

TIME TO THINK

An Approach to Peer Reflection for Artists
and Practitioners in Participatory Arts

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And facilitated by Helix Arts

HELIX ARTS 2015

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TIME TO THINK: An Approach to Peer Reflection for Artists and Practitioners in Participatory Arts

First published digitally in 2015 by Helix Arts 1-4 Forth Lane, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 5HX

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Minor corrections made January 2016.

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1 FOREWORD

“I was surprised at how very enjoyable it was.”¹

During 2014 Helix Arts worked with several participatory arts networks² to develop a structured approach to Peer Review as a way to improve practice.³ Those who took part felt that, while evaluation for funders was well-established, opportunities for critical reflection on arts practice were much less common. We therefore set out to explore whether Peer Review might fill that gap and, if so, to develop a framework that could help others to undertake it.

The work was funded by Arts Council England, through its commitment to improving quality in work by and with children and young people; Creative Scotland and Artworks Wales have also been part of this development process.

The exploratory process itself was straightforward.

- 1 A half day workshop was held in March 2014, during which the participants shared ideas and agreed a broad framework to guide the reviews, subsequently written up by François Matarasso and Toby Lowe.
- 2 Several people volunteered to test out the framework over the next six months, and a small amount of money was used to support the time and costs—something that was recognised as important in enabling the participation of freelance artists.
- 3 A second half-day workshop was held in November 2014, at which five people reported on their experience of Peer Reflection before further discussion of the process. Written and creative responses were also made and this final report draws on that material.

The whole group, but especially the people who undertook pilot peer reviews, found the experience very rewarding because it helped them to think about their artistic work in a fresh and empowering way. Our approach gave the artists involved

¹ This comment, and all other quotes in this report, was made by a participant in the Peer Review process conceived and managed by Helix Arts in 2014.

² The networks were Arts Alliance (National Alliance for Arts in Criminal Justice); Connected Culture (London); Consortium for Participatory Arts Learning (North West); East Midlands Participatory Arts Forum; National Arts & Health Network; and West Midlands Participatory Arts Forum: See Appendix 5.2 for more details.

³ An explanation of the shift of terminology, from Peer Review to Peer Reflection, will be found in Section 2 of this report.

control of the process. They chose to do it, and selected the work they wanted to focus on; they identified a peer and decided when, where and how the review would happen. Most of all, perhaps, they were not required to report on what they learnt about their work, but only to share their thoughts about the experience of the Peer Review they took part in

This report sets out the reasoning behind the Peer Reflection project, explains in more detail how it was done, and provides an updated version of the framework that was developed. We do not see it as more than work in progress, and we hope that everyone involved, as well as those who may read this document, will feel encouraged to explore further how a structured peer reflection process might help strengthen the practice of participatory arts.

Toby Lowe & François Matarasso
December 2014

2 WHY PEER REFLECTION?

2.1 NO TIME TO THINK

*Equality, liberty, humility, simplicity
You glance through the mirror and there's eyes staring clear
At the back of your head as you drink
And there's no time to think*

Bob Dylan, 1978

Participatory arts—we use the term widely here, to include a range of arts work in which an artist facilitates a creative process with people in a spirit of co-production—has never been so visible or influential. Its methods and values are appearing in many forms of artistic practice, and are found across the spectrum of social intervention: in education, youth work and public health and welfare.

However, resources to do this work well are becoming ever scarcer. What funds are available are often tied to targets and performance indicators that are not always meaningful to artists and others in the field. Evaluation is often confused with monitoring, so that it becomes merely a way of checking 'deliverable outcomes'.

As a result, participatory artists find themselves going from project to project without the resources to do it as well as they could, the time to learn from their experience or the opportunity to share knowledge with colleagues. The underlying problems will change only with a change in policy, which is unlikely at present. But artists are independent, creative people. They do a lot with limited resources to create their projects. Why should they not be equally creative in support of their own learning and practice?

Every artist decides for themselves how to grow, renew or extend their artistic practice. It is more a matter of commitment than money. Above all, it takes time, and freelance artists can usually find some time for rewarding activities, even if they would naturally prefer paid work. But being committed and making time are not always enough, on their own, to support successful learning. As in making art, method is also necessary.

This is where a framework for peer reflection may help. Adopting structures other artists have found helpful, asking questions your peers agree are interesting, sharing insights in a supportive way—such methodical approaches can make all the difference between kicking things around in your head and thinking them through productively.

2.2 PEER REVIEW OR PEER REFLECTION?

Peer Review is an established term. It is used in different contexts to mean different things, from academic assessments before publication to calculations of potential courses of action in management. In a culture where the performance of individuals and organisations is often measured, it can easily be seen as part of an assessment or evaluation process.

From the outset, the participants in this project were clear that they were looking for something else—a space where it was possible to reflect honestly on and learn from arts practice. They felt that evaluation, while both necessary and important, was a different thing. At the second workshop it was agreed that describing this process as *Peer Reflection* was more accurate and gave a better sense of the character and purpose of what is proposed. That term is therefore used from here onwards.

2.3 WHAT IS PEER REFLECTION?

“There were lots of surprises, but they were all good, as we learnt a lot about each other’s approaches and shared a common understanding about the work.”

For present purposes, we see Peer Reflection as:

- **A structured process through which an external peer helps an artist or arts worker to reflect openly, honestly and rigorously on their practice.**

In this context, that practice focuses on participatory arts, in which the professional artist is involved in a process of co-creation with people who do not have a professional role in the arts.

It does not relate *specifically* to work involving children and young people, since discussions at the first workshop concluded that there did not seem to be any fundamental aspect of Peer Reflection that would need to change if the artist was working with this group. Likewise, artists working in other ways may also find value in Peer Reflection and the ideas set out here are open to adaptation to other forms of practice.

2.4 WHO IS PEER REFLECTION FOR?

Peer Reflection could be applied to any aspect of participatory arts practice but the participants identified two critical but distinct areas to look at:

1. **The organisation and management of the work's context**
(‘the space’ that has been constructed for participatory art);
2. **The practice of the artist within that space**
(theories, plans, working methods and creative results).

For some participatory arts work, these two aspects will be planned and managed by the same person; in other cases they may be undertaken by different people, and even by different organisations. A complete overview of a participatory arts project will necessarily look at both of these (and other) aspects, but an organisation or an artist may choose to focus on just one area through Peer Reflection if there are particular issues or concerns they want to explore.

For simplicity's sake, we refer here to a person who is being helped to think about their practice as the **Artist**, recognising that they may not be directly involved in creative work (for instance if they are producing a project in whose delivery they have commissioned an artist). For the same reason, we refer to the external person as the **Peer**, again recognising that their practice may not be exactly the same as the Artist's. The capitalisation of ‘Artist’ and ‘Peer’ in this report should help the reader see when the text is specific to these two roles.

2.5 WHY USE PEER REFLECTION?

“The experience itself left me feeling really good—deep, honest, thorough, positive, inspired and a little challenged.”

Sustaining a critical perspective on your work

The purpose of Peer Reflection is to help an Artist sustain a critical relationship with their own practice. Of course, such a questioning approach to one's work is integral to a strong practice in many fields and professions, but it is not easy to maintain when you are deeply invested in what you do. It may be harder still when an Artist is working with others whose confidence in both process and results it is part of their role to secure. So it can be very helpful to discuss a project with someone who understands what is involved, who shares your values and aspirations, and who is equally committed to doing better work.

Peer Reflection is not evaluation, nor an assessment of an artist's performance, skills or importance. Above all, it is not a judgement by one person on the work of another. At its heart is the idea that it involves two people who do similar work, share a range of assumptions and values, and hold one another's practice in genuine respect. Each person's opinion matters to the other, because it is informed and experienced in the same field of arts practice.

Each person can learn from the other and from the process of exploring, with care and rigour, where they agree and disagree about aspects of their practice. A good Peer can expect to learn as much about their own work, ideas and experience through the process of exploring the Artist's project with them.

“I didn't anticipate how much the opportunity to listen would provoke reflections on my own practice / organisation / approach to project management. The nature of the art forms were so different that the objective distance made me work to find the parallels and it was this shift that provoked new thinking and reflection.”

Facilitating, enabling and empowering

They are peers, but they have different roles. It is the Artist's work only that is the subject of the Peer Reflection. It is by exploring a specific, recent project that the process can help its creator think more clearly and objectively about its strengths and weaknesses, about its meanings and interpretations, about possible alternatives, about its place within a wider body of professional practice and much more.

The Peer's role is to support reflection and the development of new insight. It is not, as already said, to assess or judge. But nor is it to teach, advise, mentor, coach or guide. As far as arts practice is concerned (to say nothing of life), the most valuable insight an artist can gain is usually what they discover or realise for themselves. In practice, that may mean that asking good questions is often the most effective support to thinking that a Peer can offer.

Much as a good participatory artist will facilitate, enable and empower the people they are working with to achieve their own best work, the Peer's task is to help the Artist to learn *for themselves* about their own work.

“I found it an in-depth, utterly reflective and honest (mostly self-realised) insight into some ways I work.”

3 A FRAMEWORK FOR PEER REFLECTION

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This section sets out the latest iteration of the Peer Reflection process that was developed by the participants during this exploration of the idea. It remains an outline, which you can use, adapt and build on as you think best, for practical or creative reasons.

However, since people's experience of this framework so far has been very positive, it might be good to be clear, if only between Artist and Peer, about the reasons behind any changes you might make, so that you can consider afterwards the relative merits of different approaches. Instinct or personal preference is reason enough to make changes, provided both Artist and Peer are open that this is the reason for those changes.

"I don't think I gave a lot of thought about what I hoped for my practice — I was simply experiencing it to see what did happen. I liked this approach as I was totally open to it and very pleased with what came out of it."

3.2 QUALITIES AND GROUND RULES

Characteristics of a Peer Reflection

The participants agreed that Peer Reflection is defined by three key ideas:

- **STRUCTURE:** Peer Reflection is not the same as a chat with a friend, valuable as that might be: it needs a structure agreed beforehand by both parties, setting out its aims, focus, timescale and expectations.
- **MUTUALITY:** Both parties should share values, interests and practices—though that does not mean they agree about everything or even work in the same way—and both should expect to benefit from the process.
- **LEARNING:** the purpose of Peer Reflection is to strengthen arts work, by enabling both parties to deepen their understanding of their own practice and its place within the wider field of participatory art.

Behaviours

Within this simple framework, each Peer Reflection will be different, since it involves different people with different practices and interests, focussing on actual work. However, the pilots suggest that the process will be most productive (and enjoyable) where Artist and Peer work together in ways that are:

- **Honest**, enabling an open and objective discussion;
- **Optimistic**, expecting that constructive, supportive and positive analysis will contribute to better results;
- **Careful**, ensuring that, where challenges do arise, the process is sensitive and respectful;
- **Diligent**, so that agreements are met and commitments fulfilled.

One possible risk, in this approach, is the blurring of lines between Peer and friend. Good Peer Reflections are likely to be conducted by people who are not already good friends since they offer a different—and normally more objective—form of support, focused closely on critical review of practice: friendship is something else.

“I understood the importance of great facilitation—gentle probing encouraged us to think deeper about issues.”

Ground rules

Peer Reflection rests on a foundation of trust. Since the Artist is more vulnerable in the process than the Peer, their confidence in it needs to be protected by some simple ground rules:

- **Confidentiality**: what is said in a Peer Reflection meeting can only be disclosed by, or with the prior agreement of, the Artist;
- **Consent**: the Artist should freely agree to take part (i.e. it should not be a contractual condition) as well as agreeing to the structure and process; they should be free to end the Peer Reflection without explanation at any stage.

Finally, both Peer and Artist should recognise a duty of care to each other **and to third parties**. For example, confidentiality should be extended to any discussion of project participants that might arise in the reflection.

Naturally, Artist and Peer may agree some further ground rules in particular cases, reflecting their particular situation or concerns.

3.3 WHO IS THE RIGHT PEER?

“I spent time thinking who to involve and how to involve them. Is it good enough to just talk about the art work? Should we invite our reviewer to come and see our work process? We wanted to invite someone in to see the project work, but it became very difficult to set up. Our reviewer saw case studies and images of the work—was that enough?”

The success of Peer Reflection depends on finding the right person. In the pilots, Artists spent some time identifying the right Peer, and the first person approached did not always prove to be suitable.

But it is hard to set rules, other than that the Peer must not have been involved in the work on which the Artist wants to reflect. Some Artists worked with strangers, some with people they knew by reputation, some with people they knew quite well. The absence of definitive answers in this and other aspects, is one reason why principles and behaviours are suggested here.

Some Artists used a broker—a third person to advise them on who they might approach to act as a Peer. This could be done informally or formally. If the broker is a formal part of the process, it will also be necessary to clarify their role, as there are different models.

Some people also liked the idea of having a broker present at Artist–Peer discussion, in an observer capacity and able to feedback at the end. This approach will entail obvious costs, for instance of time and resource in involving third person. But it may also involve less obvious ones, such as a loss of intimacy and trust. The value of the idea must be left to individual artists.

“We valued having an external facilitator, someone who understood the work we were involved in and whose work we respected.”

3.4 HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE?

The pilot Peer Reflections varied in length and intensity. They were generally planned and undertaken over a period of three or four months, but did not involve more than two or three face-to-face sessions, sometimes fewer. It seemed that a single meeting, well prepared for and in the right conditions, could be sufficient. Other people liked time to think about what had come up in a first session so that they could return to an issue in a following one.

People generally felt that the venue and timing were important but also largely a matter of personal choice. For one person, an afternoon walk followed by tea and

cake was ideal; another wanted to use her hands to make while talking; a third preferred a structured conversation across a table. Several Artists in the pilot made their own work in response to the experience as part of how they processed it.

“We needed a space we could all get to easily (we work across the West Midlands) The space we used was a bit soulless and too big. Next time we would think more carefully about this aspect of the review.”

The specific format, it seems, is less important than that it suits the Artist and the Peer, and provides a space in which they can feel comfortable and relaxed. But this is also an area where the best should not become an enemy of the good. The difficulty of implementing the ideal approach should get in the way of undertaking Peer Reflection: what matters is doing it, regularly and rigorously.

“I learnt to balance my aspiration to do the best review possible with a need to make it happen.”

3.5 WHAT IS THE FOCUS ?

“I really valued the opportunity to listen! That may sound unusual, but I am often so caught up in the day, that finding the time to simply listen and reflect is a challenge.”

It is important to identify the areas of a project that the Artist is most concerned to think about and understand better. As has been said, a Peer Reflection is not an evaluation, so it is likely to be concerned with outcomes only insofar as they relate to practice.

That said, artists working with people will naturally be interested in the whole spectrum of what their work achieves. In Peer Reflection, that might be less a matter of whether some desirable change was observed than of *how* and *why* it might have resulted from the arts activity. Likewise Peer Reflection could be a very good way of exploring the possible interpretations of what was observed and so questioning the meanings and assumptions underlying an artist's practice.

Above all Peer Reflection can support a practicing artist in thinking closely about what they actually *do* in a participatory project, from the big scale of conception and planning, through the mid-scale of organising a workshop, to the small scale of how they interact with one person in a single moment. That may be its greatest value in strengthening artists in their practice.

3.6 THE FRAMEWORK FOR REFLECTION

“The framework areas were good ones—they provided the right basis for the discussion. The questions are good prompts for supportive conversations.”

The people involved in a Peer Reflection are best placed to decide what areas are of most interest to them, and that, of course, might change as things arise. What follows are some suggestions that were used during the pilot stage.

- **CONTEXT:** developing an understanding of a specific situation, the project circumstances and how the Artist’s response related to them;
- **RELATIONSHIPS:** looking at the relationships between the Artist and the project participants, between participants themselves, and with managers, external partners, funders and others;
- **POWER:** looking at where power lay in the project, whether it shifted over time and if so why, the nature and availability of choices for participants and artist, where decisions were made, notably creative ones about authorship, etc.;
- **CHANGE:** exploring what, when, how and why change occurred (whether it was observed or inferred) for any of the people involved, including the artist; not neglecting ‘negative’ indicators, and exploring the possible meanings of any changes observed;
- **ART:** considering what happened creatively, the Artist’s plans or intentions, how the activities were received or adapted, the material and immaterial things that were created, and the evolving dialogue between Artist, participants and others.
- **EXPERIENCE:** one important thing that can be explored in Peer Reflection—because it is so little addressed elsewhere—is what the Artist *feels* about their experience of the project, and what sense they are making of it. This might particularly consider what it is hard to put into words, and during the pilots several artists made creative responses in which they expressed some of what they were thinking about the work being focused on.

Some prompt questions that may help in exploring these areas are included in the appendix to this report.

“Clear themes focused our thinking; the questions helped to think about things in more detail. It’s OK to say that a specific question doesn’t apply to their work, but it was good to be asked to explain their thinking.”

4 PRINCIPLES AND SUGGESTIONS

4.1 PRINCIPLES OF PEER REFLECTION

Peer Reflection is a way of thinking about your work: how you do it will be shaped by your values and ideas, experiences and preferences—and by those of whoever you do it with. It would be out of step with the spirit of Peer Reflection to be prescriptive about process and probably counterproductive as well.

At the same time, there are ways of thinking about your practice that cannot be described as Peer Reflection and, perhaps, that those involved in this process would not recommend. Setting out some Principles of Peer Reflection is a way to define, albeit loosely, an approach and some values. We do not say that a Peer Reflection that does not follow all these principles cannot be successful. But we suggest that it is more likely to be successful if it does follow them or at least if it can explain why one or more principle is not appropriate or feasible.

Tight enough, loose enough

One of the most valuable things the group learnt through the process of developing the Peer Reflection Framework was that it needed to be both tight and loose. It had to be tight enough to provide a focus for reflection, and to provide a shared point of reference for participatory practitioners, but loose enough to be relevant to artists with very different practices, working in very different contexts, with very different people. The feedback so far suggests that the Framework achieves this. With reference points for discussion, Artists could select the elements that were meaningful to them, and follow a trajectory that focussed on relevant issues.

Ownership by the Artist

The pilot phase strengthened the view that Peer Reflection is something that must be chosen by the Artist concerned, and therefore that they must be free to do it in ways that suit them best. Peer Reflection must not become another burden for overstretched artists, another thing they feel obliged to do. Apart from anything else, the experience of the pilots suggests that it is valuable only so far as you are committed finding new insights into your work. Artists and Peers who understand the value of critical reflection will benefit from the kind of approach outlined here: others probably won't.

Clear agreements

Whatever form a Peer Reflection takes, its agreements—defined by the ideas in 3.2 above—should be mutually negotiated and agreed in advance. There is wide scope for misunderstandings otherwise, which is likely to produce wasted effort, frustration or worse.

Focused

Peer Reflection benefits from being a short, focused effort at thinking well about your work. It should not encourage unending introspection. It works best when it is linked to a single, recently-completed piece of work, and so it should be time-limited, with a small number of conversations or activities over a short period. It is not an alternative form of friendship, mentoring or counselling, any of which artists might pursue over the longer time. It is a structured critical reflection on artistic practice in order to help the next project to be that bit better.

The process is the outcome

There should be no expectation of reporting in Peer Reflection. The process is its own end, and should be seen as additional to any evaluation work that may be being undertaken. An Artist should be under no obligation to tell anyone else what they have learned or gained through the Reflection. The test is whether it supports a development in their work over time.

Artists should be free to document and record the process, and their learning, in whatever way they feel is most appropriate. Those piloting the Peer Reflection process wrote journals and reports, kept diaries and made videos. Each was unique, and personal to them.

Understand and meet the costs involved

Undertaking Peer Reflection requires resources, in the time of both Artist and Peer, and in the cost of travel and other expenses. If this is to be a genuine opportunity for Artists, then the question of how these costs are met must be addressed. If initiated by an Artist, they can decide how to account for the costs of their own time. If initiated by others, it must not be assumed that Artist or Peer will provide their time unpaid (although they may decide to do this). Resources to undertake Peer Reflection can be built into project budgets and personal or organisational continuing professional development (CPD) allocations.

4.2 SUGGESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

Suggestions or recommendations?

The experience of testing approaches to Peer Reflection has made the people involved very positive about what can be achieved and the value of investing time and effort into this form of continuing professional development (CPD). At the same time, we are reluctant to make recommendations, because of the limited scale of the pilots undertaken so far, because we have not been invited to do so and because the world is not short of recommendations. So we limit ourselves to some suggestions, and offer ways forward so that others can benefit from the Peer Reflection process in a similar way to those involved in the pilots.

Suggestions for artists

Although our testing of Peer Reflection involved a small number of artists, it is very striking how enthusiastically they responded to the opportunity. Everyone felt that it was a very enjoyable, interesting and valuable experience and all said they would do it again on their own initiative. It can be hard to make time for additional commitments, especially if you are working freelance. But perhaps the rewards—in terms of new ideas, energy or confidence—outweigh the effort. Not every project needs this approach: but it could be a very valuable addition to practice, two or three times a year.

While we think Peer Reflection is one way of sustaining and improving artistic practice, it may also provide an advantage in a competitive field. The arts managers involved in the process felt that an artist committed to independent, critical reflection on their practice would be a more interesting person to commission.

“I was surprised and delighted to find that my partners in the work were also keen to speak with my Peer and use this opportunity to have an independent eye and sounding board—at all levels of the project.”

We suggest that artists find time and resources to undertake this process as part of their creative practice. This may be through incorporating the process into applications for artists' own projects, or by allocating the resources otherwise identified for their continuing professional development (CPD).

Suggestions for arts organisations

If participatory artists make a commitment to Peer Reflection as part of their CPD, we suggest that arts organisations should respond to that in their relationship with them. Ideally, we would like to see arts organisations supporting this key part of continuing professional development with facilities, travel costs and paid time. After all, arts organisations consider it normal to invest in CPD for their employees and

there are equally good reasons for them to do the same for the freelance artists on whose practice their programmes depend. We recognise this is difficult in the present financial climate. However, the investment that arts organisations make in the development of artists is one way to distinguish themselves for funders. We suggest therefore that arts organisations should consider how they invest in the CPD of the freelance artists they work with and how they demonstrate that they value the kind of rigorous practice that Peer Reflection entails.

“It provided an opportunity for us to redefine our role which was very helpful and also to think about how we will continue to have these types of conversations and how we will involve artists in the process.”

Suggestions for (arts) funding bodies

There are many funding bodies, both within and outside the arts, who care about the quality of participatory arts activity, and the development of skilled practitioners. These funding bodies could do much to encourage artists and organisations working in the field to make Peer Reflection a consistent part of their practice. The obvious way of doing that is by rewarding those who do commit to independently supported critical reflection. This could be achieved by:

- Asking for Peer Reflection as part of any work that they fund (much as evaluation is already required);
- Welcoming applications that include the costs of Peer Reflection; or
- Paying higher fees to artists who support and pay for their own Peer Reflection.

We believe that an approach that allows a minimum amount of non-contact time within any participatory arts project—for planning and preparation as well as Peer Reflection—would significantly improve the quality of the arts practice and, crucially, the experience of the participants.

4.3 WAYS FORWARD

Those involved in this process identified several ways of taking up these ideas:

- Publishing the Peer Reflection Framework in an attractive physical form. If this is to be something that Artists desire to use, then it should be in a form which is creative, useful and relevant to them. This could be distributed free to artists and organisations who request it.
- Publishing the Peer Reflection Framework as an online resource, free to download and use by anyone. The online resource can also provide examples of how people have used it (to act as inspiration for others) and be a repository for any learning that Artists wish to share from their Peer Reflection.

- Support a next phase of roll-out, to generate further champions for Peer Reflection. This could be facilitated via the hub organisations and networks of participatory artists who have been involved so far.
- Securing support from funders and commissioners. Crucial to the take-up of Peer Reflection by artists and organisations will be the messages that they receive from funders about their willingness to underwrite the costs of the Peer Reflection process, and their view of Peer Reflection as a marker of quality for the practitioners who undertake it.

“The impact of Peer Reflection on my future practice included: Making new contacts for working together in the future; Recognising again how important reflection is on our projects, so we have made a conscious effort to include it in our future work; Creating a piece of my own artwork in response to the peer reflection experience; and Being able to focus on one project and talking about it with peers has helped me feed the findings into a new bid, and enabled me to look at working with the LGBT community on a much larger scale with new partners.”

5 APPENDIX

5.1 PROMPT QUESTIONS

The following questions were suggested as starting points for reflection. If you are thinking about using these, it be helpful for Artist and Peer to discuss them in advance, so that they can think about how they might respond, and what materials might be useful to illustrate or inform the conversations that flow from them; for example, are there examples of artwork, or documentation from a project that would inform aspects of the conversation?

“I was surprised to find how useful that dreadful question / suggestion was: ‘Let’s go right back and tell me how you began’.”

The wording of the questions is less important than the conversation and reflection they lead to. They could be rephrased in a more open format: ‘*Tell me about your planning for the project*’. Or questions that establish what or how something was done (‘*How did you introduce the project to the participants?*’) could link with questions exploring the rationale (‘*Why did you decide to do it in that way?*’).

AREA	THE CONSTRUCTION OF SPACE/CONTEXT	ARTISTS’ PRACTICE
CONTEXT	How did you develop an understanding of the context of the participants’ lives?	What (if anything) did you feel was important to know about participants, and their situations?
	Who helped you to develop your knowledge?	What influenced your decision?
	How did that knowledge translate into the project design?	If it was important, what research did you do, and how?
RELATIONSHIP	How did the project design and management enable artists and participants to build meaningful creative relationships?	What did you do to develop relationships with participants?
	What was the duration of the relationship?	What did you do to develop relationships between participants?
	What was the ratio between artists and participants?	How well did these strategies/actions work?

POWER	<p>What were the power relationships in the project?</p> <p>Who decided the structure of the project (locations, timings etc.)?</p> <p>Who decided who the artist should be?</p> <p>Did the power relationships change over time?</p> <p>How were participants involved in decision-making about the project?</p>	<p>Whose work is it?</p> <p>How were decisions made about what is created, made or performed?</p> <p>What roles did you play in developing the project's creative vision?</p> <p>How was the on-going direction of the project negotiated between artist and participants?</p> <p>Who thanked who at the end of the project?</p>
CHANGE	<p>How was the artist supported to develop their practice?</p> <p>How was the participants' progression or learning enabled?</p> <p>Did participants want to carry on with some form of creative activity following your work? If so, what did you do to support this?</p> <p>How did you record, document or analyse any changes that the artist and participants experienced through this work?</p> <p>What have you personally learnt from this work?</p>	<p>How did you challenge both participants and yourself?</p> <p>Did participants want to carry on with some form of creative activity following your work? If so, what did you do to support this?</p> <p>What has changed for you as a result of this work?</p> <p>How did you record any changes that you and the participants experienced through this work?</p>
ART	<p>What was the vision for the work?</p> <p>How did what occurred fulfil, or change the vision?</p> <p>Was the space and equipment suitable for the artists and participants?</p> <p>Was it accessible?</p> <p>Did it enable them to fulfil their creative ambitions?</p> <p>How was work displayed/performed/distributed?</p> <p>How did this meet the creative ambitions of the people involved?</p> <p>What troubleshooting did you have to do?</p> <p>What have you learnt from this?</p>	<p>What was your creative ambition for this work?</p> <p>What was the best moment?</p> <p>When were you worried?</p> <p>What was disappointing?</p> <p>What specific support—creative and technical—did you give to participants in making the work (if any)?</p> <p>How did you explore the potential of this medium with participants?</p>
EXPERIENCE	<p>What feedback did the participants and artists give about the work, and their experience of it?</p> <p>How were the participants' support needs, if any, met?</p> <p>How was communication between stakeholders undertaken?</p> <p>Who (if any) was the audience for the work?</p> <p>What experience did they have?</p>	<p>What experience did you want participants and audiences to have?</p> <p>What experience did they have?</p> <p>Why do you think that?</p> <p>How did the participants think about audiences for the work?</p> <p>How did you think about audiences for the work?</p>

5.2 PROJECT PARTICIPANTS

The framework was developed through a process of reflection, discussion, trialling and sharing, by a group of artists and practitioners keen to improve their practice in participatory arts. The group included: Jocelyn Cunningham, Arts & Society/RSA; Kate Gant, Creative Health/WMPAF; Angharad Lee, Artworks Wales; Jonathan Petherbridge, London Bubble; Jan Reynolds, EMPAF; Deborah Rogers, artist, Cultural Sisters; Simon Ruding, TIPP-CPAL; Chrissie Ruckley, Creative Scotland; Kate Sweeney, Freelance artist; and Nicky Morgan, Arts Council England. Melanie Stace, Judy Thomas and Fiona Waddle also contributed to the process.

Toby Lowe (Helix Arts) initiated the project, secured financial support from Arts Council England and acted as convenor and co-author of the framework and this report. François Matarasso facilitated the workshops and feedback and is co-author of the framework and report.

5.3 FEEDBACK FROM PILOTS

As has been said, the experience of undertaking Peer Reflection was very positive for all those involved, and the comments quoted throughout this report are a representative sample of what they said afterwards. The insights gained, both in the piloting and in the workshops and other discussions, have been incorporated directly into this latest iteration of the Framework. The following table includes some of the quantified responses by the five Artists to the experience of Peer Reflection. It is very striking how many times they chose with the maximum positive response.

	1 = not at all; 5 = enormously				
How much did you enjoy the experience?	5	5	5	4	5
How likely are you do it again?	3/4	5	5	4	5
How useful do you feel Peer Review is?	5	5	5	5	5
How likely are you to offer peer review to someone else?	5	5	5	3	5
Would you recommend it to other people?	5	5	5	3	5

A less easily expressed, but no less real indicator was the palpable enthusiasm in the second workshop when people presented and spoke about their experience. It confirmed to us that, done right, Peer Reflection is not only an important addition to artistic practice, but personally rewarding and enjoyable too: that has to be worth building on.