted to complete work but had no access to funds, who needed funds to just get by and those who wanted to do a lockdown project.

New Artists		Artist Alumni
Abdus Inim	Laura Griffiths	Dan Glass
Anne Bean	Marianne Stier	Hafsah Aneela Bashire
Carrie Williams	Martin Lewsley	Humaira Ahmed
CraigClarke	Matt Broomfield	Kiva Corrigan
Craig Cooper	Maureen Ward	Mahboobeh Rajabi
Danielle Aspinwall	Maxima	Matt Stephenson
Dawn Woolley	Michelle Tylicki	Pasha Du Valentine
Elizabeth Six	Monika Dutta	Ria Hartley
Elspeth Moore	Patch De Salis	Robin Doyle
Estabraka	Richard Downes	Sapphire McIntoch
Eva Solomon	Little Trumpeter	
Felicity Hammond	Ruby Tingle	
Serena Hussain	Sarah Pennington	
Frankie Beckley	Serena Corrigan	
Glynis Neslen	Shaniqua Benjamin	
Holly Nolan	Stella Grundy	
Isaac Acheampong	Sumit Sarkar	

Jason Oliver Jayde Ayino Jill Howitt Kris Canavan Laima Leyton	Tracey Moberley Yvonne Shelton Leo Hermitt Niall Walker	
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Final online event – Beyond Future

Again, to cement this work and encourage connection with a larger alumnus than ever, we hosted a final online event, both to launch the final publication and to enable sharing and connection amongst the ever-growing alumni and family of artists that we had now grown. This event took place online in March 2021. As our previous event, it served as a combination of evaluation of what had been done, a chance to connect with other artists and performances and provocations for discussion and collaboration. This time there were fewer funders and arts teams in the room, as many were fighting their own battles with Covid still raging and the need for support ever greater.

However, it proved as successful in terms of attendance and gave a platform for newly funded artists to connect and share. We also had representation from Arts Council Malta looking at how we ring artists together and share practice through online content.

Staying in touch in the good times

Because of the number of artists funded in the final round, the Fund Manager, Advisors and Trustees took to roadshows to meet with people in person and provide a face to face for those who wanted to connect further and meet in person. This meant we had meet ups of artist clusters in various parts of the country, and again was another point at which artists could build their networks and meet others. We did meet ups in Blackpool, Manchester, Leeds, Hull, London and Newcastle and encouraged artists to arrange meet ups through the WhatsApp group wherever they could outside of these times.



The final gathering – going out with a bang

To close out the funding, and bring things to an end, we always knew we would do a final in person event. We had to wait until early 2022 to do this. To keep costs down, and to try and make this as accessible as possible for as many people as possible, we chose Hull. Michael Barnes Wynters at this time was now running and managing a meanwhile artist space, and it was the perfect location to host a 2-day event and evening party and bring people together.

On the 26th February 2022 we arranged for 50 participants to engage with this final event. That was our artists, the wider arts community in Hull, supporters, Trustees, Advisors, alumni. People

travelled from across the UK and did open mic performance, shared experience and work in progress, visited other artists spaces in the city, and connected, collaborated and gave feedback on their experience. The evening was given over to celebration, dancing performance and food. So rarely are there real opportunities to share in this way, and celebrate many not just a few. The weekend closed with a walking tour of Hull on the second day, visiting the Boat Shed of Paul Burwell, the subject of one of the funded projects, and a chance to reflect for attendees. A full event evaluation is in the Appendices.

As a close to activities this was fairly special, staying true to the thread of Welfare State and vision of celebration, community and art for all.

3. REFLECTIONS

Alison Surtees - Co-Founder/Fund Manager

It is often hard to reflect on process when you are in the thick of it. Adapting as we did each year to reflect the needs, and try to close gaps in access, I think for me the absolute pleasure was having the freedom to do just that. To see something that needed to happen and make it so. Recognising from my own experiences of accessing funding, how utterly exhausting it is as an individual, neuro diverse person, and how on so many levels, whilst the talk in public is of equity and fairness, equality, diversity and inclusion, mainstream funding still falls massively short of achieving this. Hence the reason we are still having this discussion today after years of what has been EDI development. The use of the term 'public money' has lost all meaning, as it almost separates the fact the artists themselves trying to secure funding are the public. In fact, many are the ones buying lottery tickets each week, along with millions of people from disadvantaged backgrounds, to get themselves out of the rubbish lives of no money. Yet they have the least say in where it is spent, or voice at the table where decisions are made. Equally, paying taxes is still not a direct link to a say in how the money is spent.

We have seen an increase in larger institutions getting millions in support with the aim of 'trickle down' effect for individual artists. Well, it doesn't work in our economy, so why should it work in the arts? Are we serious about change? Are we merely paying lip service? We actively went against the continuous burden of proof, to take risks, to trust and inspire. We didn't collect EDI data, because that does not change anything in terms of greater diversity, just a tick box as having done the job. If you want to see diversity, you have to actively pursue it. Make that part of the remit, not just a numbers game, but a way of holding ourselves to account, across all protected characteristics and more, social class. The proof is in the artists we funded, the challenges we set ourselves and the people we brought along to help. It is still not perfect. I am not sitting here saying we were wonderful, there are many more things that could have been done, with capacity. However, with a small amount of capital in comparison the many funders, we did achieve a great deal, we built a community, that a year after closing still stays connected. Two years since we last funded artists.

What can be learned for other funders?

- If you cannot fund artists directly, with small amounts on a regular basis because you are too large, how can you devolve grant giving to smaller entities such as ours that can do exactly that and increase parity in access to funds.

- Who have you got at the table where the decisions count? Does it reflect what you want to see in terms of change, if not then change it.
- Stop one size fits all, offering a bid writer or support worker is not being supportive, it is being ableist. Get off your arse and try something else.
- The arts infrastructure exists because of artists, not institutions. Feed artist, they will always make art, they will always support their communities and they will always find unusual places to do it. We cannot talk about widening participation and audiences if we are NOT doing this.
- We know other funders are out there on a similar journey, how can they better come together to share and then have agency and impact to make change at policy level to help larger funders.
- Let's stop being dishonest and disingenuous about our motives and motivation. We are either here to change or we need to move over to help those come through who do want the change.
- There is huge value in bringing artists together and building community. It supports growth, collaboration and new artwork. More opportunities for this physical networking and sharing of practice is required, regionally. How can we foster better connection and mutual support?

We were extremely privileged to have had this funding as a gift and legacy of Welfare State International. The principles of John Fox and Sue Gill and all those who travelled this journey remains, art is for all, take it to where it should be, stop expecting people to come to you, get real about engagement, not audiences that is passive.

Some things personally, I felt at times that artists thought I was personally responsible for deciding who was funded. I dealt with everyone personally. That is a difficult position to be in, but being uncomfortable is where we need to be, so that learning for me was valuable. I was at the frontline in that respect. I also acknowledge my privileged position in being able to steer thinking of the Trust and Fund, to guide direction and open up to build the community. I am grateful for that, as it did allow me to really engage in ways funders could work differently.

For a very small team looking back at all we achieved I am amazed, it was a lot, we remained adaptable, open to change. There are criticisms of the way we funded, especially in our first round. We did learn. The following reflections are from our Trustees and Advisors, and we finish with thoughts from Artists who cared to share with us. Soe of these you can listen to on our website [here](#).

I also feel that we tried to evaluate what we had done in various stages of the work. We tried to being in PhD candidates, that never quite came to fruition. We engaged an external evaluator, but they had to step bac due to family commitments, and we engaged an artist practitioner to do some per-to peer evaluation, but again they were too busy to follow this through. In the end, as we had asked of our artists, all we really wanted were their reflections

on their process. How things helped or not. I did do a final questionnaire, outside of the video evaluation interviews, and those who wanted to write did respond, generally all the older artists! But some of that feedback is later here. To tis end, we felt that reflecting on process was of greater value. There is literally 9 years of work, many appendices to read through, and at the core, really what is important is what we learned and can share with others.

Keisha Thompson – Chair of Trustees

FVF. I used to think the second F stood for “fund”. Then I thought it stood for “foundation”. But really it stands for “family”. When I was first approached to join FVF, I was exhilarated and terrified in equal measure. I was twenty-five years old and had a very loose understanding of what it meant to be a trustee. I was pretty familiar with funding bodies as an artist who was lucky to be on receiving end of a fair amount. When I heard about the legacy of Lanternhouse, I was devastated (but not surprised) to hear what happened regarding its funding. The story behind FVF was so inspiring, I knew that I wanted to be a part of it. I have perpetual gratitude for Barney who reached out to see if I would be interested in being on the board.

Being a part of this family has been an absolute dream. The connections that I have made have been invaluable. The interrogation of what is means to be “radical”. What is means to be a funder. And eventually what is means to be a Chair. My experience with this magical group of humans - fellow trustees, artist advisors and funded artists - has informed my practice, my art and my life. I feel like I'm being really broad with my observation but it is because there is so much to say and I don't want to miss anything out. I know that Alison has done a brilliant job of getting into the detail which means I have the gift of being purely sentimental. I know that we've made something brilliant. And I'm proud that we've been able to document it. Officially, according to the accounts, FVF is over. The fountain has run dry and we always knew that it would. But that is only true if you adhere to the literal representation of the second F. We're not going to do that. We're a family of rebels. The proverbial blood is thicker than any financial water.

Phil Sams - Trustee

Exactly half way through FVF's planned seven year I was 'found' in much the same way that the FVF artists are 'found'. Lucky me, it's been a truly inspiring 3.5 years from my perspective.

Here are some things I love about the Foundation.

First, that it's significantly about supporting artists who are unlikely to get a look in with more formal funders but who, in my view, we 'lose' at our peril. Surely society needs unexpected voices and provocation to cut through the noise of living and there's nothing better than 'art' in its broadest sense at doing that. This support is of course about some (often very little) cash, but equally about creating a self-supporting community, sharing woes and dreams, sometimes just helping to build the confidence and self-belief that recognition provides. The Foundation seems to recognise that the artist is more important than any specific funded art.

The process through which most of the artists are found is personal contact and exploration head-hunting. This is right for me, seems very appropriate for a small fund which has perhaps the luxury of writing its own rules, and is seeking out inspiring artist-people.

Because of this artist-people centred culture I've met some fantastic folk trustee/advisors, artists, and that rock of the culture, the fund manager/co-founder with her finance partner.

The culture of people and community really helped when the shock of the pandemic hit, too often trashing livelihoods and isolating people, for example through support training that emphasised how the community was there to help. The culture also illuminated the final small-grant round, basically the Board's swan-song project, and I loved this rush to use every last penny of funds to support artists and build a community for the future 'beyond FVF'.

What didn't always work, might I have done better? The idea of 'radical art' is at the heart of the FVF mission, but I continue to wonder what 'radical' means or should mean. Should we always look to be out of our comfort-zone when perhaps it's too easy just to follow obvious political activism, shared 'tastes and prejudices' (ie in general 'hate the Tories'). I probably should have challenged this more especially for the final small-grant project.

Whatever, it's been a great journey. It's been an honour, thanks FVF for pulling me in. I have learnt a lot, far more than was able to contribute. Friends, colleagues, inspirational peep have come my way because of FVF. And that question ...what is radical? ... will never be quiet, will now bug me forever, as it surely should.

Ruth Daniel – Trustee/Advisor

I have been someone who has spent my life trying to navigate the funding systems in the UK and beyond. I was very fortunate to receive a large grant from Arts Council when I was very young, following a rejected grant from Arts Council, a funding advisor helped me shape an application which would later award me £80k. I was 22 years old. Over the years things changed with the Arts Council and became competitive and inaccessible for many people. Onerous long cryptic forms, inaccessible funding language, no one-on-one support, made the process inaccessible for many. Also, the funding of radical arts activity seemed unlikely to be awarded. Many incredible ideas were unable to manifest due to the nature of the process. This is why I was incredibly excited when Alison approached me and asked whether I wanted to be involved in a fund that challenged the status quo and sought to fund the 'unfundable', the radical and the arts happening on the margins. Funding real artists, rather than institutions. Small grants, that were easy to apply for. Widening reach to those that didn't even know funding was possible.

I was part of the original board and have been part of the entire duration of the fund, seeing it from an embryonic form to what it became seven years later. The original 250 words on a postcard, to watching pitches and the development of networks of networks - building a community of racial artists supporting each other and celebrating alternative and risk-taking work. It's been a joy to be part of. I am happy to see some really important people being funded - those that had never received funding before and what that meant as a catalyst to their careers, impact and journey. Funding homeless, black and global majority artists, LGBTQI+, young, old and everything in-between artists make important work.

I felt the impact, as always, lay in the network of artists and the opportunity to showcase, witness and celebrate the work people were creating and be a support system, acknowledging things like mental health, times of crisis and being flexible in our approach. I am proud to have championed diversity at the trustee level from the start. I was the only

woman on the board and Barney, the only BAME person. I wanted to see more working class, young, BAME, women represented. We brought in Keisha as our Chair, which was a really profound moment - a young woman of colour leading the entire process with professionalism and creative wisdom. She really made it what it aspired to be. Bringing those we had funded onto the Board - Naomi - a young gay woman of colour, was also a milestone for me.

I also loved being challenged by trustees coming from much different backgrounds to me in terms of what art is and what it means to them. At times I was challenged, sometimes frustrated. I remember supporting a refugee artist for funding and they didn't receive it, but we were able to help them some small development support, which in turn has really helped them grow. I loved that it wasn't a case of, you didn't receive the funding, so that's it. It was a process of - 'how can we support them to get them to where they want to be'.

I saw this fund as a catalyst and stepping stone for those who just thought that funding couldn't be for them. Not only did it make amazing artistic creativity possible, but was part of the development of remarkable people, who would have otherwise been forgotten by the funding systems in the UK. The wrap around support system that Alison put in place - from the WhatsApp group to the celebration and sharing events to the mentoring sessions and workshops - it wasn't just about funding. Every artist was invested in at many levels and a bespoke approach was taken.

Arts Council and other UK funders have a very commercial approach to funding what is at its core, creative and artistic work. Most of that funding goes to institutions and those who are from certain backgrounds. I loved seeing the diversity in what we funded - in terms of artistic form and the humans we believed in. Making the process relatively straightforward and the grants small, we were able to help artists get a 'foot on the ladder', many have gone on to receive other grants and I feel this gave them an inherent confidence to push themselves and their work forward.

I have learnt so much being part of the process and am so thankful to Alison for asking me to participate. I feel we became a family of brilliant humans who understand that art is crucial to making change in the world. My favourite awardees were David Tovey, a former homeless artist, who had never received funding before and was able to create a mixed media show about his journey through homelessness; Dan Glass with the LGBTQI+ Voices of the Revolution project; Joe Chelebik from 0161 - an organisation in Manchester working to support working class communities and those living in hardship with arts opportunities and much more and Naomi Gabriel and the spoken word night and artistic development in Croydon. But there was so much more.

I was also thrilled at the opportunity to delve into other Board members networks and see the other art that is being made that I don't get to connect to on a daily basis. For me, it's never been about supporting artistic projects or work, but about supporting remarkable and determined humans. I think this fund achieved that.

If I was to do it again, there are not many things I would do differently. However, I think making those that we seek to serve, our beneficiaries, part of the process at a decision-making level was instrumental to making it meaningful. Keisha, our Chair, has now gone on to be Creative Director at Contact, a major arts space in Manchester, which makes me beam with joy. It

wasn't just about funding the unfundable, but about believing in remarkable people and funding and supporting them.

Being part of this process feels like an incredibly special opportunity that Alison gave me, that I will cherish. I learnt a lot and will take that forward in my own work as CEO of In Place of War. I decided to put our beneficiaries on our Board, following seeing the impact of that in the RIAF.

To this day, I see so many people struggle to get funding to make their art possible, because they are young, have no track record, don't speak the funding language, are from marginalised backgrounds. This fund challenged that in its core.

Thank you for an amazing seven years. It's been an absolute honour to be part of it. Thank you to Alison for being amazing, our Chair Keisha, all of the trustees, Cathy and the artists. What a journey, I feel very sad that it's come to its conclusion. I wish we could do it all again!

David Haley – Co-Founder/ Trustee/ Advisor

THE END

Finally, to fund artists themselves and trust them to make the art; that for me was a truly radical gesture, an act of deep generosity from both the giver and the receiver. At the time of the COVID-19 pandemic, some funders like Esmée Fairbairn, recognised the need of artists to simply survive and gave funds to their existing clients. Future's Venture Foundation (FVF) started by funding those of our Alumni who were in need and then asked the Alumni to identify other artists in need, thereby extending the network of personal contacts. No forms were required. No reports. And no expectations. Amazingly, of their own free will, those who were funded this way, sent accounts of how this funding had enabled them to continue their practices and live. The unsolicited wealth of projects was phenomenal and it reached many more artists who are 'wired differently', think differently and identify differently. In other words, artists who are otherwise excluded from any usual form of funding application.

This initiative alone, revealed the inequalities embedded in the application processes of most funding systems. Reports and policies for 'Equality, Diversity and Inclusion' represent absurd avoidance of these issues, as the Treasury (ACE) or elite trustees renege on their responsibilities, afraid of being accountable for their actions. People make art and need to be supported by other people, not forms and algorithms. And this takes us back to the beginning of FVF.

FVF fundamentally challenged the anonymous management structures of abstract, quantitative efficacy and the denial of responsibility, now prevalent in most major arts funding institutions. Getting it wrong is learning, not to be blamed, but the litigation culture of our society distances engagement and accountability from those they claim to serve. As art and creativity are seen as unmanageable, challenges to the political status quo, the present Government has axed most arts activities from the National Curriculum, UK Research Councils and courses from Higher Education. This follows the reactionary trends of institutional neo-colonialism, asserting control and retaining power for the elite, maintained through the prevailing bureaucratic management systems of our age.

HISTORY

In an interview for the Ashden Directory, in 2006, I learned from John Fox that he ended Welfare State International (WSI) mainly because Arts Council England's (ACE) bureaucracy diverted attention from making art. He, also mentioned that after 38 years of radical artmaking, WSI had had its day and it was time to move on. WSI's building, assets and ACE Revenue funding were passed over to Lanternhouse International that initially engaged in large-scale civic spectaculars and then focused on local community arts in Ulverston, Cumbria.

THINKING THE UNTHINKABLE

As ACE cut the Revenue Funding of Lanternhouse International in 2012, by 2014 Denis Mc Geary (Chair) and I were the last trustees. We had spent two years developing erroneous diverse business plans at the behest of ACE and were forced to make all the staff redundant as there were not funds for programming. The last Artistic Director, Andrea Hawkins, had been financially prudent and there were reserves, but these were hemorrhaging at £39,000 a year, just to maintain the Lanternhouse building and warehouse. With no viable support from anywhere, Denis and I agreed to sell all the company assets and either start a new company or create a trust fund. Either way, making art was paramount.

The sale of the building, 'Lanternhouse' met with minor protests from ACE and the Mayor of Ulverston, and some old WSI associates expressed their displeasure, but still no support was forthcoming. Denis and I offered the proceeds to a group of local artists who had worked on Lanternhouse projects and the staff to start a new company but neither wanted the responsibility. The trust fund became the final option. Denis and I engaged Alison Surtees to help create the new charity and invite trustees, and Richard Povall to ethically invest the money. At the first trustees meeting, the Manifesto that I had previously drafted was amended and adopted for the new company's guiding principles.

THE RADICAL INDEPENDENT ARTS FUND (RIAF)

Originally conceived as the Independent Radical Arts (IRA) fund, the words were rearranged to avoid confusion. However, it is worth considering the ideas and intentions behind the words.

INDEPENDENT

In February 2015, the film Director Mike Leigh, received a BAFTA Fellowship Award. The central point of his acceptance speech was the importance of independence, "... free from all censorship or interference by governments, backers, producers, script editors, or committees of any kind."

Quite simply, he could not have made the film, had he been tied to a studio or beholden to industry sponsorship. RIAF, therefore, represented opportunities for artists to make work that was not constrained or controlled by the dominant management culture or political persuasion. This was further enabled by FVF's desire to support work that would otherwise not normally be funded by established arts funders. Although being independent is a vulnerable place to be in many ways, it allowed us to own our vulnerability, rather than succumb to the double-bind of establishment accountability. Being independent permitted us to be radical.

RADICAL

In the Arts there are many ideas associated with what 'radical' might mean. For this purpose, it does not refer to the Art World 'avantgarde'. It does refer to art that challenges the societal status quo - the 'otherwise' unacceptable. It includes art that reconnects fundamental culture (not 'Culture') to creatively address diverse ways of perceiving and cognitively engaging with the world. Politically, it is regarded by the dominant culture as dangerous and therefore to be oppressed. However, given the nexus of climate, species and cultural crises we all face, such art seems to one of the few means of ecologically (social-environmental) savvy resilience available to us.

ART

There was no specific artform bias within FVF, per se, other than most of those associated with FVF practiced or were involved with more than one. This meant that we could focus on content, issues and approaches to contemporary society and cultures that may be expressed from a wide spectrum of practices.

The notion of funding, itself, was an issue of both independence and radical in nature - a creative process, in its own right. After all, how could an organisation that funds the arts not adopt creative means to deploy its work? We, therefore, aimed to work independently from the establishment, to promote radical arts practices, through alternative methods of funding. The art emerging as practical, dynamic, creative processes towards social transformation, not fetishised high-end commodities, quantifiable outputs, verifiable outcomes nor evidenced impacts.

Did the art meet high standards of excellence? Although these terms were largely rejected as being incomprehensible to the realities of art making, most of the FVF associates had gained traditional training and much practical experience. Highly valued, the younger members brought their own life experiences, worldviews and aesthetics to the organization and its collective understanding of good art. Given the acclaim and further support from other arts bodies for many of the artists, following FVF recognition, it may be assumed that our standards were widely accepted. Our art, therefore, was in our creative ability to influence others. However, such advances are often met with equal resistance from the establishment – such is the History of Art.

CO-LEARNING

What did I learn? I tried to listen more. I tried not to invoke the negotiating societal survival tactics of an educated, white, heterosexual male. And I tried to learn with my fellow FVF trustees, mentor/advisors and artists how to work in uncharted territory - there were few, if any, models to learn from. But we had a passion to be compassionate to those with whom we engaged. Alison achieved empathy in the pastoral care she initiated and went on to develop through her Mental Health First Aid sessions.

Yes, there were times of frustration and disagreement with each other and the processes we developed, but for the most part these were openly expressed and resolved. Above all, we did not succumb to the normalising, default options of existing systems.

Were we in anyway prejudiced? Yes, we deliberately favored artists and arts practices that we considered to be underrepresented, socially marginalised, politically and culturally challenging.

RHIZOMATIC NETWORK

In his book, *Lila: an inquiry into morals*, Robert Pirsig wrote: 'The most moral act of all is the creation of space for life to move onwards.' Hopefully FVF created such a space. A space for a few artists to be believed in; a space for people at funding institutions to question their power relations; maybe a space that is the condition for revolution to regenerate culture; and a space for us to creatively survive the transformative challenges of this world becoming, with diverse futures.

Art is dangerous, because it permits people to be creative, think and act differently, and challenge the status quo. This is why the Art World, art education and art funding appropriate, undermine and suppress arts practices and people wanting to live their lives as artists.

Despite, initiatives to be 'equal, diverse and inclusive' ACE and other major funders fail to see two important issues (there are more). The first is that this well-meaning command comes from above, as a diktat to those below to act in a particular way in future. It does not recognise the endemic colonial structures and the existence of ubiquitous racist practices. Most current management and HR systems perpetuate deeply colonial doctrines of deterministic efficacy and elitism. Diversity, then becomes the means to retain power over 'others', by including them in behaving as the dominant culture wishes.

The second issue is colonialism that goes beyond the obvious exploitation, extraction and appropriation of materials, resources and people. It has, since the Age of Enlightenment, changed the way we think. Through political, economic, social, environmental and above all, educational systems, colonialism has insisted on the reductionist, atomistic scientific method as the right way to gain knowledge and truth. Each of these points undermine the right for people to determine their own cultural values. Industrialized, urban society (Metropolis) demands dependency on the state to provide food, water, services, housing, health, education and jobs - all of which are capitalised or being privatised. In other words, the state giveth and the state taketh away for the benefit of those in power. In essence we are educated to believe that there is no alternative to the norm of a free market economy as the basis for democracy, freedom and making art.

If nothing else, FVF challenged the status quo power balance between funders and artists, 'Culture' as culture and made the ethics of funding an issue of concern. Much of this way of thinking is well documented, already, by people like Isabel Fremeaux, Jay Jordan, Paulo Frier, Augusto Boal, Edouard Glissant, Edward Said, Albert Memmi, Darren McGarvey and Vanessa Andreotti, but it is worth stating this again and again and again, as art. FVF's legacy may be the collective memories, conversations and actions of all those who were associated with this seven-year exploration to think differently and to trust each other. It proved that it is possible to support artists' futures in their ventures, beyond this neoliberal, neocolonial society, by creating a 'Brave Space'.

The **values** that emerged from the Future's Venture experience:

- Creating the space for artists to make art as process; not fetishized, value-added, high-end, commodity.
- Freedom to make mistakes without blame, as a means of learning. Being independent from institutional constraints, systems of control and manipulation.
- Capacity to learn – particularly learning that climate and species crises are a cultural crisis, fuelled by misogynistic, neoliberal neo-colonialism that maintains and controls inequality – “white man's science”.
- Enabled to challenge and be challenged – a 'Brave Space', beyond empathy, trust and comfort; towards compassion.
- Finding art (ineffable inspiration), creativity (adaptability/resilience) and culture (family) in extraordinary people.
- Overriding normative default mechanisms.

Mike Benson – Trustee

What can I say!

I joined the FV Trustee board following a phone call with then Trustee Tony Liddington. Tony told me the FV story, a story of hope, a story of love, a story of resistance, a story of hard work, a story with real human beings in and a story which in one sense was coming to an end.

For me over the last 3 years or so this story has at times been an incredible source of light and hope as we together strived to enable artists to work, create and simply be in a country/place I no longer recognise as the country I've lived and worked in most of my life. It has been a humbling experience to have been a part of this and I have learnt so much from my fellow board members.

In the end the work at FV was not about rebellion or even being radical in my head at least. It was about being honest in a dishonest world. It was about being or trying to be good. Fathoming out a way of work that carried some heft. That would leave its mark. A way of working that was truly social. It was about striving to support fellow human beings' talent and smartness to benefit both the individual and the common good. It was about working in a way that makes total sense in a world that seems to have become senseless.

The story is coming to an end but for sure it will be re told and re told again as a beacon perhaps of what is possible.

Tony Lidington (AKA Uncle Tacko!) – Trustee | Advisor Cultural Healing

I suppose I had always wanted to ensure that the ethos of Welfare State International was preserved within the programme of work supported by Futures Venture. Whilst the money available for distribution came largely from the sale of the Lantern House, the real asset being distributed was the legacy of one of the most important British performance companies of the post-War period - the equal of Theatre Workshop, or 7:84. In the 1970s and 80s, Welfare State International redefined the meaning and process of performance practice and their cultural impact reverberates around the world today.

Following the demise of the company, it took two years to sell its assets and establish Futures Venture as the charity through which the legacy of the company could be dispersed. This preliminary process did not address some of the ill-feeling felt by members of the former company which had derived from the initial decisions that had been taken in order to dissolve the assets. I believe that it is important to try and end creative projects well and I hoped that I could help to bridge these differences by becoming part of the process of dispersal: I was determined to provide a direct link with the past and ensure that celebration, community-awareness and radical performance would be at the core of any future programme of work funded from this source.

When the trustees first met, I found it a difficult start to the process, because I only knew (distantly) one of the other members, whereas many of the other trustees were already familiar with one another due to their geographical proximity. It took some time to establish any kind of rapport between us, as there were no company/charity principles to follow apart from a 'manifesto' from a company gathering some years earlier. The process was made even more difficult because of the limited time that we were able to meet, which meant that it took some time to co-ordinate our thinking, causing a considerable delay in getting payments to the first projects.

It was decided that we should ensure the *maximum* amount of money should go to artists for the *minimum* amount of application or evaluation detail. We wanted "to put the 'fun' back into 'FUN'ding" and to do so meant minimising the administrative costs of the organisation. Potential projects were sourced from existing contacts of the trustees and considerable work was required to curate each one and then, as the money was allotted to projects, each required a paper-trail of management. This was in addition to the time needed to manage the necessary discussions and implementation of policy for a progressive, ethically-led organisation to be able to engage (or otherwise) with its investment portfolio. Consequently, it was agreed that there should be a funded administrative base for the charity in order to manage our affairs and co-ordinate the decision-making processes. So it was, that in many ways we found ourselves emulating the structure of similar, existing trusts and foundations, with a bureaucracy and a range of policy documents to enable us to function effectively. Initially, most candidates for funding came from direct associations of the trustees and advisors, but this seemed to focus on projects which emanated from specific geographical areas (usually Manchester/Liverpool or other northern conurbations), urban areas and projects specifically aimed at younger participants. It seemed to me that these projects fulfilled quite predictable demographics who already had access to other funding streams.

As a representative of a rural area and having worked within more marginalised communities, I was keen to champion people from wider geographic locations such as Scotland, or more remote areas of England, as well as from under-represented communities such as the disabled and elderly. In order to do this, I engaged directly with facilitating groups (i.e. people who would help me contact and nurture artists with whom I had no prior knowledge): these groups then needed more time – sometimes up to a year, to develop their ideas, before being presented to the funding panel. I also tried to widen the focus of the trustee/advisor constituency by bringing-in people from different sectors and locations, in order to combat the Lancashire/Yorkshire bias of representation. My efforts only had a limited impact, because as the programme ran its course, there was less and less time for the trustees to meet and share ideas; in addition, the Covid pandemic interrupted any possibility of increasing the frequency of such meetings, so that the trustees and advisors became more and more estranged from one another.

The gallimaufry meetings or 'gatherings' attempted to facilitate the sharing of ideas and experiences, but although I enjoyed meeting folk at the first of these events at Walk the Plank's space, it was clear that there was a sharp divide between the current recipients of funding and the historical legacy that had facilitated it. The hope had been for this event to be a public, nationally-significant expression of the various projects which had been funded - linking it to the past and the Welfare State/Lantern House legacy, but it did not do this; instead, it was a celebration of the achievements to date – valid in its own right, but ultimately failing to deliver our aspiration for a new methodology of arts funding to the cultural industries beyond our own spheres of interest.

It was from this point that my work with Futures Venture started to diminish. The imminence of my parents' deaths and managing their demise and legacy meant that I had far less time available to work on projects – particularly those for which there was little remuneration. I began to feel that the time required to curate and nurture the various Futures Venture projects, whilst at the same time trying to ensure wider representation on the board, was a level of commitment that was difficult for me to maintain. I attended the second gallimaufry in Hull and was pleased to meet-up with various friends and colleagues, but once again, the event did not manage to impact upon the cultural mainstream in the way that I had hoped the whole project might be able to do.

In future, perhaps this very document of reflections by those of us who were deeply involved in the Futures Venture project, will help others to see how our processes, activities and discussions could inform a wider community of cultural interests – I hope so. For me, Futures Venture was always a bold, brave project which attempted to link the past with the present: during my time with the organisation, those two sides of history were brought closer together, so that key members of the original Welfare State company now seem content with the way that their legacy has been dispersed – indeed, some have said to me that they are proud of many of the projects that were created from their funds. I feel that I have been a small part of that healing process and in so doing, helped to facilitate the delivery of a fascinating array of creative, radical projects.

Endings and legacies are difficult – they are as hard for institutions as they are for individuals: to finish things well is always an aspiration. A measure of success in the decay of the old, is the legacy of fertile ground and opportunities for new growth that are exposed: in many ways,

Futures Venture succeeded in achieving this through a culture of healing and I hope that the subsequent, vigorous, radical shoots that it has nurtured over the lifespan of the organisation, will regenerate fresh ideas, exciting processes and a better society for all.

Naomi Gabriel

As someone who was once supported by Future's Venture Foundation as an artist, I cannot overstate the impact that their funding had on my career. At the time, I was struggling financially as an artist and had worked on a project for vulnerable young people, but lacked the financial resources to continue it. Thanks to the Foundation's support, not only were we able to reproduce the project in an even bigger and better way, but they also awarded us the opportunity to study sound engineering and project management, which opened up new avenues for my artistic practice and career journey.

What stood out the most about Future's Venture Foundation was their unwavering commitment to reaching out to artists at their level. As I became more involved with the Foundation, from artist to advisor and then as a trustee, I was consistently impressed by the dedication and passion of everyone involved in supporting artists who were making work with an ethical focus.

The Foundation's support didn't end there. As part of their commitment to investing in artists, they provided me with training in sound engineering, a field that I had always been interested in but lacked the resources and opportunities to explore. The training that I received not only opened up new avenues for my artistic practice but also sparked a new career path for me as a software engineer.

While my path has taken me away from art, I believe that this is a testament to the power of investing in artists. By supporting artists in their creative endeavours, we not only help them achieve their immediate goals but also equip them with the skills, experiences, and connections that can lead to unexpected and exciting career paths.

I am grateful for the legacy that Future's Venture Foundation leaves behind and the impact that they have had on the world of radical art. I am proud to have been a part of such an extraordinary organization, and I will always cherish the memories and experiences that I gained through my involvement with them.

Michael Barnes-Wynters – Trustee/ Advisor/ Radical Arts Handbook triptych co-editor

Based in Hull, I felt privileged to have been invited by Alison to be one of the foundation's original trustees in 2015. Indeed, it felt an honour as I have always had the utmost respects for the inspirational works of **Welfare State International**, especially its founders, **John Fox** and **Sue Gill**, who were originally from Hull. For me, this unique opportunity to make a difference, came with a responsibility which I truly embraced. The opportunity to make the unheard visible and to give the underdog and untold stories a chance to breathe and explore uncharted radical possibilities which would find difficulty in receiving funding or support elsewhere.

New lasting friendships and future collaborations have been forged on a magical journey with a family of oddball like-minds who truly want to make a difference.

We are the committed!

A massive thank you to Alison who kept this adventure on track and especially for supporting this oddball family but also for organising many memorable trustees/advisors weekends in London, Manchester and Bristol where we hatched plans and gave vital opportunities.

Many highlights include our wonderful editorial meetings with **Roney Fraser-Munro**, **David Hayley** and **James Brady** for the production of our quarterly Radical Arts Handbook triptych whereby each were launched at our **Beyond Future** on-line event. We commissioned **Robin Doyle** for each of the three covers which absolutely nailed the political climate at each release and so our first on Guy Fawkes Day coincided with Trump stepping into presidential office with an unforgettable provocative image.

In true Future's Venture spirit, as like the ongoing exploration of trying different ways and making mistakes to giveaway funding whilst always connecting that Welfare State International Spirit, our Beyond Future events changed shape but always driven by its family.

Rewinding back to Theresa May's failed original Brexit weekend and British Summertime at the end of March 2019, we grasp the opportunity to invite our family at that time on that weekend for a **Celebration: Provocation Weekender**, to embrace its Welfare State International heritage, share, connect, eat, drink, dance and hatch future plans at Walk The Plank's HQ in Salford.

On the opening Friday evening we were blessed to have John Fox give a masterclass in how to present your work!

As in the spirit of the foundation, I took risks in giving time and space leading up to and the week following on at Walk the Plank for **Bill Posters** and his technical collaborators including **Dr. Daniel Howe** to develop his **Spectre** installation project. Meanwhile, at the time of John Fox's presentation, Bill Posters had told me the project had just been awarded Alternate Realities (Commission Winner) at Sheffield Doc/Fest 2019.

Spectre started out to subvert the power of the Digital Influence Industry & via a series of viral 'deep fake' artworks, Spectre became embroiled in a deeper, global conversation about the power of computational forms of propaganda leading to global press coverage and unexpected – and contradictory – official responses from Facebook, Instagram and Youtube.

Indeed...

we make mistakes and so...

embrace our mistakes.

The timing of us choosing to celebrate at Walk The Plank coincided with being unable to choose our first choice, in central Manchester at the Niamos in Hulme. This would have been ideal as it would have been a more public affair, accessible to reach and our budget would have been much welcomed for an embryonic organisation who at the time of our meetings, didn't know if they would be there in March 2019.

After a fab Saturday of family sharings/ presentations most folks needed to just chill and reflect/ connect and watch Uncle Tacko's Amazing Flea Circus(!) around the garden's fire rather than moving into a large performance space which was geared towards John Wassell's birthday. His birthday didn't seem to have anyone invited beyond our family and so felt flat.

I have been proud of every single person(s) whom I put forward including the unsuccessful proposals and as a mentor to many in this family I have felt so blessed and energised beyond words, as our connections continue to grow with so many future possibilities.

A thought from me to share has to be how excited I am to be so looking forward to letting you and the world know a future release date of **Paul Burwell documentary** by Nova Studio which will beam light onto an art movement yet to be unearthed and celebrated.

The foundation's journey may have come to an end but this family continues to grow and hatch plots to disrupt and ask brave questions.

No time for contentment

Bless

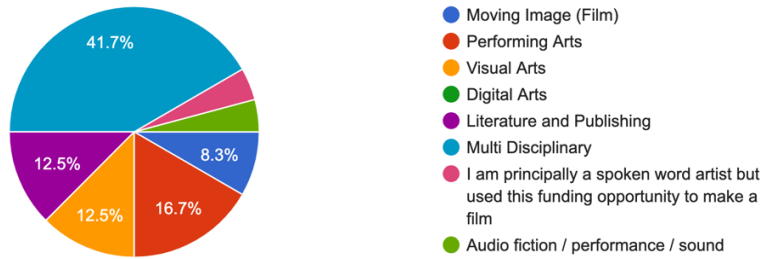
Artist Reflections

Many of the artist provided their reflections on their projects in written form, however, for this report, what is more pertinent are the reflections on process of funding and working with FVF. Those reflections are captured with a range of tools, from recorded interviews which can be found on our website and [YouTube](#) channel. Head over and have a listen.

Here is a little bit of background to our artists and their general thoughts on process in some easily digestible images, with the caveat that survey responses represent roughly a third of those we funded, and written responses are higher from the older artist!

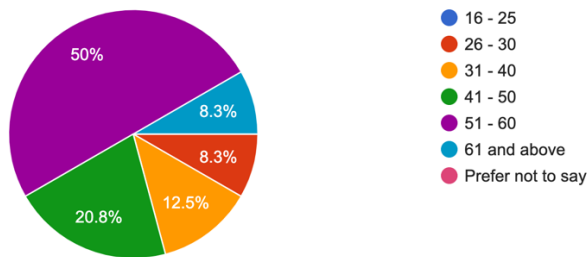
Art Form (tick all that apply)

24 responses



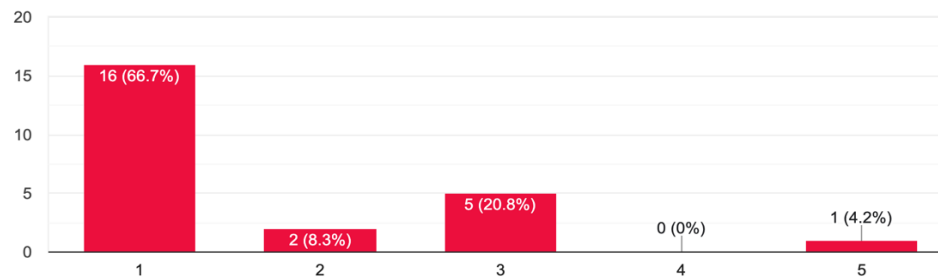
Age

24 responses



How was the application process?

24 responses



1 being simple 5 being complicated

Comments on the application process

Very easy, no fuss and NOT off putting at all like some applications which, to be honest have stopped me from bothering.

Fair and open access.

Application processes in the arts are often unnecessarily complicated - FVF was a joyful exercise in easy access.

It was fairly easy, but that was because I asked for help. I find things easier if I can be honest about my abilities.

It was well supported. It encouraged risk and made it clear that it was creatively open. I enjoyed the questions and how they helped me shape my proposal.

Refreshingly simple.

It was ok not hard or difficult.

The mentoring process was helpful as was the application presentation.

The only difficulty was having to organise care for partner which is quite stressful.

Really appreciated the ease and openness of the process.

Felt really understood and not pressured.

We didn't apply - Shan Edwards at Edinburgh Printmakers did so on our behalf as we aren't usually successful applying for things - applications usually work for us if someone else does them!

Really accessible and gentle on the brain.

Very easy, much better than most other applications I have had to do.

Really inclusive.

It was accessible and I felt supported.

It was blissful.

It allowed for creativity and for connection with FV as funders throughout the process. The focus required to articulate a project in a few words, which were not managerial or based on evaluative requirements, was itself helpful and liberating.

It wasn't too much work.

It was simple and quick to complete, which was great, as this isn't often the case when applying for funds.

Still surprised how easy it was and that I was successful in getting the funding at the time in Lockdown, is a positive interaction.

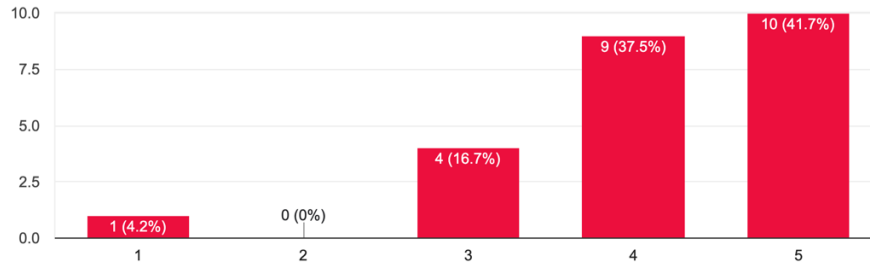
For me the zoom meeting was a bit confusing. The process after was straightforward and more familiar.

I was lucky to find it. Someone mentioned it.

Learning:

Overall, those who completed the survey found that the access to funding, methods of application and process was simple and effective. The majority reported that this was often, not the case with other funders, and they felt the over burden of lengthy applications too much. Changing the application process each time to reflect need was definitely useful for us, and enabling support with application from mentoring was really beneficial.

Support after award of funding
24 responses



1 poor – 5 excellent

Comments on support

Interest in what I did was the main thing.

I could not find support and felt utterly ostracised by everyone. In fact, I will never get over it. I was actively ignored at meetings and my supposed mentor physically turned his back on me and would not engage through many attempts. I felt I was not culturally accepted, the wrong colour, but perhaps the subject matter of my work was also an issue. I will never know but my treatment was outrageous. I have grappled every day with it.

My difficulty was in terms of technology. I did not have a smart phone at the time and did not find it easy once I got one. This excluded me from some of the opportunities'

I was supported after really well, even when it meant being left to my own devices. I've been self-employed for 35 yrs and not keen on "bosses" but having a way to ask for support was really helpful. It was very light touch. This meant that I was able to get going quickly and I felt trusted.

Having a lot of flexibility to move within the project enabled me to become the founder of ecologies of care.

FV were very 'hands off' which was also refreshing! The initially proposed work didn't evolve as expected due to the partner organisation, so I ended up extending the work.

General and sometimes useful.

Absolutely brilliant opportunities and support network - just wish I could have taken more advantage but Covid/long Covid meant I couldn't always engage as much as I wanted - but always felt supported and understood.

The support was very useful.

We've mostly been ill so although there was lots on offer, we couldn't take up much of it.

Approachable and genuine communication with those managing the fund. Thank you so much.

Helping training sessions that have continued after, ones that are actually helpful and not just tokenistic. I think having conversations with both other artists who have received funding and other people in the same kind of fields is great, and having a space to do that makes a big difference to support and share ideas with others.

I was always informed of upcoming opportunities to develop.

For me, being allowed to get on with the project without heavy reporting demands, was what was needed and appreciated. There was support, when and if I needed it, from named mentors. And I also was aware of the potential for wider support from FV. But being left alone to go with the project was transformative. I also appreciate that I had decades of production experience which may have made closer support and follow-up unnecessary.

It was useful and I have enjoyed being in the WhatsApp group and hearing about events etc. It's been amazing, especially when the uncertainty of Covid hit. Top drawer support and friendship.

I need to use the support to go and work on a writing project with a couple of actors.

At that stage the support that FVF could offer was limited

The funding helped me concentrate on finishing the writing and self-publishing it as an e-book.

Follow up support, online workshops, mental health first aid training and a real life social helped support the works further development, networks, and my mental health.

The support has always been there with amazing care to make sure the progress goes well.

Learning:

Overall, artists were aware that support was on offer, and where it was taken up it was valuable. One comment back was quite upsetting for the artist who felt they were ostracised. I have subsequently reached out to this person to see what had happened, as they had engaged so much with online support, including delivering a session themselves for others. I know that they rated the funding highly and talked of it being life changing in and of itself, but to hear they felt this way during the process was really worrying, although they felt they didn't want to comment further. The learning from this, is that just because people don't always feedback their whose experience, doesn't mean everything was OK, and that more attempts to stay connected can help to ensure everyone feels valued.

Respondents also commented on what they felt the funding did for them personally, with 6 responding:

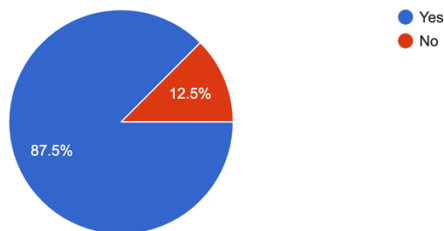
*Developed my confidence - shown me that my ideas work.
More aware of different process.*

*Moved my practice forward hugely, helped what defines me as an artist activist.
Opened so many doors, but not just myself, it's opened the doors for the community,
Medway are now engaged with the homeless community to provide more
opportunities which they have never done before.*

*It strengthened my resolve to return to writing for the theatre and producing multi-media
projects. It's a difficult area as my work aims to be original and is not always in step with current
trends and priorities in funding.*

*Raised my spirits. Usually dealing with a lot of rejection. I find it difficult to get funders
and venues to support / host political work.*

Did you find a sense of Community with FVF?
24 responses



We wanted to build a community of artists, and really connect people to each other and opportunities, of those who responded, this was very much their sense of that too.

Where it is needed a community is an asset.

It was really helpful to have the WhatsApp group and although I didn't know who most people were, we shared a common goal to help the wider community. I'll miss that group.

It was important that FVF engaged in the BLM debate and movement. It felt as if these voices came through.

I felt that Alison was the glue that held the community together and that her communications via email and invitations made me feel a part of FVF, the email felt like being part of a loving family - loads of care being shared.

*The regularity and varied opportunities offered meant we could all engage and share
It feels like a friendly network of people who are willing to help and support.*

Real sense of equality and community but saddened that we only really had a big get together right towards the end and for some of us we knew of each other but were meeting for the first time.

The community has been open and inviting. It's a diverse group so I feel more inclined to join gatherings. The individuals are different ages and with different geographies. It's refreshing to meet and speak with people I wouldn't normally have to opportunity to connect with.

As mentioned above, very helpful and pleasant to have a group of people who are going through the same process and actually the people involved with the funding have been helpful since we were awarded it.

I found the weekend in Hull to be an empowering and engaging experience. The WhatsApp group is also a source inspiration.

*Seems like a vibrant and active group, sorry I couldn't get involved more
Yes and No - I am of a generation, working in an area that differs from some/many of the other artists. But I have benefitted from following others' work. The connections with others more directly made have been good.*

*The WhatsApp group and events were good.
You could feel the sense of community with the WhatsApp group.*

It's become a family for me.

There were new and familiar faces. via the Whatsapp group, it was clear links and networks were built. Perhaps not for me at that time.

It was amazing meeting like-minded creative political people from all over the UK, online and occasionally in real life.

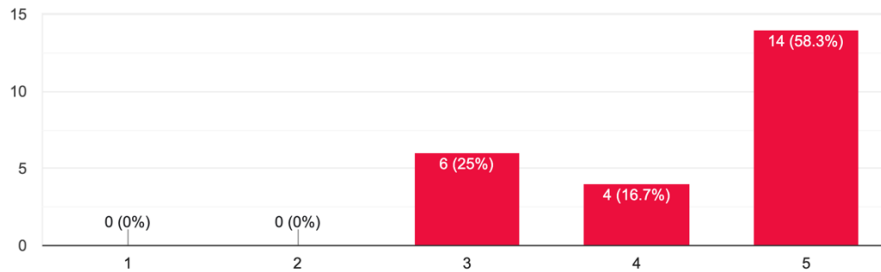
It actually felt so like a community and family for me to be connected to amazing inspirational people. We might have been different in form of our work but so align with our missions and visions, to use our art and work to make our community city, country and the world a better place. That's the power of art.

Learning:

Community is important to artists and providing space and means to do that are crucial for funders. Mutual support, inspiration and connection helps to maintain resilience for artists who may be isolated, struggle with connection or from marginalised communities. There is definite value in coming together in person, more opportunities for this, organised and paid for by funders to allow as wide a range of people to join and connect as possible is important.

How useful was the support during the pandemic?

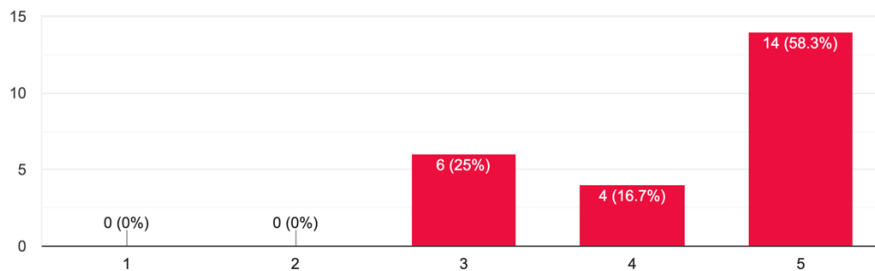
24 responses



1 poor – 5 excellent

How useful was the support during the pandemic?

24 responses



Some feedback on this:

Yes, I loved zooming.

It was well organised, friendly and overall great to touch base with other artists. I was pregnant during the pandemic so I wasn't in the place to engage at that time yes, it was also affirming in a community sense.

Absolutely - literally a lifeline to the outside world whilst ill with Covid and trying to keep Grow going during the pandemic

I had a meet up which was very useful and helped me realise my direction was going in the right way.

I didn't actually do any training but my meetings with Alison and David were very useful mentoring sessions for me.

Mental Health First Aid ZAD training programme - I was loving it but in the last 2/3 weeks of it I fell over and hit my head - and was temporarily blinded. I was so gutted not to complete it. 2020-21 did not go to plan - mainly because of our ill health.

None of the sessions I applied for went ahead due to lack of numbers

Learning:

Maintaining connection where possible through difficult times is invaluable, especially for those who are isolated. Opportunities to learn and develop not only in artistic practice are also valuable, especially around wellbeing, mental health and soft skills, all of which help artists to build and maintain resilience, vital during current times. More attempts to do online training even with smaller numbers was often difficult due to capacity, but everything should be done to help those access this training elsewhere if possible.

Final remarks

Thank you! It was very useful for the funds and I hugely appreciated the interest and the simplicity of it all.

I was so willing to be involved or to springboard relationships and creative possibilities for a shared future. The life changing financial support has saved my life and yet it has been marred by feeling shamed at the Hull event.

I felt very lonely during the pandemic but enjoyed the time this afforded me for play. I was not properly equipped to partake at the start of the project and laboured with the difficulties I was facing but I was committed to finish and did. Consequently, I learned a lot about myself and processes as a result of the funding. I also managed to attend the final event and found a lot of pleasure in this.

I'd like to thank with a full heart for all your work, support and love you've shown the group. You'll never know how many lives were touched from us all, and how many people they go on to help, support or inspire, but I bet its bloody hundreds. Well done you heroes x

Well done.

I hope that more initiatives like this will come along to help artists make new work.

My sincerest gratitude for selecting me and thank you for all you have done, it has made an impact in my life and career. Warmest Regards, Ria

This was such a beneficial thing, thank you. I came to you via another artist that I mentored, and was gutted that I hadn't encountered you before. Always happy to be kept in the loop with whatever you all do next - take care and peace to you xxx

Just thank you for changing my life.

Thank you for weathering the storm with us. Artists led and amazing work. Will always appreciate the opportunity and support you offered us.

Thanx

It's been a wonderful experience and I'll be forever grateful especially to Alison and Keisha xx

I am hugely grateful for the experience of gaining FVF funding. I feel that my world has opened up & more is possible. I only wish I had become involved sooner.

*Thank you for your support, you are appreciated
Thank you. Thank you.*

It is a great organisation and the structure/ process / ethos are exemplary.

Yes, this opportunity has been life changing for me, it's helped build a stable practice, introduced me to a community which are phenomenal and has helped me create more opportunities for others in my community.

Many thanks for the support.

Just THANK YOU!!!!!! I am deeply appreciative.

I wanted to say a huge thank you for the fund and support that helped me to continue my work and now being in a position to set up my own CIC. If it was not for Future's Venture Fund I would not be where I am now.

Learning:

It doesn't take a lot of financial investment to support artists to get where they need to be. Whilst there were some issues, we worked with the artists to change and reflect need. Having artists involved at all stages of this process is what made things work. From the initial consultation of how we should set up, what our purpose should be and how we should engage, through to artist advisors, funders and mentors, reflecting and representing those you want to help is vital to success. It should be a core part of funders structures, artist advisory panels – not just artist evaluators on grant bids, but helping shape how funding is delivered.

4.WHAT NEXT?

We set out to be artist led, to reflect the needs of the artist, support the artist, remove barriers to access and widen reach to those who were finding it difficult to get funding. Overall, we made a huge step towards achieving this aim.

We'd like to see other funders taking on this process in adapting how they fund and why they fund so that artists can be sure of securing an income, a life and making change. Certainly, too much of arts funding is supporting those who don't actually produce the art. How can we keep this going when things are so difficult for people to get a break, to get on and maintain. Tiered systems of funding at present are not working in mainstream, as they are still too complicated and off putting. If we are serious about diversity and engaging with the widest cross section of artists, then we have to change this and work collectively to do so.

Taking risks are necessary to pushing boundaries but more importantly of bringing forward those less represented in the sector. If we cannot take risks through smaller pots, we will not really see the diversity question change.

What comes first the institution or the art?

Appendices



**Future's Venture Foundation Trust
Evaluation and Report
Celebration/Provocation Weekender**

BACKGROUND

Future's Venture is a legacy of Welfare State International, based in Ulverston, Cumbria. It was a collective of radical artists and thinkers lead by John Fox, Sue Gill, Roger Coleman and others, who explored ideas of celebratory art and spectacle between 1968 and 2006, before becoming Lanternhouse International, until it's close in 2013. The organisation was instrumental in publishing ideas and practices for community arts, large-scale processions and lantern parades, truly taking art onto the streets in meaningful ways to engage with the widest possible audiences, and put art outside of institutions and into the hands of the community.

On the closure of Lanternhouse International, the remaining Trustees, Denis McGeary and David Haley, with input from other artists, developed a manifesto, to iterate the next phase. Working with Richard Povall and Alison Surtees, they realised this ambition of funding art practice, using assets of buildings to establish the Radical Independent Art Fund, that could take artists and art out of the tyranny of traditional funding models, and take it back to true collaboration, pushing boundaries and approaches, as well as enabling non-traditional artists to find a voice and a space to create. The manifesto can be found at www.futuresventure.org/manifesto

In 2019 we are taking a break, to take stock, to look back, and to re-evaluate what we do and how we do it, and take the opportunity to celebrate what has been done, connect our artists with each other and wider to the family of Welfare State, and discuss the future as we enter our final year of funding actions. The weekend took place over the original date set for Brexit, of the 29th – 31st March, at Walk the Plank's new cultural space in Salford. This report is an evaluation of the event and feedback with recommendations for future actions and funding.

EVENT AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The core aim of the event was to bring together all our funded artists in one location to share and connect, and develop ideas for the final round of funding.

Under this aim, the objectives were:

- Bring the past and future together to link the history of FVF.
- Engage with other artists and speakers, to inspire attendees
- Invite other creatives and cultural activists to share and collaborate around the ideas for future funding
- Plan towards the final funding, process and priorities

Event Team

Tony Lidington - Advisor
 Micheal Barnes-Wynters – Curator
 Alison Surtees – Logistics, admin, artist liaison
 Roney Fraser Monroe – design and print
 Walk the Plank – venue and tech crew

Attendees	
Trustees, Advisors and Guest Speakers/Performers	20
Funded Artists	22
Wider Creative Practitioners and Guests	50

OUTCOMES OF THE EVENT

Bringing the Past and Future Together

From the inception of the fund, there was to some extent a separation from the past, as many of the original artist and creatives who were involved had moved onto other activities and actions. In developing and delivering on the new fund, a desire to focus the finance towards funding art rather than 'organisation', there was a detachment, giving a point of friction. It was really important for the event therefore, to form a process of healing and coming together of the past and the future and to show that the underpinning ethos of Welfare State International was still a strong thread in the new fund.

The opening evening saw the core of the old and new come together to share food and discussion, and to listen to John Fox, founder of Welfare State, talk of the history, his work with Sue Gill and the wider WSI family. Whilst this was a great opportunity for a coming together, due to outside factors, John was unable to spend the rest of the weekend with us, and weave this link into the resultant public elements. This impacted on the context of some of the talks certainly for the Saturday, with those who were around Friday referencing talks and work from Friday that the wider audience had not been involved in. However, this was outside our control, and the intention was originally that both John and Sue would very much form part of the whole weekend. It would have been much better if we could have contextualized for all visitors and attendees the past present and future of the work, and circulated the document produced for Board on the last 3 years of actions and funding.

However, as an exercise in healing and bringing some closure to the past and celebrating the future, the Friday served to finally allow everyone to clarify and come together and provide an end to any issues with regard to the fund, its use and the operation of the Charity.

Website Development and Launch

One developing out the website and Beta testing, we realized that there was not enough content for the launch to take place at the event, and rather than rush to publish without this detail, we would hold off until we had photographs and film footage to share. The site itself is visually driven, not text driven. Photographs from the event are now ready to upload, and the short film of the event is in post-production. The intention now is to complete set up of all the artist areas, and let them establish their own space within the next month and launch towards the end of June. We can also then include some of the feedback from the event and ideas for the new round of funding.

Film and Photography

The short film giving a flavour of the event is ow in post-production. It requires some work on the flow of the story, and a voice over of the narrative is important to link the elements. This will be done in the coming weeks also in readiness for the launch of the website. One of our funded artists is working with the film making producing new music to go with the piece.

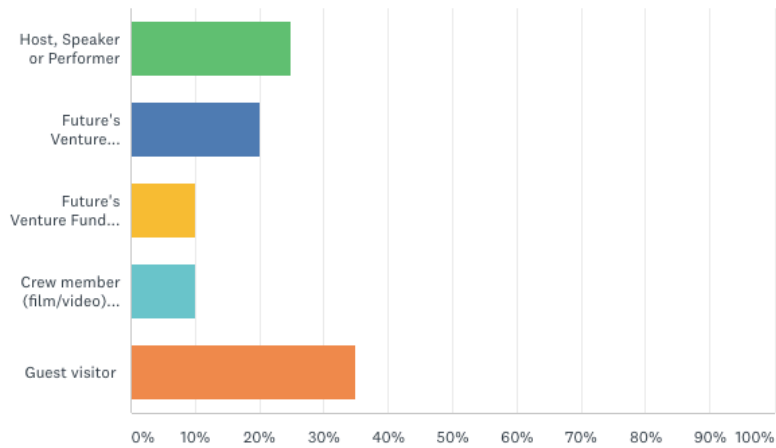
The images have been sent by the photographer, and selection of them for the site will continue relevant to elements of the areas. Again, this will be finalised on launch of the site. Some of the images will be maintained for press opportunities at that stage and within the feedback here.

Feedback from Attendees

The following stats show the overall feedback on the event, space and catering. The final section of this will look at the comments of those who completed the questionnaire and responded with ideas and comments.

In what capacity did you attend the event?

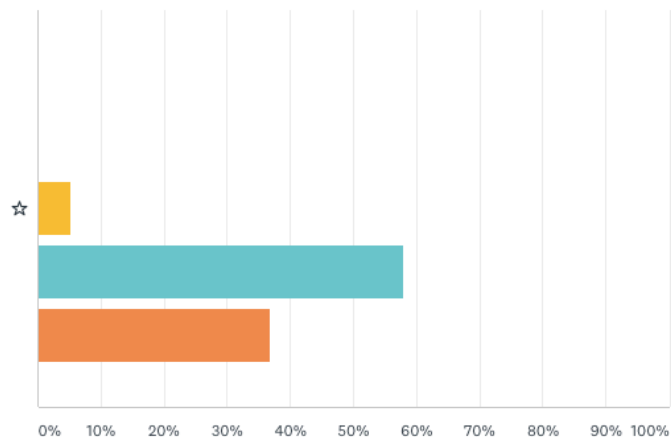
Answered: 20 Skipped: 0



The majority of responders were those guests who came along with engage with our artists and speakers, outside of the FVF/Welfare State family. For this reason, it is important to remember that external perceptions are very positive overall in all areas of the questionnaire.

What did you think of the venue for the event?

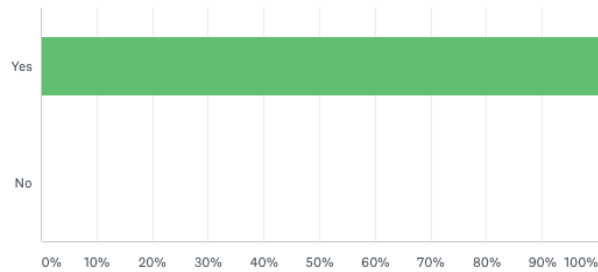
Answered: 19 Skipped: 1



Most responders rated the venue from very good to good. Accessibility to the venue and once in the venue rated 100% although there were some comments on the difficulty finding the venue and lack of signing for pepe new to the area.

Did you access the venue with relative ease?

Answered: 19 Skipped: 1

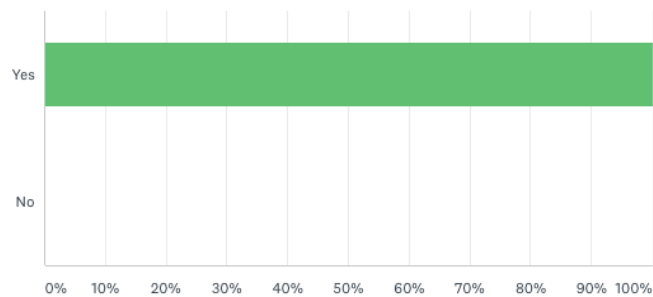


A key comment:

It was fine for me but I know other people other struggled to find it or felt uncomfortable with the surrounding area. I think more could have been done to make it more visible for people or the location should be factored in when deciding on the venue.

Were your needs met with regards to catering and/or any intolerances/allergies?

Answered: 20 Skipped: 0

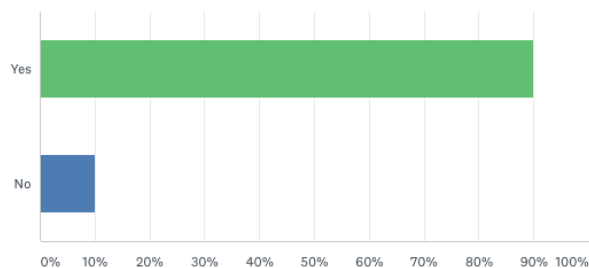


In terms of catering and food, the feedback has been brilliant, and it hit the mark for all attendees in whatever capacity.

the catering was amazing with such a wide range of tasty foods for all possible needs!

Were you sufficiently informed of the context and background to the event?

Answered: 20 Skipped: 0



Comments here:

I wasn't 100 percent sure of what the event was about

Yes, but... the constant referral back to WSI and John Fox was unnecessary on the Saturday. Particularly as quite a few of the attendees had not been at the dinner the night before or actually knew who they were. It was fabulous to see WSI artists in action and where they are now but this event in my understanding was about Future Ventures artists and the future of them.

As a host i didnt fully informed of what was expected of me.

Final questions for the questionnaire asked people to focus on their personal feelings regards the organization and content of the event and any other suggestions. It is appropriate to share these comments here for the board. Some of the comments are excellent and are very positive. There are some areas that improvements can be made, and this is covered in more details in the recommendations for future final event and the development and management of that.

Broad range of creatives and cultures brought together was good to know help and support is available and good to connect with people who have shared interests

I was very pleased to be involved in the event on many levels and to bring my knowledge of WSI to the FV community. The shape of the weekend, the informality, the spaces, the appropriate hosting, the flexibility, the food and the fire. These were all things I recognised as being important to me and connected to the ethos and values of WSI. I wondered whether there could have been more effort to connect to a wider public but maybe this was not a priority. The personal highlight had to be gathering the band and helping to shine a light on some great music.

I found the variety of work held under one umbrella intriguing and stimulating. For the amount of funding involved, huge energy was produced. More things like the walk where people engage in an organic rather than choreographed interaction, whilst absorbing shared insights, work best for me. This was where I found I had the most intense exchanges and dialogue.

Of course, some presentations were more interesting to me than others. Although there was informal time to talk with people, I would have liked more time for questions and discussions about people's work - that would have helped me to meet more people at a deeper level.

Programme worked really well for me showed what why and wherefore of the foundation in glorious technicolour (exactly what I needed) Won't pick out a psrticular artist presentation but will say how much I enjoyed Uncle Taco.

Of course, some presentations were more interesting to me than others. Although there was informal time to talk with people, I would have liked more time for questions and discussions about people's work - that would have helped me to meet more people at a deeper level.

Programme was great, good speakers and really enjoyed the walk.

Very impactful and varied

I attended the afternoon presentation The Zadd. it was incredibly informative and thought provoking. I also observed how diverse both the participants and the speakers/presenters were at the event.

I thought the programme was exciting, radical, informative, hilarious, nourishing, heart-warming, pro-active and inspiring. The range of speakers and their diverse range of art-activism was really impressive. My highlight was having the time within the programme to get to know so many incredible people. Alison, Michael, Keisha, Tony and all the organising did a brilliant job.

Highlight for me was the talk by John Fox which was very eye opening! additionally, enjoyed the performance on the last day with the artist from Jamaica. unfortunately was unable to make the entire programme due to rehearsals - but felt it was well organised.

Was not dynamic as envisioned. A lot of long straight presentation talking - mainly by men. Didn't feel as radical or free or varied as it should have been. Hosts seemed to be confused about what tone they were setting and were poor at keeping things on time.

Learning about what the trust had funded. Seeing the work in action - Ama Josephine Budge.

Overall, the event was felt to be very well programmed with lots of informative speakers and presentations. However, there was certainly more room for time to digest between presentations and look at how artists had opportunity to connect and perhaps work towards future actions. Too much was presenting and little time to reflect and collaborate.

I think old & new weren't as integrated as I would have liked. Too many talking heads. The work was all interesting. The gap on Friday & Saturday night before evening stuff was a pity.

I was a good opportunity to meet with a number of old friends and to see what had been achieved through Futures Venture. Exciting, interesting and occasionally irritating.

I was still confused about what it was... I understood it would be a kind of living exhibition of the projects, featuring new specially created works. Some of the talks seemed strangely placed. I think more time could have been given to collaboration potential between the alumni. I thought Keisha was an incredible compare. I thought that people who were not funded were confused about why they were there/what it was. It felt like a shame to be sat in a dark room, when there was so much potential in the space for conversations. It was the perfect setting for artists to plot and plan future activities.

The diversity of presentations was excellent, such a breath of fresh air to see a range of practices with real engagement to social context. I thought the performance piece on the last day was out of place however, suddenly we went from a series of projects many by women and people of colour to another solo white guy doing old style performance art !! was a bit disappointing !

Some key points to take away from this feedback is to be mindful from the very outset and continuously check that what we programme directly aligns with the context of the event and purpose. Some aspects worked very well but context to other elements left people confused and, in some cases, irritated.

Final comments from those who completed the questionnaire focused on overall feelings about the vent or it's organization. These reflect previous comments to some extent with clear praise for the majority of the organization and programming and the support offered. However particular comments that need to be thought on for the future are as follows:

There was a lot of references to an event the day before which normal guess didn't attend. In future it would be nice to either have a heads up on it or be included.

I still believe it should/could have been more outward-facing, but I guess I lost that argument a while back!

I would of liked to have had more time to show my work.

It was a bit of a shame it overran on the last day, and that the whole thing wasn't documented! Also I've heard that some of the participants have abandoned the travel receipt compensation process, as they found it too convoluted and arduous. Maybe this could be simplified in future? Otherwise bravo. x

The issue of adding too may additional speakers and presenters did mean that often artists had less time to preset what they were doing, as the performers were given larger slots, so a missed opportunity to really engage the attendees in discussions of

the work and wider thinking. More space for groups to go off and talk and digest or suggest developments would have been appreciated for some.

Having said this the majority of comments in the feedback were very positive and heartening. There was a lot of praise for the organizing and recognition of the time and effort that had gone into this work. Some of the comments:

I've given my content take-out in detail already the event itself though? reckon it was a great balance of opportunities for meeting peep, starting conversation well punctuated by presentations ... and a great venue with plenty of space. Sure it would work out slightly differently another time but hey, that's the beauty of (such a) live event. Must have been (know there was) a lot of planning for it to run so smoothly though!

By attending this event I became aware of the organisations aims and ambitions and it was incredibly impressive.

the only practical problem for me was the distance between venue and accommodation, particularly for Saturday evening. Otherwise, the event showed what a great resource this was, without too much of the wasted complexities of time and finance that funding often absorbs. It is a courageous use of limited resources to simplify the structure.

Good hosting, good place, good people, great fun - Thanks - it was a good idea! (I had my doubts, but they got squashed very quickly.)

Great communications once they were needed with Barney and Alison. Thankyou. I hope that there is a very good public sharing of what went on and that the website starts to become active.

Really well organised, great venue broad range of people ideas and aspirations thought provoking non judgment and welcoming

Ideas for future funding rounds

As part of the event, there was a workshop to look at what options we may take forward to the final round of funding, in terms of the types of art we may fund and artists.

Two key propositions under consideration were:

- An arts residency for one artist within the context of a major entity around issues of environment.
- Funding of small amounts to go to artists who are either:
 - Youth – under the age of 25
 - Older Artists or late career artists – with an age range of 50 upwards

The intention with both these age ranges is that artists are in early stages of practice.

Feedback from those who attended this session (across Trustees, advisors, speakers, performers and guests):

Micro Funding

'Seed funding can be a catalyst for confidence/empowerment'

'Prefer micro grants idea – helps develop broad networks'

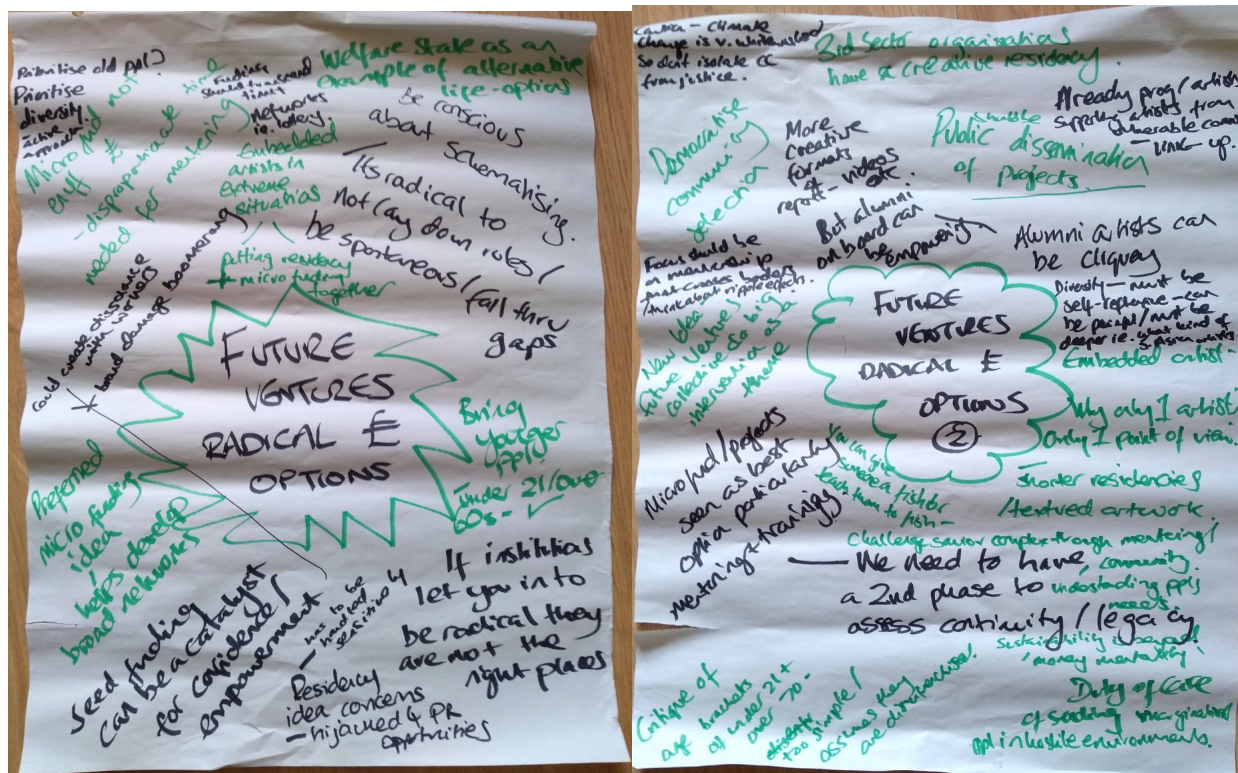
'Prioritise old people, prioritise diversity'

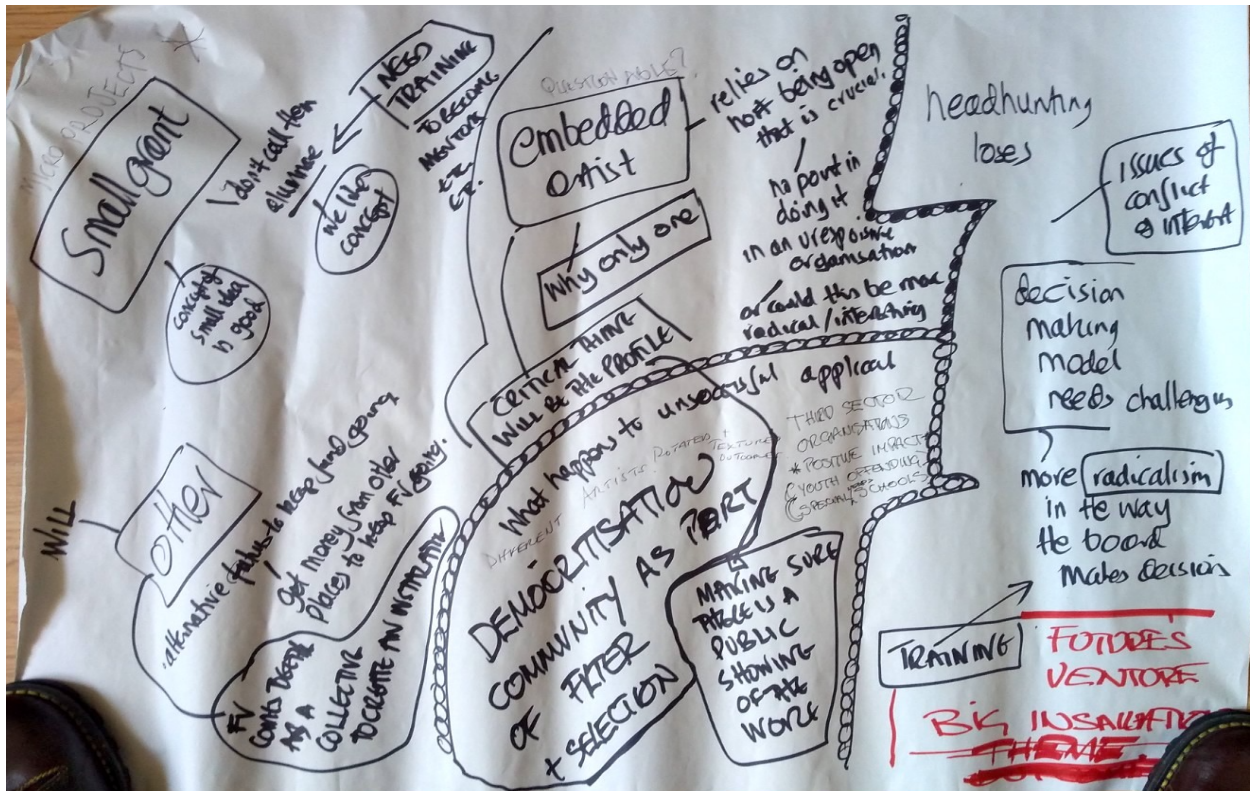
'Be conscious of schematizing, it's radical to not lay down any rules, be spontaneous, fall through gaps.'

'Micro fund/projects seen as best option particularly mentoring + training'

'Age range is too simple, under 21 over 70(?)'

'There is a duty of care of seeding marginalized people in hostile environments'





SOME OLDER PEOPLE MAY NOT HAVE HAD THE CHANCE TO GET FUND WHEN THEY WERE YOUNG - SO IF THE CHANCE IS RAISED NOW - THE WILL DIE KNOWING IT THIS CLUB HAVE REACHED THEIR DREAM...

RESIDENCY	MICRO
DANGER of being labeled for press	- Growth of the community + role sharing.
Problems to Manage? Now Disclosure shift?	which adds flow to the whole community.
Legal action?	
VERY RADICAL + James bond but also	IS radical in encouraging diverse, connected strong community
could the work be construed as false news	POTENTIAL OFFER TO EMPLOYEES of these big companies?
Public distrust → if infiltrating only the one within communities → might turn off people you need to alienate engage with the most.	
Lots of Pressure on the Artist.	

Artist Residency

'Why 1 artist? Only 1 point of view'

'Shorter residencies, textured approach'

'3rd sector organisations have an artist residency'

'If organisations let you in to be radical, they are not the right ones.'

'Residency idea concerns – hijacked for PR opportunities'

Outcome of the discussions.

Overall, it was felt that the micro grants were the best option for the final year of funding would be micro grants. Overall there was felt to be too many issues regarding one artist residency approach.

It was a missed opportunity to ask for any other suggestions for this process, there could well have been many other ideas.

Other concerns from those who participated was the networks through which artists are identified, and it felt not open enough. Some felt that head hunting artists was not really radical, and that there were always going to be conflicts of interest. It would have to be more broadly engaged. One recommendation is to use the Facebook group (Beyond Future) that has now been set up, and ask for ideas, and also go back to our artist alumni, who we had always wanted to engage far more, and get their input on ideas. This needs to be formalised and then allowed some space to consider.

Mentoring also came up a lot in the discussions, and mental health issues. I have suggested I would be happy to deliver a Mental Health First Aid Course for artists in our alumni, as a means of giving more information and tips around self-care, and helping others. This could be something we do as a fund and cover the costs for this to happen. Each person we train will then be able to support others the connect with. It may also be useful to do a half day awareness raising for a larger group if required.

Whilst the input is valuable, it will eventually go to the board to decide the final outcome and this should be done at the next AGM ready for the new proposal year.

News on the process will be forwarded to the wider network once discussed.