

NEWLYN ART GALLERY & THE EXCHANGE

An Introduction to Newlyn Art Gallery & The Exchange

Brief History

Newlyn Art Gallery was built in 1895 by philanthropist Passmore Edwards to exhibit the work of contemporary artists. At that time the building housed accommodation for a curator and a reading room meant for the education and self-improvement of the local community. The gallery has continued to exhibit contemporary art throughout its history, including the work of the internationally recognised artists associated with the Newlyn and St Ives Schools. In 1974 the gallery became an educational charity with Arts Council funding and developed a programme of exhibitions by national and international artists alongside shows by the Newlyn Society of Artists.

In 2007, Newlyn Art Gallery reopened after a period of renovation with the addition of a new pavilion designed by architects MUMA. At this time the gallery also launched its new space The Exchange in the centre of Penzance, also designed by MUMA. The Exchange has enabled the organisation to take on larger, more ambitious projects across two sites. Together the galleries continue to present contemporary work in all media by regional, national and international artists, with a programme of events, activities and education.

Public Programming

In the past five years, Newlyn Art Gallery & The Exchange has presented solo shows by Sandra Blow, John Akomfrah, David Blandy, Shezad Dawood, Joy Gregory, John Newling and Imran Qureshi. Group shows have included *Curiosity: Art and the Pleasures of Knowing*; *3am: Wonder, Paranoia and The Restless Night*; *In Search of the Miraculous, Liberties and A Certain Kind of Light*.

Many of the galleries' projects are created in collaboration with other visual arts organisations and we have recently worked with Arnolfini, Artist Rooms, Arts Council Collection, Bloomberg New Contemporaries, Camden Arts Centre, Chapter, Glasgow School of Art, Groundwork, Hayward Touring, Modern Art Oxford, Nottingham Contemporary and Tate St Ives.

The Learning & Participation Programme aims to stimulate creativity, drawing in new audiences and crossing between visual arts and wider cultural disciplines. Our approach is fluid, responding to our audience and to the demands of a changing political and social climate.

The Learning & Participation Programme is integral to the success of our exhibitions programme, the two increasingly functioning in an integrated way in order to ensure the organisation's ability to achieve its primary aim of connecting audiences, actual and potential, with art and artists, both within and beyond the Newlyn and Penzance buildings.

Increasingly, over recent years the exhibition and learning programmes have overlapped, putting artist experimentation and visitor engagement at the centre of much of the main gallery programme. Established in 2000, *Transition* is a biennial project that gives artists the opportunity to try out ideas in the gallery space for a week. This gallery-as-studio approach was expanded for *Three Points of Contact*, a three-venue nomadic residency for two Portuguese artists in Glasgow, York, and Penzance with a changing rota of local artists at each venue. *Restructured* brought together artists from across Europe, the US and Britain together to explore how frameworks, rules and data inform their artwork. Inspired by Eastern European clubhouses for workers *Palace of Culture* transformed the gallery into an establishment of recreational activity with four Cultural Secretaries programming daily workshops, performance and other stimulating pursuits designed to fight *cultureless leisure* for four weeks. A practical workshop space was created in the main gallery for *Craftschool* with free one-hour taster craft workshops every morning throughout the summer holidays.

Enterprises

Both sites have a shop and a café. These enhance the visitor experience and produce additional income for the organisation. The shops specialise in art books, locally made crafts and design products. Stock is sourced with specific exhibitions in mind. Both cafes act as resource area to learn more about the exhibitions, with activities for all the family. They are also a popular venue for evening events.

At Newlyn Art Gallery, *The Picture Room* is a small gallery space dedicated to the exhibition of works for sale by locally based artists. With monthly changing exhibitions *The Picture Room* helps the gallery to support the career development of Cornwall-based artists and to contribute financial support to the organisation's education and exhibition programmes.

Over the course of this plan we will explore new enterprises to generate income to support the organisation. These will include exploring the potential to generate rental income from the basement area at The Exchange and potentially off-site locations. We will investigate the potential for online trading. Our research suggests creating a traditional online sales platform for our shops may not be cost effective. However we see potential in creating an online trading portal, providing a platform for artists and designer-makers linked to our brand and generating new income linked to sales commissions for the gallery.

We are also piloting an Events post with a remit to maximise income generated through hires (recent clients include Google, Culture 24, Cornwall Council, Eureka Escapes and St Austell Brewery) and commercial activities such as a regular Makers' Markets, as well as attracting new audiences to our venues as a consequence of a diversified offer.

Governance and Organisation Structure

Newlyn Art Gallery Ltd, is a charity and company limited by guarantee. In March 2017, by a vote of the membership at our AGM, support was secured to accept new Articles which enabled a change in our constitution from an 'open' to a 'closed membership' model.

Prior to March 2017 any individual could become a member of the gallery by paying an annual subscription of £25. Amongst the benefits associated with membership was the right to vote at gallery AGMs on the appointment of Trustees. Trustees could only be recruited from the membership pool. This structure restricted the charity's powers to appoint trustees on the basis of the needs of the businesses as determined by the Gallery Director and trustees and brought unnecessary risk to our governance.

In order to retain the support and former Members a new Supporters Scheme was created which offered Supporters the same benefits as the Membership Scheme, with the exception of voting rights. All Members were happy to be transferred to the Supporters Schemes. That scheme is now actively promoted to our visitors and forms an important element of our approach to donor cultivation.

Currently the Board comprises of nine elected members, with the option to appoint up to four nominated members and three observers. In addition, we have the power to co-opt a further two members who can bring specialist skills to the organisation, mostly for specific time-limited issues.

All trustees are required to adhere to a Code of Conduct and Statement of Obligations, which ensures trustees understand what the gallery expects of them in their role and provides for sanctions if trustees act in a way that is detrimental to company interests.

The present Board membership has been selected to provide a basis for the organisational development and change needed to ensure we can meet the risks, challenges and opportunities of the next four years. The Chair, Miranda Bird, is Head of Development for PHD Worldwide, a global advertising network, and divides her time between London and Cornwall. She brings experience from both commercial and third sector organisations, and previously ran the European Region of Culture Campaign in Cornwall. Our Vice Chair is artist Andy Harper who lives in West Cornwall, exhibits internationally and teaches at Goldsmiths. Phyllida Shaw is Company Secretary. She is a freelance facilitator and evaluator in the cultural sector with extensive experience in organisational development and in working with grant-making trusts. Our Treasurer, Michael Donnelly is a former public sector senior manager and artist. Michael will step down later this year (2017) with Treasurer duties being taken on by Neil Scott. Neil has extensive experience in the retail sector and has acted as a Trustee for a number of leading cultural organisations. Pat Brown divides her time between Cornwall and London, where she runs an international management consultancy. She brings an extensive network of business contacts and is advising us on fundraising. Artist Jonty Lees is currently undertaking a PHd moderated by Tate Liverpool which explores issues around co-commissioning and co-authorship between artists, institutions and the wider community. Cllr Bert Biscoe represents Cornwall Council on the Board and brings a wealth of contacts and experience.

A number of board working groups are established with scrutiny and advisory roles, supporting in areas such as company finances, programming and fundraising. Other working groups are set up as required, covering issues such as governance, and to oversee special projects.

We are committed to increasing the diversity of our board in order that it better reflects the diversity of contemporary England and the audiences and communities we intend to work with. We have prioritised the recruitment of trustees under the age of 30. We are also committed to exploring appointments with other protected characteristics in support of our business priorities.

Staff

James Green joined the gallery as Director in July 2006 to oversee the acquisition and redevelopment of the former telephone Exchange in Penzance and the redevelopment of Newlyn Art Gallery, and their relaunch in July 2007. He has also reshaped the programme in order to realise the potential created by this major expansion of the organisation. James brings with him considerable experience as a curator and of arts leadership roles and has led the gallery team and volunteers to a point where in the past 12 months the organisation has engaged more people than in any other year during its 122-year history.

James leads a small and highly motivated group of staff (approximately 14 fte) working across both venues, assisted by a dedicated team of volunteers who help run the gallery's front-of-house areas and on projects behind the scenes. As an educational charity the gallery regularly employs freelance artist-educators to deliver workshops and courses. Over the period of the plan we will invest in the staff, volunteers and board to ensure we are equipped to address the challenges and maximise the opportunities ahead.

Funding

The gallery is funded as a National Portfolio Organisation by Arts Council England, with additional annual support from Cornwall Council. We raise 50% of our annual turn-over through other fundraising activities including applications to other funders such as the Stanley Thomas Johnson Foundation, Henry Moore Foundation, Headley Trust, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation and Heritage Lottery Fund and are working to strengthen the support we currently receive from individuals and through sponsorship. Recent sponsors include GWR, Midas Construction and Classic Cottages. In order to establish a sound foundation for the business we need to build our capacity to secure unrestricted income, including a greater proportion of income from individuals. We currently operate cafes and shops at both sites, which together make a modest net contribution to the business and enhance the visitor experience we offer. We introduced a modest entrance charge in 2017 which generates useful income and enables us to recover a larger portion of a VAT. We are also exploring other enterprises including online trading opportunities. The subletting of the basement at The Exchange to Eureka Escapes generates modest income. Short term hires of our buildings is a growing area of our income generation.

Our Values, Vision, Mission and Goals

In spring 2017 we worked with staff and trustees to refresh our mission and vision. As part of that process, we reflected on the organisation's history and the principles of its founder, the philanthropist John Passmore Edwards.

He saw culture as "a ladder the poor might climb", to help them rise out of deprivation and override a prevailing poverty of ambition in a place such as Newlyn at the end of the 19th century.

Our intention is to reactivate these founding principles, contributing to debate among contemporary arts organisations and curators as to how art and the art institution can perform both a societal and civic function and be relevant to prevailing social and political issues.

Values

Change-making

Rooted in place

Part of a global art conversation

Vision

We believe that art can inspire and drive change

Mission

To connect Cornwall with visual arts internationally, for the benefit of the community and development of artists

Our Goals for the 2018/19 to 2021/22

We have established the following five goals for the period and have developed Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to enable us to monitor and report on our progress towards them.

We are driving up the quality of our product

We are engaging more people

We are taking a lead role in strengthening our sector

We are improving our financial position

Our staff, volunteers and trustees are getting even better at what they do

Why these goals are important now

We are driving up the quality of our product

Over the past three years, we have developed a reputation for the quality and effectiveness of our work with young people, demonstrated by the invitation from Tate St Ives to partner on delivery of their *CIRCUIT* programme for young people and the success of our work with *Arts Award*. We have demonstrated particular strengths in our peer-led programming and our work delivered in partnership with youth agencies. Placing artists at the centre of much of this work has been vital to its success.

We have also begun to investigate new ways of engaging some of those audiences most disconnected from the services galleries traditionally offer, for example older people in residential care.

Our exhibition programming has involved projects of national significance such as *Home Service* (2014 to 2017); *In Search of the Miraculous* (summer 2015); *Imran Qureshi* (summer 2016); *Craftschool* (summer 2017). We have continued to explore new models that support artists' research and the development and testing of ideas, often in front of an audience. *Transition* is a highly regarded programme amongst artists and curators interested in creative exhibition models, particularly those concerned with the effective and level interplay between artists and audiences. We have developed our learning programme and regularly delivery learning-centred programming from our exhibition spaces. We have trialled new educational programmes such as *Palace of Culture* and will explore alternative approaches for delivering such programmes in future, often beyond our two venues.

Our ambition to lead the debate around the civic function of cultural organisations will drive us to exploring entirely new models of activity for visual arts organisations achieve material change in our community.

We will become more ambitious in our gallery-based programming and explore delivery models that reach out beyond our venues. Our programme to 2022 will be characterised by increasingly ambitious exhibitions and projects delivered in unorthodox locations, often engaging new audiences. We will seek to maximise the benefit we draw from the ACE Quality Evaluation Framework as a means of objectively assessing the quality of our work.

We are engaging more people

We have reflected on the needs of audiences in our specific situation in West Cornwall. The profile of our visitors changes markedly over the course of the year as a result of the overwhelming influence of tourism. This understanding informs the rhythm of our programming.

Cornwall is a largely rural county, with a high concentrate of visual arts provision in the far west, however, this diminishes as you travel east through the county.

Over the past three years we set and exceeded ambitious goals to increase the numbers of people we engage. In 2016 we attracted 65,720, a 34% increase on attendance in 2014 and the highest recorded attendance in the gallery's history. We aim to achieve further increases rising to a target of 79,000 in 2022.

Our *A Postcard To Penzance* initiative emerged from a desire that the organisation should become more 'permeable' or 'porous' in its relationships with our communities. The programme has demonstrated the role a gallery can play within its immediate community to help them arrive at their own solutions to pressing issues. In recent years, we also embraced the notion of our two venues operating as 'social spaces'. This has radically deepened the offer, particularly at Newlyn Art Gallery. This work will be expanded over the period of this plan, the rate of change accelerated through partnership working within and beyond Cornwall and the UK.

We are taking a lead role in strengthening our sector

Many of our fundamental values and aims are shared with other visual arts organisations across the region and nationally. It is therefore essential that we work together, in a coordinated way to achieve the greatest impact. Newlyn Art Gallery has long acknowledged its wider responsibilities to artists, creative producers and visual arts venues. The Director and senior staff sit on the boards or steering groups of other national and regional organisations including Plus Tate, Engage, FEAST, Cultivator, KEAP and the Borlase Smart John Wells Trust and will continue to do so during the period of this plan.

It is also important that we reflect on the contribution we can make to the wider creative ecology in Cornwall, the south west and nationally. We must also increase our engagement with partners and peers in Europe and beyond.

We are improving our financial position

To achieve the goals outlined above, we need to ensure that the organisation is robust and resilient. We need a realistic strategy in place to reduce our current deficit and build a reserve, in line with our policy. This requires strong, stable, networked governance and a plan that takes full advantage of the creativity and commitment of the whole team. We need to continually explore new income streams and ensure we have a clear and compelling case for support. We need to continually review whether we have the capacity and relevant expertise amongst board, staff and supporters to maximise our income.

In 2017, we revised our constitution, moving away from a membership model, a development which will strengthen the working of the board and the governance of the gallery and enable the sharing of clearer and more compelling messages to new supporters.

We need to monitor the environmental impact of our work and take steps to reduce that impact year-on-year.

Our staff, volunteers and trustees are getting even better at what they do

Our board, staff and volunteers demonstrate enormous commitment to the organisation and an ability to develop creative solutions to a range of challenges. They are highly adaptable and committed to the organisation's core principles.

However, our location brings challenges in accessing quality training and professional networks. We are more remote than any other NPO from its ACE regional office. It is a four-hour round trip to our nearest NPO gallery and it takes six hours to travel to London.

To overcome these challenges we need to ensure we invest appropriately in our team and their professional development and provide them with the space and opportunity to flourish.