

**A PUBLIC  
ART PLAN**

**FOR THE  
CITY OF  
PLYMOUTH**



CONTENTS



Tim Etchells, *Revolution*, 2015.  
Courtesy Plymouth Arts Centre



Above  
Myriam Lefkowitz,  
*Walk, Hands, Eyes (Biel)*, 2014.  
Photo: Meyer and Kangani.

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# INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this plan is to redefine Plymouth's relationship with public art – in its widest possible sense as the arts experienced within and produced for the public realm.

An opportunity exists for Plymouth to take a national lead in its approach to public art, which would reflect its pioneering history to go beyond the horizon. The city will offer new kinds of cultural experience in the public realm and across unconventional spaces, to nurture its producing talent, and to create opportunities for both resident and visiting artists to respond to and contribute to Plymouth's built and natural environment, living culture and heritage.

This plan outlines a set of eleven principles, which will form the basis of the strategic development of public art and arts in the public realm in Plymouth over the next four years, set within a context of current funding and policy considerations and concluded with a set of recommended actions.

It has been written for the wide diversity of stakeholders involved in arts in the public realm in Plymouth, including artists and arts organisations and producers, Plymouth City Council representatives, schools, the higher and further education sectors, the health sector, community and resident groups, the housing, environmental, heritage and tourism sectors, planners, developers and businesses, architects and structural engineers, urban and landscape designers and the transport and infrastructure development areas.

It supports the development of public art projects and initiatives that can:

- enable Plymouth residents (including young people) to experience high quality cultural activities and have the opportunity to develop themselves as makers, participants, audiences and leaders in the cultural field;
- improve Plymouth's reputation as a desirable place to live and work (in line with the objectives of the Plymouth Plan);
- enhance the quality of the public realm, including the re-use and re-invention of historical sites as well as the imagining of new environments;
- create key memorable moments in Plymouth's annual cycle of events, contributing to a year-round programme of cultural activity for residents and visitors;
- be realised directly by the cultural sector, expanding and enriching the city's cultural ecology, skills and talent in producing arts in the public realm, supported by a city council dedicated to opening doors, making connections and supporting brave, new ideas.

## SECTION 1: BACKGROUND



Mark Vernon,  
*The Dividing Line*,  
2014. Courtesy River  
Tamar Project.  
Photo: Dom Moore.



## WHAT IS PUBLIC ART?

Public Art is a contentious term. In the collective imagination, public art is cast either as the controversial, uninvited guest or the mass entertainer. Instead public art can be seen to encompass a variety of artforms and artistic approaches, both temporary and permanent, that engage with the sites and situations of the public realm to re-make a sense of place.



Characterised by monumental scale or mass appeal, the successful public artwork is judged against its ability to galvanise popular opinion and contribute positively to place-making. Invariably if it fails on either count, it is judged against its price tag.

Yet this myopic view of art in the public realm masks its recent transformation beyond the gigantism of landmark sculpture, the mass appeal of participatory performance or the embedded nature of environmental design. The most powerful artworks in the public realm rarely conform to preconceived ideas about what scale, materials, location or form a public artwork should take.

Most notable changes include the commissioning of artists from the contemporary gallery and theatre sectors who employ media, materials and processes previously thought unsuitable for the public realm; interventions which remake a sense of place; remarkable structures and events which act as gathering points for diverse temporary communities; as well as projects which unfold over time.

By its very nature, public art is open to all and connects directly to people's lives. An encounter with the arts in public space is a particular opportunity for engagement with children and young people. There's no threshold to cross. No museum fatigue to overcome. No dos and don'ts. Public art is present in the everyday – free, available, open all hours and most importantly, in their space.

Perhaps the most useful way to approach a consideration of public art is to acknowledge that public art is not a single artform, but may be understood as a series of creative practices that encompass a variety of forms and approaches, temporary and permanent, that engage with the sites and situations of the public realm.

Dan Canham / Still House,  
Of Riders and Running Horses, Bristol 2014.  
Courtesy MAYK.  
Photo: Paul Blakemore.

## WHY DO WE NEED A PUBLIC ART PLAN?

Public art is particularly reliant on non-art partnerships to bring its forms into being and therefore, a set of shared principles will inform decision-making and focus resources and funding towards a set of common goals.



Alex Hartley's  
*Nowhereisland*  
at Jennycliff,  
Plymouth, 2012.  
Courtesy Situations.  
Photo: Max McClure.

From 2011-2013, funding for public art in the UK from local authorities alone totalled £90m, which is comparable to three times the amount spent on public and street arts through Arts Council England's Grants for Arts over eight years between 2003 and 2011. IXIA's 2013 public art survey states, "*Recovery in the housing and development sectors and the use of national planning policies and guidance that promote public art began to generate new opportunities at a local level*". Economic growth is likely to bring increased private sector funding for public art because public art is aligned to public sector policies such as planning, regeneration, health and wellbeing and tourism.

This funding is distinct from local authority and treasury budgets, which are facing considerable cuts and, therefore, an opportunity exists to support new forms of public art to stimulate deeper and more meaningful engagement with Plymouth's surroundings and to foster cultural well-being in Plymouth.

This plan celebrates public art for its intrinsic arts value, as well as its capacity to address other city council policies and non-arts agendas, and for its potential to tap into the burgeoning culture of shared experiences. In 2012, cultural consultants Morris Hargreaves McIntyre argued, "*The arts can offer people authenticity... We provide experiences with an entirely new worldview, emotionally cathartic moments, intellectual stimulation or just a really good laugh. We stimulate social interaction: we can offer people the chance to join communities of interest, to engage in shared experiences, a sense of belonging, affirmation and endorsement.*"<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Gerri Morris & Andrew McIntyre, Morris Hargreaves McIntyre, Insight Required, 2012 download at <http://goo.gl/8XM9EW>



## WHAT ARE OTHER CITIES DOING?

It is now widely considered good practice to integrate arts programmes into major building development and the regeneration of the urban environment.

Within national and regional policy there are few specific references to public art, however, the concepts of good design, sustainable development and a quality urban realm are key. In 2014 the Farrell Review, an independent review, commissioned by Culture Minister Ed Vaizey and led by architect Sir Terry Farrell, called upon Arts Council England and the Crafts Council to research and reinforce the contribution that the cultural sector can make to the planning, design and animation of the public realm and architecture, describing the arts and artists as, “*well placed to creatively engage individuals and communities and give voice to their sense of place, their concerns, and their aspirations for the areas they live, work and play in.*”<sup>2</sup>

The leading UK cities in progressive approaches to public art are Bristol, Birmingham and Cambridge, two of which have recently launched new public art strategies.<sup>3</sup> But despite these developments, most public art commissions remain, for the most part, of limited ambition with little sustained public engagement or arts sector recognition.

So what are the reasons for this lack of development in the public art commissioning field? The London 2012 Cultural Olympiad showed us that audiences are ready to take risks, to be challenged and to explore new territories in public and outdoor arts,<sup>4</sup> but this has not translated into brave new commissioning at local authority level or a change in the reputation of public art in the collective imagination.



Bill Drummond  
*Imagine Waking Tomorrow  
+ All Music Has  
Disappeared* 2014  
Ongoing wall painting  
beneath Spaghetti  
Junction, Birmingham.  
Courtesy Eastside  
Projects. Photograph by  
Tracey Moberley.

<sup>2</sup> The Farrell Review (available to download at [www.farrellreview.co.uk](http://www.farrellreview.co.uk)) subsequently led to the launch of a Manifesto for Public Arts which can be downloaded here <http://goo.gl/E0tsJj>

<sup>3</sup> Download Birmingham Public Art Strategy from [www.birmingham-culture.org/](http://www.birmingham-culture.org/) and read about Cambridge's approach to public art here [www.cambridge.gov.uk/approach-to-public-art](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/approach-to-public-art)

<sup>4</sup> *Reflections on the Cultural Olympiad* evaluation report at [www.artscouncil.org.uk](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk)

## WHAT ARE OTHER CITIES DOING?

There are underlying assumptions, which need addressing if we are to change the conditions for the production of public art to meet the demand for enriching art experiences in public spaces in Plymouth. These assumptions can be summarised as follows:

- **Public art commissioning is often misunderstood as a design-and-build process:** too many artist briefs are based upon a client/service provider model rather than on an understanding of how public artworks come to fruition over time, just as they do in the studio, through false starts, exchanges and dreaming. More resources and flexibility in commissioning contracts will support the creation of works of critical integrity as well as popular acclaim.
- **Permanence is valued above cultural impact:** Value in public art commissioning is often ascribed to the length of time a work will remain in place in a static, durable state. This is due to a lack of knowledge and research about the potential cultural and social impact of alternatives: temporary artworks (that have a fixed, short-term timescale but which have long-term impact on collective memory and cultural well-being) and durational artworks (that unfold and change over time and allow for participation and engagement over a longer period of time). Artists are shaking up the life expectancy of public artworks and research shows that temporary, durational and dispersed artworks can have deeper impact over time than permanent, static works, because they light a spark to inspire personal development which continues beyond the life of an event.<sup>5</sup>

- **Civic development is locked into a cultural arms race:** Towns and cities across the world are locked into a 'one-size fits all' style of public art, which means that expectations of public art are confined to a small set of conventions – it should be large-scale, sculptural and monumental.
- **Public art is mistaken for a way-finder, destination or history lesson:** If we release artists from the job of decorating our public spaces, marking out trails or commemorating, they have the ability to address difficult issues and encourage the involvement of those of us who might be intimidated by contemporary art to discover something new about ourselves and our surroundings.

<sup>5</sup> Evidence of the effectiveness of these longer-term, durational projects can be found in the publication which resulted from Situations three-year research project *Locating the Producers: Durational Approaches to Public Art*, edited by Claire Doherty and Paul O'Neill and published by Valiz, Amsterdam in 2010.

## WHERE ARE WE NOW?

This vision document has arisen as part of the strategic thinking towards 2020 in Plymouth. From consultation with individuals and organisations across the city, the following key observations can be made about the status and health of public art in Plymouth in 2016:

### **Plymouth has a long history of significant public art commissioning, but lacks the capacity to transfer and sustain knowledge and skills from one project to the next**

Past projects have shown the capacity of the city and the city's artists to produce ambitious work from TWSA Four Cities in 1990 to the Tamar River Project, and Keith Harrison's recent Heavy Rock commission for the Breakwater to durational engagement projects such as Take a Part, and new model performance projects such as Outpost, to festivals such as the Plymouth Fringe Festival and the Art Weekender; but the overriding conclusion from the consultation is that these projects develop in isolation and there is little cross-over between events, projects and artworks, except through the efforts of a small number of visionary individuals. There is considerable risk that this knowledge and vision will be lost by the city as the arts ecology is young and fragile.

### **Plymouth's cultural offer is considerable, but there is low engagement in and awareness of the arts in the public realm**

Plymouth has low levels of participation and engagement in cultural or community affairs, compared to other places in the UK.<sup>6</sup> Investment in a consolidated approach to producing, promoting and supporting the arts in the public realm, is required not simply in the cultural hubs, but with residents from the surrounding neighbourhoods to encourage a greater degree of recognition of and engagement with public arts activities.

### **Plymouth needs investment in skills and processes for producing artworks and art events in the public realm**

The vibrant arts ecology is growing and could be sustained by an interconnected set of arts individuals and organisations, and supported through greater strategic direction through the city's new Visual Arts Strategy. At present, a lack of knowledge and skills in the production and commissioning of arts in the public realm, operating outside of the City Council, has been identified. Opportunities to grow these skills are lost as public art consultancies and commissioning opportunities rarely involve existing arts organisations or curators in the city. Whilst it is acknowledged that the City Council will always play an important role as a producer, the need to grow and expand producer skills outside of this framework would free up much needed resources from within, allowing the City Council not only to produce and deliver behind the scenes but to contribute to a sustainable training of new producers for, and growing out of, the city.

## WHERE ARE WE NOW?

### **Plymouth has a culture of waiting for permission**

Primarily caused by the amount of red tape necessary to produce anything within the public realm and a lack of clarity about who to talk to and where to go for information, the city suffers from a state of stasis in taking forward visionary ideas or even, for that matter, testing out something relatively modest. The public art and outdoor arts events planning processes and policies are risk averse (often due to the pressure on capacity to consider proposals and applications or to deal with the knock-on effects of public art events), but this has led to a culture of suspicion amongst artists and younger producers that any proposal will be compromised by the level of permission required.

### **Plymouth has over 250 public artworks, but no plan for maintenance or deaccessioning**

The existing public art assets have been audited, but no maintenance or de-accessioning policy in place. A decision should be taken by the city council as to whether further resources should be expended on maintaining the full portfolio.

### **Plymouth's greatest successes result from longer-term investment but there is also value in short-term interventions**

Take a Part is clearly one of the most successful projects to have developed over the past six years, and this model of a long-term durational project with 'spikes' of activity through specific short-term partnerships would provide a useful model to roll out across the city. The World at Your Feet, an initiative led by a consortium of Plymouth's leading arts organizations including: Attik Dance, Barbican Theatre, Plymouth Music Zone, Plymouth Dance and Theatre Royal Plymouth in collaboration with the city council, is another example of a stand-out one-off festival event developed through long-term partnership.

<sup>6</sup> According to DCMS *Taking Part* Survey and ACE: Plymouth Local Report stated in Arts and Culture Topic Paper, July 2014.



## SECTION 2: VISION

## THE PLYMOUTH PRINCIPLES – RULES FOR NEW PUBLIC ART

To go beyond the horizon of existing public art practice and to become the national leader in place-based public art initiatives, Plymouth will own, promote, test out and advocate for the following key principles:

### 1/ BROADEN HORIZONS

Plymouth will commission ambitious projects that capture the public's imagination and open up the potential for personal development by tackling the most pressing issues of contemporary life. It will do so by identifying key opportunities for the city to commission landmark projects over the next four years.

### 2/ SHAKE UP PERMANENCE

Plymouth will support and advocate for a reconsideration of the lifespan of public artworks, deaccessioning where necessary, investing in maintenance where appropriate and supporting works and projects that unfold over time. The city will invest in deep engagement, appreciating that fleeting, one-off projects can also offer significant impact.

### 3/ GIVE TIME

Plymouth will invite artists and community stakeholders to the table as often and as early in development discussions as possible, allowing enough time for false starts and valuing slow processes as a means to build relationships and knowledge, so that an exchange of expertise might take place. The artist's process of working and developing ideas will be valued as much as the final outcome.

### 4/ AVOID FIELDS AND JUMP FENCES

Plymouth will embrace cross-artform commissioning in public art, moving beyond an emphasis on permanent sculpture or architectural embellishment to promote the possibilities for different types, forms and timespans for the arts in the public realm.

### 5/ LISTEN TO YOUNG VOICES

Plymouth will create opportunities for children and young people to contribute to the city's living culture, built and natural environment through their involvement with the making, shaping and commissioning of public art and the public realm.

### 6/ TEST AND STRETCH THE POSSIBILITIES OF THE DIGITAL

Plymouth will test out new artistic approaches to digital media to capture, extend, enhance and enrich the experience of place, supporting new collaborations between creative agencies, designers and researchers, and artists, participants and companies across the city.

Visitor to Katie Paterson  
with Zeller & Moye,  
*Hollow*, 2016.  
Courtesy Situations.



7 /  
MAKE MAKING VISIBLE

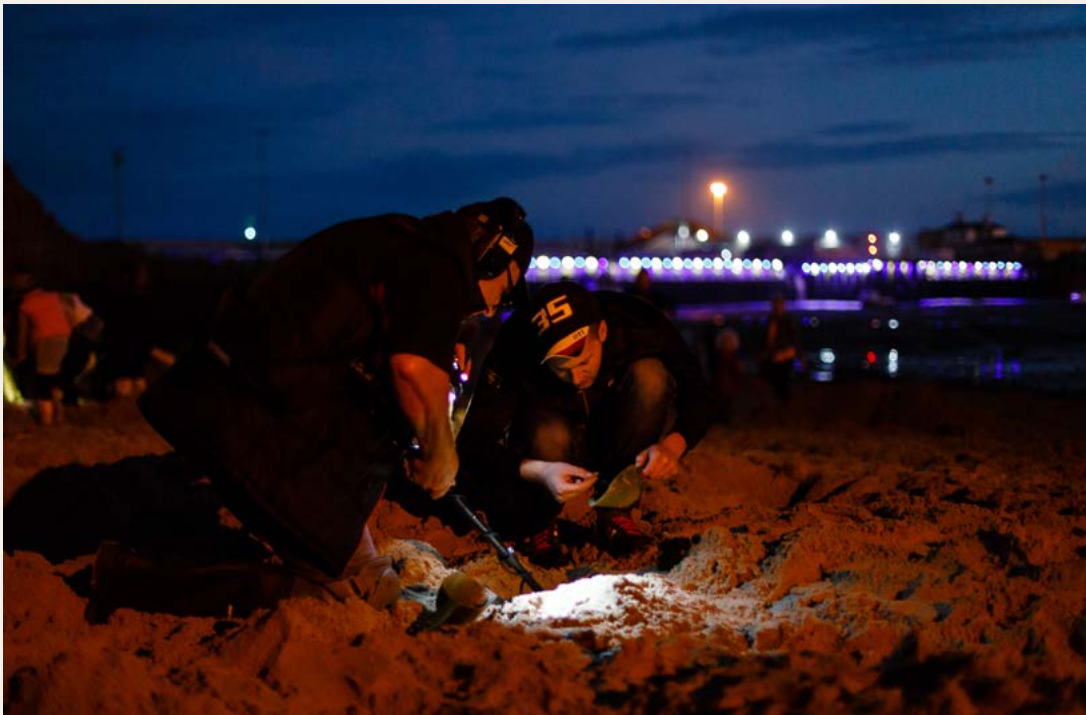
Plymouth will take pride in opening up the working process of artists, where appropriate, to create a greater understanding and ownership for arts in the public realm, and where possible allowing participatory processes to be evident in the presentation of the work.

8 /  
INVEST WISELY

Plymouth will pioneer a new policy for public art funding, pooling public art funds for use in the commissioning of public artworks and activities across the city, and supporting training opportunities for emerging artists and producers, whilst maintaining a set of existing public art assets, as well as supporting more ambitious and sensitive proposals for projects through Section 106 planning conditions.

9 /  
PROMOTE GENEROUSLY, OWN CAUTIOUSLY

Plymouth will support a culture of co-production and collaboration through work in the public realm, fostering a culture of generosity between organisations and the sharing of data and skills, whilst being careful about maintaining quality and integrity.



Michael Sailstorfer  
*Folkestone Digs*, 2014.  
Courtesy Situations.  
Photo: Steve Tanner.

1/  
BROADEN HORIZONS

Plymouth will choose to work with artists who want to connect directly with people's lives, creating space for them to test the limits of their practice and to contribute to the lived experience of this city, rather than simply producing a work for a site. This might mean encouraging established artists of international repute to develop projects of scale and ambition in locations they might never have visited before, identifying experts from other fields to work with artists to bring complex ideas to life, coaxing studio-based artists to work in the public realm for the first time and nurturing emerging artistic, producing and writing talent across all areas of the city.

The city will do this by taking advantage of the opportunities offered through the development of the History Centre and the marking of the Mayflower 400 anniversary in 2020. Plymouth will build towards this key date through the commissioning of landmark projects in the years prior to 2020 in order to establish ownership, expectation and awareness of the possibilities of creative encounters in public space.

Broadening horizons also means committing to expanding and learning opportunities through projects and programmes to allow for deeper public engagement beyond the spectacle of a one-off event.

Examples of inspirational projects elsewhere:

Kara Walker, *A Subtlety*, Brooklyn, U.S. 2014



In 2014, Creative Time, New York's public art producers commissioned Kara Walker to create a giant temporary sphinx-like sugar sculpture, sited in the sprawling industrial relics of Brooklyn's legendary Domino Sugar Factory, Walker's physically and conceptually expansive installation attracted over 140,000 over eight weeks and was entitled *A Subtlety, or the Marvellous Sugar Baby* an Homage to the unpaid and overworked Artisans who have refined our sweet tastes from the cane fields to the Kitchens of the New World on the Occasion of the demolition of the Domino Sugar Refining Plant.

Watch the video  
[www.creativetime.org/projects/karawalker](http://www.creativetime.org/projects/karawalker)

Above  
Kara Walker, *A Subtlety or the Marvellous Sugar Baby*, Brooklyn, 2014. Courtesy Creative Time. Photo: Jason Wyche.



Theaster Gates, *Sanctum*, Bristol 2015



In 2015, Situations commissioned Theaster Gates to create a project for Bristol 2015 European Green Capital. Hundreds of musicians, performers and speakers from across Bristol contributed to a continuous programme of sound performed in the bombed out shell of Temple Church in Bristol, over 24 days, 24 hours a day. A temporary structure, constructed from the remains of former sites of labour and worship across the city, housed Sanctum within the walls of the 14th century church. The structure served as an intimate gathering place which received over 29,000 visitors in 24 days.

Find out more about *Sanctum* here  
[www.situations.org.uk](http://www.situations.org.uk)

Theaster Gates, *Sanctum*  
 rises from within Temple  
 Church, Bristol, 2015. Courtesy  
 Situations. Photo: Max McClure.

## 2/ SHAKE UP PERMANENCE

There are currently limited resources (funding, capacity and partnerships) for maintaining the full portfolio of permanent public artworks in Plymouth to the desired standard. In addition, the original context of an artwork can be lost as developments take place across Plymouth, and maintenance responsibilities of artworks seems to lack clarity in the city. But in addition to a commitment to reviewing the lifespan of the current public art portfolio, which is set out under the action plan through a de-accessioning policy, Plymouth has the opportunity to foster collaborations with local residents, activists and producers on long-term projects, which may continue beyond an artist's initial catalysing role.

Homebaked, for example, in the Anfield area of Liverpool is a cooperative bakery and community land trust, which grew out of 2Up2Down, initiated and supported by Liverpool Biennial and artist Jeanne van Heeswijk. Such radical departures from the conventional notion of a public commission necessitate a rethinking of how we document, assess and judge their significance or success, as well as the nurturing of new kinds of producing and support structures to extend such projects beyond the initial event.

### Examples of inspirational projects elsewhere:

#### Futurefarmers, *Losæter*, Ongoing

Losæter developed over the past three years in Oslo, Norway, led by Californian-based Futurefarmers, through a growing constellation of farmers, oven builders, astronomers, artists, soil scientists and bakers. The physical home of *Losæter* is an unpromising site on Loallmenningen, which lies under the shadow of Oslo harbour's twin towers, the road tunnel's ventilation shafts. Futurefarmers proposed to build a public baking facility within an experimental architectural structure – as the organising principle of their project in Oslo, through which they explored the possibility of finding a sustainable and environmentally respectful form of grain production and cultivation on the land. The change in land use at Loallmenningen was signalled by a parallel project inspired by the artists – Herligheten – in which one hundred allotment beds were given away to Oslo residents, alongside Futurefarmers' grain field.

[www.flatbreadsociety.net](http://www.flatbreadsociety.net)  
[www.slowpace.no](http://www.slowpace.no)

Below  
 Futurefarmers' grainfield set against the  
 backdrop of Oslo harbour, Norway, 2013  
 Courtesy Situations. Photo: Max McClure.





Assemble, *Granby Four Streets*, Ongoing

Assemble are a London-based collective who work across the fields of art, design and architecture to create projects in tandem with the communities who use and inhabit them. Their architectural spaces and environments promote direct action and embrace a DIY sensibility. Assemble worked with the Granby Four Streets CLT and Steinbeck Studios to present a sustainable and incremental vision for an area in Toxteth Liverpool that builds on the hard work already done by local residents and translates it to the refurbishment of housing, public space and the provision of new work and enterprise opportunities.

The project won the Turner Prize 2015. The approach is characterised by celebrating the value of the area's architectural and cultural heritage, supporting public involvement and partnership working, offering local training and employment opportunities and nurturing the resourcefulness and DIY spirit that defines the four streets.

Read Oliver Wainwright on the project in The Guardian <https://goo.gl/myW65z>



*Granby Four Streets*  
Courtesy Assemble

### 3/ GIVE TIME

The single most dangerous risk to successful public art commissioning is the lack of time usually assigned to the production of artworks, cultural events and activities. Whether responding to a public art brief, creating a work in response to a particular opportunity or to coincide with a festival, or simply proposing a partnership, artists, producers and performers need time to develop ideas and to respond from an informed position. This can only happen as it might in an artist's studio or theatre rehearsal space, where there is time given for mistakes, cul-de-sacs and rewrites, and time to develop working relationships. Part of this process also requires levels of trust to develop between stakeholders and partners – trust in the artistic process, trust to develop sustainable funding models and trust to take difficult decisions if things are not working out.

Example of an inspirational project elsewhere:

Alex Hartley, *Nowhereisland*, 2012

An example of the benefit of time in the development of a project would be the production of Alex Hartley's *Nowhereisland* by Situations for the London 2012 Cultural Olympiad, where over 18 months a network of partnerships including particularly fruitful partnerships in Plymouth were developed to result in a deeply affecting programme of activities and engagement.

[www.nowhereisland.org](http://www.nowhereisland.org)



Young citizens contribute to the *Nowhereisland* constitution, Newquay, 2012. Courtesy Situations. Photo: Max McClure.



## 4/ AVOID FIELDS AND JUMP FENCES

Artists are rarely constrained by discipline or artform boundaries and neither should public art commissioning be within Plymouth. Some of the most exciting encounters in the public realm of recent years have involved immersive theatre and performance, particularly because these artforms directly engage the viewer or visitor experientially.

### Examples of inspirational projects elsewhere:

#### National Theatre Wales, *The Passion*, Port Talbot 2011

On the Easter weekend of 2011, a very different interpretation of the Passion play took place in the industrial coastal town of Port Talbot in south Wales. The performance revolved around the central character of 'The Teacher', played by one of the town's most famous sons, actor Michael Sheen, supported by a professional cast of twelve and more than one thousand locals. This epic piece of immersive promenade theatre, experienced in real time and space over seventy-two hours, self-consciously used the celebrity figure of Sheen as a foil for the Christ character to build a fervent following across the town towards its climatic end on a roundabout. What distinguishes this progressive form of theatre from other site-specific productions is the way in which the narrative and eventual script, developed by poet Owen Sheers, arose from a sensitive response to the town's historic decline, contemporary marginalization and threatened future. Whilst *The Passion* borrowed the narrative structure of the Gospel of Mark, that story was presented, as Sheers indicates, 'through the prism of Port Talbot today'.



*The Passion* performed in shopping centre, Port Talbot, 2011. Courtesy National Theatre Wales. Photo: Ian Kingsworth.

#### Extraordinary Bodies, *Weighting*, 2013 onwards

Extraordinary Bodies is a professional integrated circus company and partnership between Cirque Bijou & Diverse City. Combining circus, dance and theatre, *Weighting* tells the story of an extraordinary family who make new discoveries in the face of love and loss. The show celebrates risk-taking, transformation and questions the right time to let go. It premiered in Exeter in 2013 and after redevelopment it toured the UK in 2015. The cast included seven extraordinary disabled and non-disabled performers who took to the air on a huge transformative set in a joyful exploration of equilibrium and balance. They were accompanied by a five-piece band playing an original score, and backed by a local community choir formed as part of Extraordinary Bodies' integrated participatory programme SINGS.

<http://www.extraordinarybodies.org.uk>



Extraordinary Bodies, *Weighting* in Southwark, 2015. Photo: Richard Davenport. Courtesy Diverse City



## 5/ LISTEN TO YOUNG VOICES

Public space is shrinking and children and young people are the advocates for the value of non-commercial, free public spaces – whether digital or live. As Emma Morsi, Young Journalist at Arts Council England’s No Boundaries conference in 2013 suggested, “It’s this insidious war on public spaces over the thirty or forty years of market commercialisation and privatisation of public space that needs to be addressed. For the love of all things without boundaries can we inspire, support, nourish, develop and maintain our public spaces and remember they are for the people by the people.” Plymouth will entreat young people to join artists and performers in reclaiming public space through playful, provocative and sensory interventions.

### Examples of inspirational projects elsewhere:

#### *Haircuts by Children*

Devised by Canadian group Mammalian Diving Reflex, *Haircuts by Children* is a performance that involves children between the ages of 8-12 who are trained by professional hairstylists, and then paid to run a real hair salon, offering members of the public free haircuts. The project invites the consideration of young people as creative and competent individuals whose aesthetic choices can be trusted. While providing atypical entertainment for the public, *Haircuts by Children* also shifts the traditional power dynamic between children and adults, creating a safe social space where children and adults who live in the same community can meet and share a unique creative experience together. The idea that young people should be allowed to cut our hair evokes the same leap of faith, courage and understanding required to grant children deeper citizenship rights.

<http://mammalian.ca/projects/#haircuts-by-children>

#### *Forever Young*

*Forever Young* was a collaboration between Australian company One Step at a Time Like This and a group of teenage artists based in Tipperary, Ireland. The work premiered at Clonmel Junction Festival in Ireland, and then toured to Edinburgh Fringe Festival in 2015. One Step at a Time Like This brought their one-to-one approach to question ‘what happens to our youthful ideals as we grow older?’ ‘Where do they go?’ With a teenage accomplice, the audience set out on an adventure through city streets.

Read The Guardian review of the project:

<http://goo.gl/QyvRHF>



One Step at a Time Like This, *Forever Young*, Clonmel Junction Festival, Tipperary 2015  
Photo: Mihaela Bodlovic.

## 6/ TEST AND STRETCH THE POSSIBILITIES OF THE DIGITAL

With IDAT resident in Plymouth, the city is already primed to take the lead in terms of experimental and creative use of digital media, as evidenced in the city’s ground-breaking Artory app. This strength should be embraced by considering the use of digital media to broaden the diversity of participants and audiences in cultural activity and to nurture ground-breaking new ideas about engagement, interpretation and digital artworks experienced in the public realm.

### Examples of inspirational projects elsewhere:

#### *Playable City*, Bristol – Ongoing

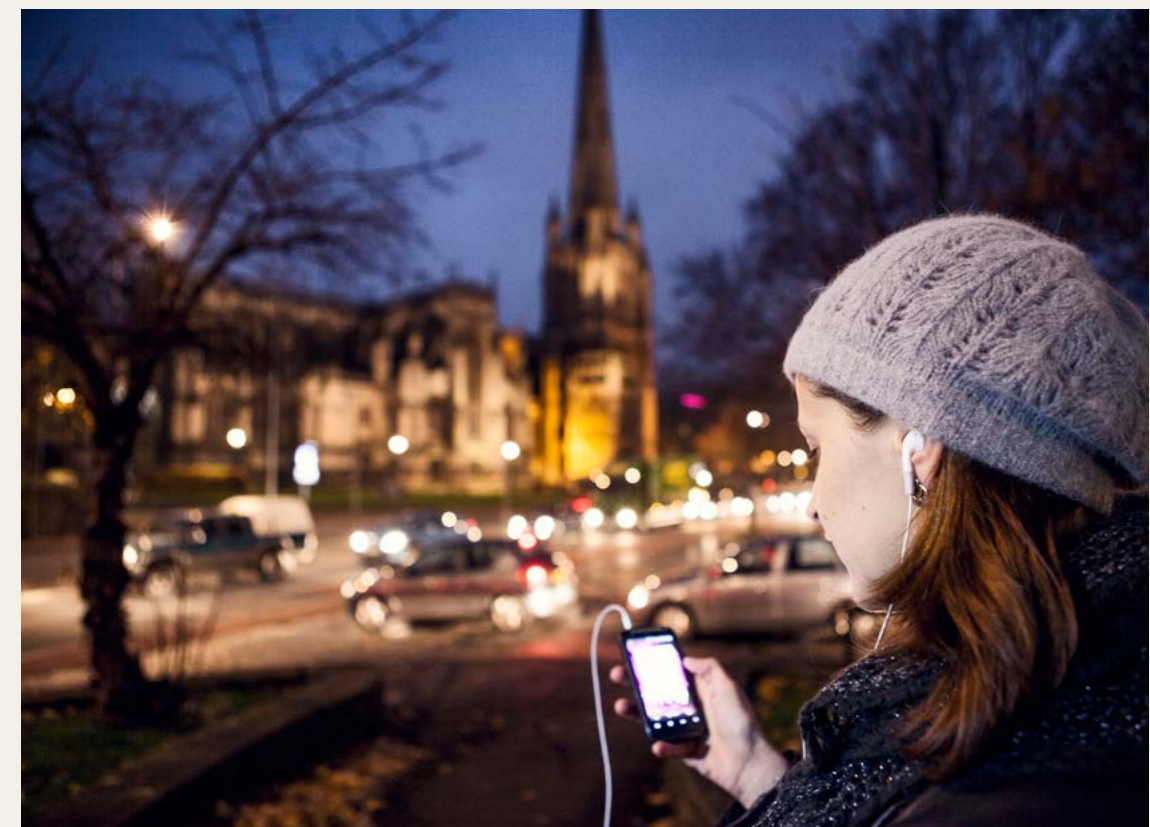
Through *The Playable City Award*, a biennial conference and a programme of global labs and commissions, Watershed and partners are exploring the notion of a Playable City, how play can influence and engage with city development and how we might create worldwide sustainable networks of creators and commissioners of Playable City works.

Find out about *Hello Lampost*, the internationally acclaimed Playable City prizewinner 2013  
[www.hellolamppost.co.uk](http://www.hellolamppost.co.uk)

#### Tony White *Missorts*, Bristol – Permanent Work

*Missorts* by Tony White is a permanent public artwork for Bristol. An urban soundwork delivered directly to your smartphone as a mobile app, *Missorts* combines ten location-triggered stories by ten writers set to a newly composed soundtrack. *Missorts* promises to immerse you in a surprising, new experience of the city.

Download the app and explore the city  
[www.missorts.com](http://www.missorts.com)



Tony White, *Missorts*, 2012.  
Courtesy Situations.  
Photo: Max McClure.



Blast Theory, *My Neck Of The Woods*, Manchester, 2013



In *My Neck Of The Woods* three young people walk through their neighbourhoods in Manchester, filming themselves as they go. You choose which of the three you would like to have a conversation with, whose questions you would like to answer, who you feel comfortable just being with. Select them and you are dropped into their live video stream. You travel with them as they tell you about their lives and as they ask you about yours. No two conversations are the same.

What they say depends on what you ask, what you ask depends on what they might propose. Each young person will have their own approach, their own interests, their own unique set of questions and places to explore with you. This 2013 project was part documentary, part performance, part live-stream video experience online.

Find out more here  
<http://goo.gl/WTUZST>

Blast Theory  
*My Neck Of The Woods*,  
Manchester 2013.

## 7/ MAKE MAKING VISIBLE

Plymouth will take pride in opening up the working process of artists, where appropriate, to create a greater understanding and ownership for arts in the public realm. This would not mean the standard presentation of models or drawings as part of a consultation process, but rather an opening up of ideas as a conversation about the making of artworks and arts events in the public realm. Plymouth is committed to encouraging a deeper exploration and participation in the arts, beyond 'like' or 'dislike'. To this end, the city will support opportunities through the process of making and producing for participants, stakeholders, residents, visitors and other cultural practitioners to have insight into the ideas behind a project.



A member of Crazy Glue gets to grips with hot forge work as part of a sculptural project with artists Thrussell and Thrussell. Saltram, Plymouth, 2014.  
Photo: Gem Ward.

## 8/ INVEST WISELY

Plymouth could lead the UK in pioneering the first smarter use for public art funding derived from Section 106, which truly delivers social, cultural and environmental value. This would entail creating a public art fund, managed according to these eleven principles, which would be allocated across new public artworks, events, activities and projects and (where relevant) the ongoing maintenance of existing works.

This would entail looking at planning policies and conditions with the planning team, and working through a set of recommendations at cabinet level, which would support a set of advisory documents for capital developments within the city.

The development of a formal framework for the creative use of Section 106, and alternative funding opportunities should be a priority in 2015-16, as well as identifying potential new funding streams.

In regards to the funding of maintenance, our recommendation is that a 'highlights list' be drawn up from the audited list of existing works which would be the primary focus for any funding derived from CIL for maintenance and improvement, but that a de-accessioning policy be drawn up to drive decision-making about the dismantling or removal of existing public artworks.



# 9/ PROMOTE GENEROUSLY, OWN CAUTIOUSLY

The Visual Arts Plan will promote better cross-collaboration across the arts sector in the city, and a commitment to promote and support all activities in the public realm will benefit the profile of public art. This spirit of generosity between organisations and projects should, however, be balanced with a commitment to critical, aesthetic and ethical integrity – which effectively means making careful choices about what the city itself chooses to promote.

# 10/ PASS ON

Plymouth pledges to pass on information, evaluation outcomes and data to other cities so that the city acts as a test-site as well as a pioneer in the exchange of learning and skills in the support of progressive public art. To do this, Plymouth pledges to work with Arts Council England and Audience Agency to gather quantitative and qualitative data which can be benchmarked against other key social, economic and cultural impact data in outdoor arts, public art and cross-artform productions nationally.



Students from Elmfield School for Deaf Children visit *Sanctum*, Bristol, 2015, Courtesy Situations.

# 11/ GROW PRODUCING, AS WELL AS ARTISTIC, TALENT

Arts Council England has recently identified a skills gap in producing and project management as part of their Outdoor Arts strategic review.<sup>7</sup> It is clear from anecdotal evidence gathered throughout the consultation for this strategy, that there is a skills gap in Plymouth, which could adversely affect the progression of public artworks and events.

Plymouth will commit to working with the planning teams within the city council to introduce local producers to developers as part of their commitment to resourcing the production of public art within the city through the planning system.

## Examples of inspirational projects elsewhere:

**Culture Hive Small Scale Development Programmes** (which could be tailored to audiences for public realm work)

[www.a-m-a.co.uk/ssdp/](http://www.a-m-a.co.uk/ssdp/)

**Workshops and talks run by In Certain Places,** University of Central Lancashire

[incertainplaces.org](http://incertainplaces.org)



*The World At Your Feet*, Plymouth, 2012.

<sup>7</sup> Unpublished Arts Council Outdoor Arts discussion paper for external reference group, 30th January 2012.



## SECTION 3: DELIVERY



Keith Harrison,  
*Heavy Rock, New Expressions 3*,  
Plymouth, 2015.  
Photo: Guy Channing.

## DELIVERY

We intend that the principles of this plan should be owned, promoted and supported by the city council and by individuals and organisations across the city. This plan recognises that a rich and fertile culture for the growth of public art should include a variety of approaches from artist-led pop-up projects to major city redevelopment initiatives. Producing processes appropriate to the opportunity should be applied in each case, but broadly across the city, there are a number of changes and improvements that could be made strategically to assist in realising the vision for public art in this city.



*The World At Your Feet*,  
Plymouth, 2012.

This is a working document and therefore we offer a set of recommendations for implementation over the next 18 months.

To improve the integration between the arts sector and city council processes, we recommend:

- Embed the principles of the Public Art Plan within the Plymouth Plan and SPD recommendations document and explore how new projects can be more effectively funded through CIL and S106 contributions.
- Explore how relationships can be strengthened with planning opportunities to develop different models for delivery of the Public Art Plan through cultural organisations in the city; championing the principles and supporting the development of experience and talent to deliver projects.
- Establish a series of public art training workshops for planning officers, Destination Plymouth and officers with specific remit for Health and Wellbeing within the city council to inform and share ideas about alternative forms of public art and how these might best be supported;
- Devise a set of case studies for better public art commissioning to present to developers as part of the planning process from the principles;
- Develop a list of suitable curators, producers and project managers within the city and Plymouth's arts ecology to draw upon for the commissioning of public art, ensuring investment goes into the existing arts infrastructure;
- Develop a policy for the decommissioning, re-siting, maintenance and storage for existing public art works;
- Identify areas for improved efficiencies in maintaining artworks and monuments through a review of maintenance plans and contractual arrangements in priority areas.



To improve, develop and sustain the knowledge and skills in public art producing and commissioning and nurturing a culture of peer-to-peer learning in the city for arts in the public realm

- Improve the written and online information, advice and support available to local artists who wish to stage activities and projects in the public realm and expectations through an online resource of downloadable documents including a 'first port of call' checklist for presenting work in the public domain to be uploaded and updated by the Public Art Officer, sample risk assessments and event management plans, sample event licence applications, shared evaluation reports and audience data findings, as well as toolkits written by local partners and organisations;
- Establish a programme of professional development and training with the arts and HE sector including:
  - a platform of lectures and talks through a partnership with Plymouth College of Art;
  - training workshops and masterclasses for producers and artists centred around learning about the challenges, opportunities and considerations for presenting work in the public realm possibly in collaboration with Visual Arts Plymouth, the Barbican and with Plymouth Arts Centre;
- Nurture emerging talent through Vital Sparks with a particular stream centred on the public realm;
- Increase training and development and diversify and increase the number of artists working in public realm, in terms of artistic background as well as (but not exclusively) ethnicity, age, gender, disability, faith and sexuality by offering opportunities for entry level project support;
- Create shadowing opportunities for emerging artists on larger-scale projects in development.

To ensure that the city invests wisely in public art

- Research European funding opportunities and develop partnerships to access alternative longer term funding through HE and Further Education partnerships;
- Invest in cross-project consistent evaluation strategies to create shared quantitative and qualitative benchmarks across the city;
- Work smarter – offering examples of how to raise match-funding against planning conditions, CIL and Section 106.

To improve and promote ambitious new public artworks and projects in the city

- Establish a Public Art Champions group led by the Public Art Officer and the Executive Director of Plymouth Culture .This group would be appointed on a rolling 18-month commitment to attend three out of four quarterly meetings and four advisory evenings during the year for public art proposals. Their remit would be as follows:
  - To be useful (!) offering advice and a steer on proposals, rather than to act as an assessment panel;
  - To feedback on the quality of public art projects on a twice yearly basis to Plymouth Culture and Plymouth City Council, and to review the delivery plan on an annual basis to ensure updated action plans and new policy developments are incorporated as appropriate;
  - To scan the horizon for future appropriate sites and opportunities and to bring them to the attention of the wider arts sector and particularly external champions;
  - To identify and develop opportunities for co-commissioning between partners across the city;
  - To improve knowledge of and access to a wider diversity of artists and performers through the advisory sessions;
  - To create and facilitate further networking and brokerage opportunities between artists, arts organisations, arts consultants, developers, architects and other public art commissioners.
- Establish an annual public art forum in which to set out the ambitions of the city, to track any potential collaborations, funding applications or clashes in terms of the calendar. Each year, the findings from the previous year would be presented and any learning shared and taken forward.



Keith Harrison,  
*Acts of Making, Tombstone*,  
Plymouth 2015.  
Photo: Dom Moore.



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[www.situations.org.uk](http://www.situations.org.uk)  
[www.plymouthculture.co.uk](http://www.plymouthculture.co.uk)



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Annika Kahrs,  
*A Concert for the Birds*, Bristol 2014.  
Courtesy Situations.  
Photo: Max McClure.



# A PUBLIC ART PLAN FOR THE CITY OF PLYMOUTH

Front cover image  
*Parkour in Plymouth.* Courtesy Street Motion  
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