Creative Partnerships

Art for Whose Sake

ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND

artsadmin

Contents

Our purpose in commissioning this document is to create a piece of work that acts as a catalyst for discussion, debate and reflection on the issue of CPD for artists and creative professionals.

In July 2004 Creative Partnerships London East commissioned Artsadmin to manage a two day seminar for Live artists to reflect on their work in school. The aim of the "Art for whose sake?" programme was to gather a diverse group of people to share their experience and respond to a series of interventions from practitioners. This document shares these different perspectives.

"Art for whose sake?" is the start of a relationship between Creative Partnerships London East and Artsadmin. This partnership will focus on continuing professional development (CPD) for Live artists who work in schools.

The individual contributions to this document are from a range of sources; Manick Govinda, Artists' Advisor for Artsadmin and coordinator of "Art for whose sake?" alongside practising artists Helena Bryant, Keith Khan and Rosemary Lee. Other contributors include Jude Kelly OBE, Director of Metal, Jonathan Meth, Chair of CreativePeople, and Tom Deveson, freelance evaluator and writer who was present throughout the two days as an observer.

As the Creative Partnerships initiative continues to develop and disseminate its practice it is important to address the provision of CPD for the creative sector. Our purpose in commissioning this document is to create a piece of work that acts as a catalyst for discussion, debate and reflection on the issue of CPD for artists and creative professionals.

What do artists and creatives feel are their CPD priorities?

Should the sector focus on training provision or is it more important to create the opportunity for individuals to reflect on their practice?

As awareness of the value of schools working in partnership with artists and creative professionals increases, what steps does the funding system need to take to ensure that artists are given space to develop their professional practice?

What is the best way to place contemporary creative practice in a learning framework?

We hope the various papers stimulate, inform and encourage more thought and action on this issue.

Steve Moffitt
Director, Creative Partnerships London East

Art for whose sake?

Tom Deveson

Build, a motiroti project presented at Tate Modern, 2000.

Photo: Ali Zaidi

‘the most important way you can work is collaboration, and that means listening…’

This two-day symposium was not a training course but an opportunity for discussion and reflection. The participants were experienced within a broad range of art forms. More of them had worked with children in visual and performing disciplines than in poetry and imaginative writing. There were many opportunities for developing networks but the essential business was exposition, argument and thought.

The following five questions were at the heart of the proceedings:

Why do artists work in schools?
This question was not explicitly dealt with in presentations or panel discussions, but its implications were frequently referred to. Some participants were wary – perhaps even suspicious – of the possible motives behind the increased financial and administrative support for artists working in schools represented by the setting up and continuance of Creative Partnerships. Keith Khan warned that in a ‘post-democracy’ the work of artists might be commodified; turned into a means of displaying concern for social regeneration rather than valued for its own sake. ‘Coercion will kill creativity’ was a forceful way of expressing this anxiety; artists who are ‘off the radar’ may simply be ignored by fund-giving organisations.

This situation presents clear difficulties, but Keith made one point explicit: ‘the most important way you can work is collaboration, and that means listening… Your work exists if you have good relations with a number of people.’ He developed this most interestingly, insisting that it’s only when artists are clear about the fact that they do have function in relation to others’ needs that they can begin, if necessary, to subvert it.

Contrasting views emerged of how to characterise an artist’s function. Steve Moffitt, while fully acknowledging the ‘messiness’ of London as a locale for arts funding, highlighted the shift in emphasis from an ideology of patronage to one of partnership. The collaboration of DCMS and DfES is unprecedented and a cause for moderated optimism. The work of Creative Partnerships represents a big commitment towards new and yet undefined forms of co-operation between artist and school. Rosemary Lee put this with enigmatic but undeniable force: ‘I am the author and they [children] are the dance.’ That positive expression of mutual need is picked up in later discussions.

Is there a schism between the work of cutting-edge artistic practice and creative teaching and learning? How can the two areas meet?
One short answer is that they meet because they have to. No one would deny that the national curriculum and the national literacy and numeracy strategies can steal precious time from those who work on educational projects in the arts, and challenge their confidence to explore areas of ‘radical possibility’. But the sustainability of Creative Partnerships depends on schools and arts organisations acquiring the habits and the ethos of collaboration.

Ansuman Biswas emphasised a different aspect of the same dilemma: that asking dangerous questions is almost by definition disruptive of a school’s nature. The perennial difficulty is to bring together the attempt to strive for radical excellence with the need to connect with as many people as possible, a difficulty neither to be ignored nor exaggerated.

Barby Asante touched on this quandary, declaring that ‘my education work and my art work live in very different spaces’, and regretting that financial pressures cause her and others like her to do more of the former and less of the latter than she would wish. Manick Govinda developed this point during a panel discussion, suggesting, as a deliberate challenge, that while schools might necessarily look for good team players to work with their children, artists are often more concerned with angst and alienation.

This view was also thematically important in Helena Bryant’s presentation. Helena focused on two meanings of the phrase ‘fear of the artist’ – the tendency for schools to look dubiously at the work of those practitioners who can be defined (or pigeon-holed) as transgressive, and the feelings of isolation and anxiety that can arise in the practitioners themselves when they are so treated. One thought-provoking experience was to realise that pupils might become much more absorbed in an artist’s work than teachers do, but that the nature of their involvement may cut across artists’ own expectations.

An alternative view came from Caroline Partridge, welcoming the opportunity Creative Partnerships afforded to bridge the gap between schools and artists, and asserting that artists’ work can naturally be developed in accord with schools’ needs. She gave the example of how work with puppets leads naturally to children making discoveries about proportion and perspective that are part of the programmes of study for maths and science. She compared artists’ and teachers’ work to two languages that can be translated into one another, though they sound superficially different. Rosemary Lee finds that she can actually speak in her work with greater clarity if children are involved. Eelyn Lee’s film and presentation showed how there might be a creative tension between giving a voice to young people and meeting the expectations of teachers; the head-teacher in her school perhaps initially felt marginalised, but the pupils had an unprecedented chance to express their own view of the world.

Mary Huane took this point further, recognising that teachers can themselves come to feel like frustrated artists. But her firm emphasis that Creative Partnerships allowed the school ‘to determine what we wanted to do’ led to the further discovery that in this way more teachers, including senior mangers, are likely to become familiar with and supportive of similar projects and their extension throughout the curriculum. Both teachers and artists are then likely to benefit. Subassa Lewis gave a global perspective: we in the developed West, whether teachers or artists, are both part of a larger privileged whole. Jeanefer Jean-Charles agreed: we are privileged to have young people’s honesty to work with.

Can contemporary artistic practice contribute to the development of young people’s creativity in school settings?
Perhaps the most significant observation under this heading was Rosemary Lee’s insistence that, while dance or other artistic forms may promote children’s skill in literacy and numeracy, that is not their essential purpose: ‘they are other forms of knowledge.’ This is a truly central idea, which nevertheless is sometimes overlooked. Practitioners working with children are able to help them make connections at deeper and more unusual levels than the conventional language of the classroom; and this, at its best, challenges and involves the adult’s own creativity too. For example, Rosemary would not teach children the set phrases of choreography, but would offer opportunities for them to express themselves through their bodies in ways that communicate power, control and that energy which Blake called ‘eternal delight’.

Eelyn Lee’s account of her film complemented this central notion. She was essential to its production (it began with her vision) but the young makers and performers were also central. In making the film, they ‘went on a journey’ that comprised rough-cut, screening, discussion and editing. They were using an art form to tell their story. In this, introductory activities like trust games and digital photography were vital; so were the production skills they learned; but these processes were subsumed into a more creative enterprise, finding an imaginative way to express what they would otherwise be unable to say and which could only be said in that newly-minted language.

Mary Huane described this from the school’s viewpoint. When all pupils are required to study a mainstream subject in close conjunction with one from the arts, they and their teachers are able to reflect on what they have learned and the way they have learned it.

Helena Bryant: video stills from **SHOUT: voices from the edge**, 2000, a project set up by Box Clever Theatre Company in partnership with Cambridgeshire Drug Action Trust.

They are then encouraged to revisit the arts subjects of their choice with a fresh confidence that 'creativity' is more than an abstraction but something whose elusive nature they are now more ready to recognise. Barby Asante showed how children might use games and playful activities on a CD-ROM to gain access to ways in which contemporary artists approach the world; or they might curate an exhibition of objects they have assembled, creating aesthetic meaning by self-determined acts of decision and choice. Oreet Ashery reminded us that there are also darker sides to creativity that must not be forgotten.

One strong cautionary note tempered the positive tone of this discussion: the issue of disability. Ju Gosling among others raised the question of strategies for engaging disabled artists in schools. She also pointed out that celebratory events like parades and dances often exclude performers with physical impairments; and children with disabilities may find work involving film intrusive as much as liberating. While it was generally agreed in discussion that these are true and frequently overlooked concerns, it could not be claimed that either arts organisations or schools have yet found more than palliative solutions.

Rosemary Lee and Nic Sandiland: **Apart from the Road, Hammersmith**, 2003. Originally commissioned and produced by East London Dance.

How do artists and young people learn?
Keith Khan set the tone for this part of the discussion in his keynote address, when he talked about the need for artists to 'make process visible and available to others'. Those two words 'visible' and 'available' point towards where and how learning takes place. Jeanefer Jean-Charles described how this might take place within an artist's own educational experience. Describing her work with children using British Sign Language, she spoke of her 'cultural ignorance' and how she became a willing learner in ways that consequently enabled her to understand how to help teachers learn. PE teachers could draw on her expertise as a dancer, rooting new practices in established repertoires.

Rosemary Lee's belief in children's 'energy, transparency and candour' reflected another aspect of this process of mutual growth; 'they can refresh and teach us and we can enrich their world.' Here too her insistence that 'the art form is its own form of knowledge' did not exclude a recognition that a successful dance project will also teach young people a variety of skills, from preparing resources and taking on quasi-professional organisational responsibilities to the development of kinaesthetic memory and self-expression. Eelyn Lee's account of the growth of her film led to parallel insights. She described how she changed her initial approach after recognising pupils' short attention spans. She needed to devise new ways to convince them of their own potential such as the £100 'auction' of desirable qualities. Without her own willingness to reshape her practice, they would not have found their path towards the imaginative use of graffiti characters and song lyrics.

Many participants approached the current educational 'hot topic' of preferred learning styles from their own perspective. Mary Huane showed how her school had, in effect, developed its own model for curriculum reform by asking all pupils in year 7 to perform an audit on their favoured ways of learning. Ansuman Biswas drew attention to the central importance of the 'quality of consciousness', more significant than the nature of the building (school or studio) in which it takes place. A good outcome is when a teacher or pupil thinks 'I could do that'. Learning how to learn is as important as the content of what is absorbed.

This is why, as Barby Asante rightfully observed, the legacy of a project can be enjoyed long after (sometimes years after) the project itself has finished. Paula Snyder drew attention to the changes in body language when children have become absorbed in a project, an almost infallible indicator that learning is taking place. Life-long learning shows itself less overtly but no less significantly in an altered imagination.

What experiences contribute towards artists' professional development?
Barby Asante spoke forcefully about one inevitable experience; 'we need to acknowledge that we learn from failure and to think about what we learn from it.' This honesty was a feature of shared discussion, but the sentiment was not allowed to become negative. A suggestion that teachers might be groomed to take over artists' specialist role (that artists would be, in effect, milked of their existing virtues and then dismissed) was firmly dismissed. Artists will still need what Helena Bryant referred to in her presentation as 'a space to take risks'.

This does not entail a cavalier attitude towards artists' responsibilities. Eelyn Lee described how her collaboration with a project manager for her film allowed for greater flexibility in the way her work developed, and a greater responsiveness to what the school students needed from day to day. This encouraged her to devise 'new ways in' [see above] and to give greater scope to students' creative thinking. While not every project will attract enough funding to employ an independent manager, Eelyn's considered views carry strong implications.

Mary Huane illustrated this process from a teacher's angle. Future projects in school will be more closely planned, more directly linked to pupils' preferred learning styles, more rigorously evaluated; and the artistic partner will take a full part in INSET days. Even well established organisations like Guildhall School of Music and Drama or the Almeida are constantly engaged in learning and the assessment of their own professional skills.

Paula Snyder reminded us that while broadcasting can't reproduce the living experience of working with an artist, it can reach a wide audience, explaining to many more people what artists try to do. This process of diffusion is only one among many methods of fostering professional development. Recent research undertaken by Creative Partnerships in the area of 'creative and cultural entitlement' suggests that there are many different ways in which schools and artists may learn to work together. That diversity is a reason for argument and experiment but even more a cause for hope.

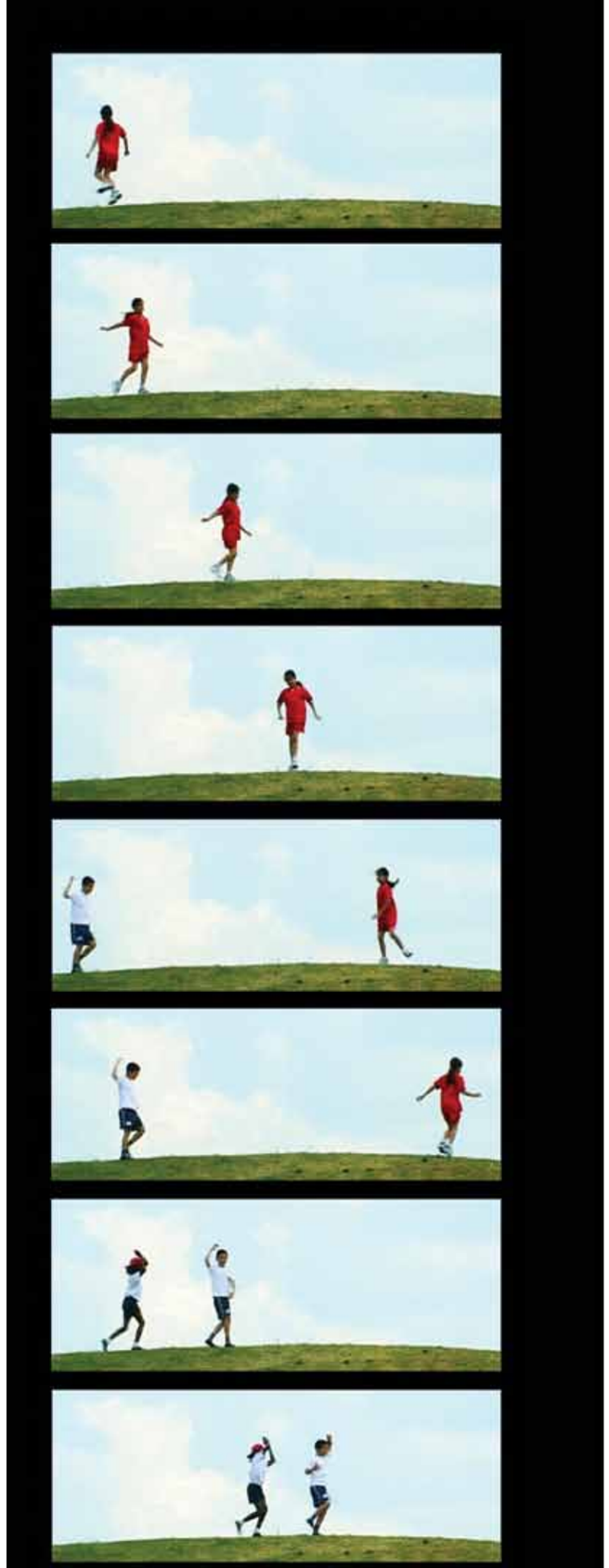
From the inside out

Rosemary Lee

Art for whose sake? This title cleverly raises so many huge issues around the relationship of artists and their audiences, authorship and ownership, arts funding policy, the relationship between governmental social policy and arts policy, arts as a means to an end rather than an end in itself… The question deserves endless debate and should keep us all on our toes.

When speaking at the conference I was asked to focus personally on why, as an artist, I sometimes want to work in a school environment, and how it affects my practice. I found the only way to answer these seemingly basic questions was to go back to some even more fundamental questions – why am I an artist? What relationship do I have to my audience and to the participants in my work? What responsibilities do I have to those people?
So forgive my personal and clumsy philosophical attempts at answering these complex questions. Hopefully they lead back to some of the bigger issues suggested by the title.

My work is primarily about relationships. It is about making connections. The connections are between me and my work, me and the participants in the work, their connections to the work, and the relationship created between the work and the audience. In my own art form these connections are mostly non-verbal and, more often than not, unspoken and very precious to me. “Only connect”,



As an artist one is a life-long student and I want to foster a life-long curiosity in each child I work with.

E.M. Forster’s famous line in Howard’s End, resonates strongly with me these days. My somewhat idealistic desire to connect silently with people of all ages and experiences remains one of my strongest motivations as an artist.

Coupled with this desire to connect through the subtle proverbial language of movement and sensation, is my fascination with the human condition from infancy to death. To speak to a wide-ranging audience I want to make dances with a wide-ranging cast. To nurture my curiosity about people and the expression of their movement, I want to continue to make dances with all ages.
I cannot deny that a primary factor for working with children is that I love being with children! It is their candour, the freshness of their energy, the newness of their emerging movement language, and the simplicity of their expression. Innocence is a term that we are uncomfortable using now and I would like to reclaim it as a quality to cherish and value, though I don’t deny it is not always easy to find.

Let me reflect what excites me every time I work with people on a project, whether they are trained or untrained, seniors or children. It’s those exquisite moments of embodiment, when a dancer is so at one with the activity, so comfortable, so unselfconscious that dance fills their every cell.
I would describe these moments as full of grace. It is what I aspire to, when you truly cannot tell the “dancer from the dance”. There is something very innocent and unspoilt about those moments; I find them beautiful and utterly compelling. They are transformative for the dancer and sometimes, I would argue, for the audience.

I cannot separate the various reasons I continue to make projects that involve working with children as they are all interconnected. However let me now focus on what I believe the child, or indeed anybody of any age, gains from working creatively rather than what I gain as an artist. In actual fact it’s the same thing; I am trying to give people the experience that has been, and is, transformative for me.
I strongly believe that the arts are not a luxury; they are a necessity to our lives. It’s worth considering what Peter Brinson, my dance and society professor in the 1970’s, told me – the three R’s were not originally ‘reading, writing and arithmetic’, but ‘reading, writing and wroughting’! As an artist one is a life-long student and I want to foster a life-long curiosity in each child I work with. I want to help them be proud of their imagination, own their dancing, broaden their horizons. I want them to sharpen their perception and awareness of themselves and the world around them. I want to empower them, to strengthen their individuality and their ability to express themselves.

This is all very worthy and could sound precious, I know, but if I can find one moment where I can encourage an obese child that their movement has a wonderful quality, or an overactive boy to settle into an alive stillness for a microsecond, or a girl in her embarrassment to jump with just a tiny bit more abandon, then I have achieved something. If I can excite them in their creativity, help them experience and value creative play then I may have got somewhere. It’s often a question of degree.

I have talked about the state of embodiment, which is what I often focus on as a teacher because of its transformative nature. I have come to believe that the state I try to find myself in when creating or improvising – a receptive state, open to the forest of possibilities and hyper attentive and sensitive to the present – is the very state I want to help the audience experience. The artist, the performer and the audience could be sharing the same state. This receptive place for me is one of infinite openness. It’s a place where one is not judgmental, and tolerant. Dancing for me is not about how high your leg goes; it’s about a state of being.
Perhaps you can see where I am leading. From the small micro world of a classroom in the East End I hope to foster, playfully, a state of tolerance, an embracing of difference rather than a fear of it. A silent global aim starting from the individual, from the inside out.

Opposite: Rosemary Lee and Nic Sandiland: video stills from **Apart from the Road**, 2003. Originally commissioned and produced by East London Dance.

Collaboration, coercion and creativity

Keith Khan

Kamalangani Kalayathana Temple Dancers and Drummers performing under the Rainbow of Wishes arches in the **Celebration Commonwealth** parade for the Queen's Golden Jubilee, 2002, a motiroti project.

Photo: Indran Selvarajah

Artists are becoming the puppets of central government. We're being used more to answer social, cultural and regeneration agendas, which are unable to be answered by current government policy. I think they term the period that we're living in as a post-democracy: we all feel disempowered outside of a political system; outside of any sense of ownership of things that are around us. I'm curious about this phenomena because I think that the role of the artist is fundamental to society and that we actually have a crucial role to play, but I'm conscious that we're playing with the system and against it at the same time.

Coercion is probably one of the biggest things that will kill creativity. It's interesting that creativity is the top economic regeneration tool in terms of the Government's agenda, but ultimately by investing in that, and by commodifying artists, they'll probably kill creativity. So we're in one of these moments in time that's very interesting but makes us vulnerable as artists, and I think we need to think carefully about our role. The arts economy has shifted enormously. There's a practice of art that's a kind of "high ending" of it. And then there's the other end, which is about community and regeneration. This divide is becoming more and more apparent between artists' practices.

Content to me has become the most important thing. My background was Notting Hill Carnival; I did that for ten years. What I was interested in there was an open process of making and participation, in terms of open access. Another thing I took with me from my days of designing for carnival is 'process and collaboration'.

Collaboration and other ways of working represents a fundamental shift in the way that I think we need to work as artists, because nothing exists any more in a singular format unless your name is Tracy Emin. The idea of how we work together, as opposed to if we work together, is going to become more important. For most of us the desire to work in school probably comes from a sense of collaboration in terms of what we want to achieve.

When I was co-director of motiroti I collaborated on a piece called Build which was shown in the Turbine Hall at the Tate Modern. It didn't come under the 'arts' banner, as quite often artists who are working outside of the establishment in terms of what is critically considered successful is just a tiny proportion of cultural product. The majority of cultural product that actually affects peoples' lives is largely ignored.

Developed for the Year of Volunteering, the piece was made with 1600 young people, using 1600 photographs taken by them. Cameras where sent out all around the UK, and a postal and note system was established by which you could take a photograph and submit it, and then it would be made into this piece. One of the things that I'm interested in is the sense of ownership. Any young person involved in this piece will literally see a photograph of them self in it. I mean, they might have to look for it, and it might be on the roof, but this piece was the first of these projects that involved real participation. I would say this is passive because it's just a photograph and I'm interested in more engaged forms of participation, but it still works in the sense that we gathered 1600 faces.

Opposite: Students of Pushkala Gopal and Unni Krishnan from Mudralaya dance school with members of the Pearly Guild, from **Celebration Commonwealth**, 2002, a motiroti project.

Photo: Rado Klose

And words as well, we collected a lot of content via text from mobile phones and via the web.

One of the main challenges within the arts is actually how to engage. I've been asked many times to think of a project for Asian men under the age of 17 who are having social problems. How do you relate to that? As artists we have to think very carefully about this and I think that's an important area. Do you think your art is that of social engagement, or do you think your art has another place? And then how do you make your agendas fit with those agendas. I'm constantly battling with that, and I've never really found an answer.

Escapade (2003) was a performance project about participation that was commissioned by Akademi, a South Asian dance development agency, and staged at the South Bank Centre. I've done a number of projects 'on-site' as such, and this was the second time I had worked at the Royal Festival Hall. Working with about 140 performers, we used the Royal Festival Hall as a projection screen that 10,000 people came to see. London is often now used in Bollywood movies as a location, as an exotic location, which I think is really funny. You see these Indian movies and they're filmed in London. They often pick places that you'd never go to, like people singing on boats on the Thames, or in phone boxes, or they find policemen with funny hats. This project was very much about representing somebody else's view of your own city. It was very strange; an Indian view of London, as opposed to our view.

Mark Murphy made the film, and then we used a lot of London iconography and London music. We mixed The Clash with things like Sandeep Chowta, an Indian film composer, and we made composites of London music. We then worked with a lot of imagery to do with London, such as punks, and tried to work in different dynamics. You don't often see many black punks, for example, or begging sitar players. We did the Royal Family, who were Indian dancers, and they performed a gymkhana-style dance. It was fun to work with that iconography and to work within the popular idiom that interests me most; how do you make work that has an impact, that anyone can read, where there is no threshold to cross in order to engage with it. That's a very important thing for me.

Franko B & Paul Khera:
Bleeding Kit, mixed media, 2002.

Photo: kris Canavan

www.franko-b.com

Opposite: Franko B: **Home Sweet Home**, artist's blood on printed fabric, 2005.

Photo: kris Canavan

The artist outsider

Helena Bryant

Having used the idea of wearing a protective suit with imaginary powers of invisibility as a point of departure, the work took its own journey, with students at the school identifying me as an alien.

Back in the year 2000, a thousand artists were put in residence in a thousand places, and I was one of them. Three years out of college and, having had some success in both my individual practice and in more collaborative project work, I was keen as mustard. Courageous and slightly naïve, I was ready to take my practice into the challenging environment of a failing comprehensive on the outskirts of Hull.

The residency was called "The business of it, the artist as entrepreneur". It's key aims were:

- To raise awareness of the creative and entrepreneurial aspects of being an artist
- To demystify the artistic process and show the many roles an artist assumes in the development and exhibition of their work
- To engender the experience of the infectious outsider, so with the demystifying there is also contamination and the opportunity to explore new relationships and challenge the systems within education that are designed to be stable

The six month residency project was set up in partnership between Hull City Arts Unit, the school and Hull Time Based Arts. It received funding from Year Of The Artist, the Local Education Authority, the Education Action Zone and Yorkshire Arts.

Opposite and below: Helena Bryant: video stills from Zero Suit of Invisibility, 2001, performance intervention at a school in Humberside.

At the time I started at the school, it had just been put back on special measures. My police check hadn't yet come through, and no one was sure whether or not I could even be there. With the school's representative, I wanted to design a blueprint of the residency, but his idea for the project was that I would just settle in and 'get on with it'. I needed more input from him to help lay down the groundwork. I felt out on a limb and anxious that to become an 'infectious outsider' and to 'challenge the systems within education that are designed to be stable…" might be a dangerous thing, as the school seemed unstable enough. Although I was, supposedly, free to do as I wished, I felt that the school had requirements that it wasn't specifying, and my sense of isolation and inexperience made it very hard for me to achieve the partnership that I wanted.

The school was located in a sprawling and deprived council estate on the outskirts of the city. The building was the product of a highly unusual architectural vision; made of glass and aluminium it looked like a spaceship. It's claims of being 'vandal proof' were disproved by the local youth within weeks of its opening. My studio space was a good example of this; its sloping roof full of cracks like spiders webs, scars and fissures caused by the impact of assorted missiles, which let in the rain. The internal architecture of the school was odd too, with more than half of the rooms receiving little or no natural light, but a series of interior windows allowed a line of vision from classroom to classroom to classroom. The corridor system, like a giant electrical circuit, had no dead ends and throughout the day a pair of teachers trying to catch those students absent from lessons would circumnavigate them. These students seemed to prefer to stay inside the building and play this game of cat and mouse than find a place to be undisturbed in the outside world.

When I had built up the strength to take a risk I recruited a friend to be my minder and video operator, and devised an intervention, the "Zero Suit of Invisibility". The suit, I proposed, was made from special "zero fabric", letting nothing in and nothing out, allowing the wearer to "wander imperceptibly through the world. It installs a barrier and a sense of isolation and protection. It's like you're there and you're not there, at the same time."

Having used the idea of wearing a protective suit with imaginary powers of invisibility as a point of departure, the work took its own journey, with students at the school identifying me as an alien. The experience was both humorous and edgy, and the resulting video footage is remarkable as a portrayal of bullying. A group of them, skiving off their lessons, followed me through the school building. They playfully tried to strike up a dialogue in the style of a science fiction B movie. "Who are you? Where do you come from?" asks one. "I think I can talk to it," says another. At one point, they surround me, having 'captured' the alien, and the playfulness takes on an edge of aggression.

The teachers had been primed to regard me as invisible, but their reaction to me in front of the students also demonstrates the reality of my experiences there. "Get back to your lessons, now!" instructs a teacher as I start telling a student what I am doing. The school facilitated many arts activities, much to their credit, but there was a lot of difficulty with this more challenging work, which required a lot more effort before it could be incorporated into the curriculum and school agendas. I lacked the knowledge and experience of how to do this, and the teachers lacked time to develop work with me.

The residency continued and over time I formed some good relationships with students and staff, with activities including video work, school productions, web design and an after school club. People frequently asked me if I was the woman in the silver suit. By the end of the residency, a core group of students were visiting me every day, but subsequent work did not achieve the potential and artistic quality suggested in the 'Zero Suit' piece. Although the video documentation has since made a strong impression and provoked much discussion outside of the school, I was not able to disseminate it within it. The artist outsider can be a subversive presence, and therefore threatening, but the potential exists to explore this, with 'difficult' themes such as alienation and aggression, amongst others, to form an artistically rich collaboration with the creative energies of schools and students.

The school involved in this project has since undergone extensive internal building works and in 2001 achieved an Artsmark Gold award for excellence in its many arts projects with students.

Towards a unified field

Jonathan Meth

When I asked CreativePeople colleagues for snapshots around the state of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) provision in the sector for artists and creative professionals working in schools, it quickly became clear that neither art forms nor geographic areas have anything like a consistent level of provision.

Kathryn Deane at Sound Sense says:

There's tons of it – just do an Arts Connect search (www.arts-connect.net) and you'll find lots of courses, seminars and training days. Whether artists know about what's going on is another matter.

On the other hand, Sara Clifford, a playwright working for Métier, replies:

Very little, according to the Métier Arts Supply audit and the audits undertaken by London Youth Arts Network and Arts Education Network. What there is is sporadic and not 'joined up' with any other provision.

As a network, CreativePeople curates and articulates a range of views. In addition to the challenges of the patterns of provision, quality assurance is key. What then might be the value of professionals sharing their experience and practice in school in a CPD context?

Kathryn Deane again:

Peer-learning activities between arts practitioners sharing their knowledge of working in schools is a good way of doing CPD in the arts sector. We're also currently researching ways in which schools' music services could open up their INSET sessions to community musicians. The early results are that this is valued both by schools and musicians, but interestingly, as a recruitment ground much more, in some cases, than as a sharing opportunity.

Su Jones of [a-n] adds:

There is a section on our website (www.a-n.co.uk) with an introductory article and a case study of a video artist who worked in a special school in Wales. This case study introduces another dimension to CPD, in that the teachers' views of what young people with special needs could achieve, or would want to do, were challenged.

The Art of the Animateur, an investigation by Animarts into the skills required of artists to work effectively in schools and communities, has served as a very useful tool in moving many CPD-related issues forward, including reflective practice (see www.animarts.org.uk).

Creative teachers tend to be familiar with structured self-evaluation and reflection. The evidence of this research reveals that if artists understand and subscribe to this approach too, this has a significant impact both on the relationship with the teacher and the ensuing experiences.

Kathryn Deane has tested this assertion:

We carried out work on reflective practice some five or so years ago and found that there was a polarisation. I think the language and methods have changed a little since. We think that reflective practice is the key to proper evaluation; it is a creative activity in its own right.

The Art of the Animateur links reflective practice to the key issues of accreditation and validation:

The challenge is to devise criteria for assessment which can be applied to not only the explicit, but also the implicit, knowledge, skills and competencies of the animateur. It is generally the implicit communication and reflective skills of artist and teacher that are at the heart of successful relationships. CPD providers must consider how such qualities could be made the focus of an assessment process. Course structures should incorporate a framework for observation and peer assessment and encourage and promote action research techniques.

Sara Clifford would like to see consultation with artists, trainers, school staff and young people, and an independent accreditation, similar to the Unit for Arts and Offenders.

The new Creative and Cultural Industries Sector Skills Council are aiming to establish a form of kitemarking. It is hoped that they will embrace some of the analysis arising from Animarts' research:

If we want effective animateur practice to increase in education there has to be proper validation and accreditation. A number of professional development courses now embrace this need, for example Postgraduate Certificate/ Diploma/MA in Cross Sectoral and Community Arts at Goldsmiths University. Other examples of modular schemes leading to a variety of qualifications are the Music Teachers in Professional Practice at Reading University, using distance learning techniques and leading to an M.A.

But postgraduate qualifications are no longer the chief challenge within formal education, as, unlike undergraduate courses, entry is not dependant on set conditions. While institutions grapple with the challenges of embedding reflective practice and finessing a practitioner-focused approach to validation and accreditation of sufficient robustness to convince employers, artists need to locate themselves within a changing landscape. So what networks and opportunities are in place for artists to reflect on their practice in schools?

As well as art form based agencies such as Foundation for Community Dance, Sound Sense or National Association of Writers in Education (NAWE), there are databases to move the selection of artists beyond the models of the little black address book, such as Artscape, LONSAS (London Schools Arts Service) and ALISS (Artist and Learning Information and Support Service), and some specialised programmes like Animarts.

The Animarts research combined the dual processes of research and professional development and, like the DfES (Department for Education and Skills) Best Practice Research Scholarships for teachers, found that financial support was an important feature for both artists and teachers. One way to look at this is to ask the question: How can creative practitioners 'buy time' for that essential research without which they are not going to be able to keep quality in their work? Answer: Be paid at better rates for engagement-based work. [a-n] research for fees and payments estimates that artists need at least fifteen days a year for research that is not connected to a specific project.

Towards unifying a growing field, CreativePeople partners' priorities regarding future CPD opportunities for artists and creative professionals working in the sector are:

- An advertising campaign that links artists to existing networks, starting with CreativePeople – networks that include consultation with artists.
- A clear diary of CPD opportunities across the sector (this would take its data direct from Arts Connect).
- A campaign to promote Gerri Moriarty's Sharing Practice. I'm fed up of artists saying, "x doesn't exist" when what they mean is "I don't know where x exists".
- Accredited courses that are run regularly with opportunities for early and mid-stage practitioners, with modules that can be accumulated.
- Continued advocacy of CPD to artists who often don't seem to think it's necessary.
- Establishment of clear sectoral best practice terms and conditions, dealing with issues such as copyright, and proper levels of remuneration (based on Arts Council England agreed rates).

In June 2003 the Creativity and the Curriculum conference took place at the Barbican Arts Centre in London. This event was arranged jointly by the DfES and DCMS (Department for Culture, Media and Sport) "to look at ways in which the education and cultural sectors can work together to enrich young people's experience of school". In the concluding session David Milliband, Minister of State for School Standards, said he believed that above all else, what is needed in the campaign to put creativity at the heart of education is professional development.

I would like to see CreativePeople and Creative Partnerships together with the new CCI Sector Skills Council, bring together HE and FE as well as workplace based learning provision to deliver Milliband's aim.

With thanks to:
Paul Munden, NAWE
Kathryn Deane, Sound Sense
Sara Clifford, Metier
Peter Davies, Cumbrian Cultural Skills Partnership
Su Jones, [a-n] the artists information company
Lucy Day, Space Studios
Christopher Lucas, Animarts

Fear of the artist

Jude Kelly OBE

I believe fear is a deep and necessary part of genuine creativity. Exploring new ideas and following hunches requires us to become accustomed to living with doubt and also anxiety. Artists from all disciplines use phrases like “I was wading around in the dark”; “for a long time I didn’t know where I was heading”; “I just had a feeling…” and so on.

They learn to manage and mobilise their fear in order to break through their comfort zones. They learn to trust that after the ensuing and frightening wilderness, some clear new landscape will emerge. Sometimes that doesn’t happen, and therein lies the risk and potential for ridicule.

Young people need to become accustomed to experiencing doubt and navigating creative fear. This is a very personal journey that increases both self-knowledge and emotional stamina. Enterprises that require initiative and ‘character’ need a working knowledge of coping with fear and uncertainty.

So artists working within education must offer not only their art form expertise but also their experience of fear and their intimate relationships with vulnerability. This is an important understanding that builds empathy for others and not just certainty of self.

How can this understanding be valued and used in school and community contexts? Artists (and educators) are often encouraged to always seem certain. We have been taught to believe authority lies in projecting certainty. Also in teaching, we often feel pressure to make each experience instantly enjoyable. This can be in conflict with the artist/educator and young person going on a creative journey together.

The contemporary climate for ‘results’ militates against acknowledging that creative journeys are often difficult and unpredictable and that the reason for starting them can be based on mere ‘hunch’.

Two years ago, I founded Metal to support the need for time and space in artistic practice. I also include in this idea the development of the philosophy of work. When I was involved in creating the West Yorkshire Playhouse, I ensured the education and community policies were fundamental to the whole enterprise. I believed, and still do, that access, inclusiveness and the human right to creativity is one of the central reasons for public funding. But I also believe equally in the right of artists to continually deepen their own practice and to be valued for their ability to deal with fear. This is something which policy makers and institutions need to endorse.

The status given to artists often depends on their public acclaim. This status gives ‘benefit of the doubt’ to ideas, hunches, and experimentation. Artists working in education can seem ‘invisible’ and unsupported by peer group or public praise. In these circumstances, it can become harder for artists to give themselves permission to take risky decisions or new directions, and so the pupils that they teach, may never observe that fear and doubt are a necessary part of creativity and not something to be ashamed of.

The work of educationists, artists and young people will all be strengthened, if the teaching of artistic practice includes the managing of emotional turbulence as well as the techniques and disciplines that go into finished work.

Opposite top: Helena Bryant: video stills from **Zero Suit of Invisibility**, 2001, performance intervention at a school in Humberside.

Opposite bottom: Helena Bryant: video still from **SHOUT: voices from the edge**, 2000.

The rebel yell – taking risks with art and young people

Manick Govinda

I was perturbed at the Art for whose sake? conference by a presentation by a teacher who spoke eloquently and convincingly about creative learning methods across the school's curriculum. While it was laudable to use the arts to spice up "dull subjects" like Maths, Biology and Physics by pairing an art subject with a "hard subject", which led to an increased attainment in those subjects, I felt a little disgruntled by this utilitarian use of art.

I am not an advocate of art for art's sake as a cultural position, but I believe in the value of art. Experience of art and encounters with certain artists and art works can make a difference to, or change, one's life. It can help you look further into the social, spiritual and human condition, and for me, that's what art is about.

A moment at school that resonates strongly for me was when I was 14 years old, in about 1976 or '77. An English teacher invited a poet to the school. He was a young black poet called Linton Johnson (later known as Linton Kwesi Johnson). He told us that he was born in Jamaica, came to England, lived in Brixton and thought the British education system was rotten to its core and profoundly racist. His poetry was in the Caribbean Creole dialect, and he had swear words in it. They were about police brutality, the black experience. It was like nothing I'd ever experienced in school. The headteacher was a bit alarmed by him and our English teacher probably got reprimanded, but boy, did he speak to me and many of the boys in our school. I remember all the black kids were reeling in excitement by his language; their language being validated and given a voice. In Linton Johnson I could see a radical, anti-establishment kind of bloke, and he inspired both black and white kids to write about subjects that we weren't allowed to write about. Rather than writing an essay about our fictional pet dog or hamster, we wrote about harder subjects; junkies, police brutality, race, the monarchy. This was a significant moment, and my first ever experience with a professional living artist.

Linton still lives in Brixton, he's still a radical (a former member of the Black Panther Movement), and his poetry and music still rocks, as do his views. He is still a significant influence; I recently saw a well-thumbed copy of Mi Revalueshanary Fren (published by Penguin as part of its Modern Classics series) on the table of a performing arts teacher at City & Islington College who has been working with the text with his students. Some of his black students have difficulty in acknowledging the validity of the Caribbean-Creole language and diction, which to this day is still regarded as a form of sub-English.

I've always been interested in the experimental, the counter-cultural, the political, the dangerous and the downright subversive. Linton's words still stay with me.

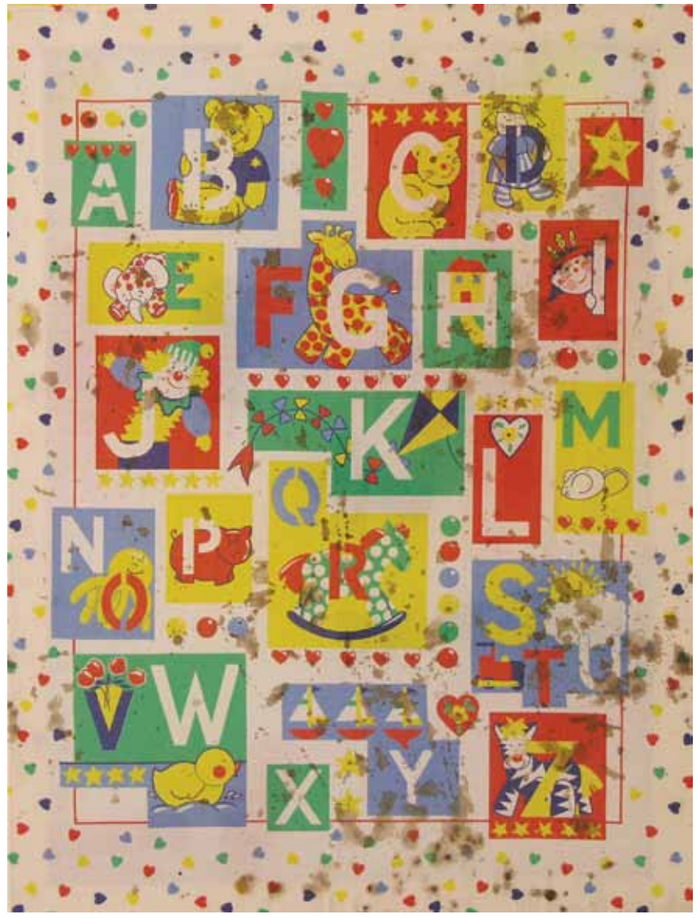
I've taken this belief with me in the work I do at Artsadmin. I advise and work with artists who I believe are pushing the boundaries of artistic practice, which is why I have come to be fascinated with and attracted to Live Art.

Live Art isn't an art form; it's a strategy. I believe it embraces what Raymond Williams called a 'structure of feeling'. You learn something from it without really being conscious or aware of doing so. It shapes your outlook on everything around you and how you respond to things. It's not about learning a technique, a language, style or subject, but it is about looking at and listening to difference, and trying to understand difference and ideas that contest your own. It's the space where that frisson between you, the viewer or participant, and the artist or maker can either change or annoy you, but your views have been challenged.

A group of students studying BND Performing Arts in East London recently came to Toynbee Studios (where Artsadmin is based) to engage with an interactive installation by Rosemary Lee and to visit the studio of artist Franko B, deep in the basement of the building. Here is an account from one of the students:

"My first expectations when I saw him was, ok this freak wants to give me a talk, let me just follow him and see what happens. When I got to his 'lair' I began to see his work in a different light. As I was circling the room I had an odd sense of foreboding about the place. This was somewhere sinister, a place where I should not be. There were pictures of males engaging in sexual contact with one another. I saw a jar full of wet condoms; yes, this is shocking… I saw paintings of flowers with his own blood in the middle of it. I was shocked that an artist would do that to himself, all in the name of Art…[Franko B] explained to us the need for him to use his own blood in his painting. He said that when he was little he was looked after by the Red Cross so as a sort of tribute to them he used his own blood in a painting of the actual cross itself. He also explained that he used to give blood regularly but then they asked him to stop because of his sexuality… Towards the end of the meeting with Franko B I started to respect him as a person not as a homosexual artist. I thought that he was eccentric and mad but at the same time I sort of understood that because he came from a rough childhood, and he was abandoned by his parents he needed a way to express himself, and he chose that through art."

Within that encounter this 16 year old has had the culture of AIDS, the culture of pain, love, hate, loss, care, dispossession and freedom expressed to him like a living collage. Perhaps one day, in his daily life he will come to understand the asylum seeker, the refugee, and the homeless person down the street, the unloved child, and the epidemic that's killing millions in the poorer nations. And he'll also come to know about love, care, salvation and challenging prejudice and bigotry. Isn't that what art should be about?



'I saw paintings of flowers with his own blood in the middle of it. I was shocked that an artist would do that to himself, all in the name of Art…'

Franko B: **Early Learning**, artist's blood on printed fabric, 2005.

Photo: kris Canavan

Tom Deveson was a full-time teacher in inner London schools for thirty years. He now delivers in-service training courses for teachers, runs drama and music projects for children, and writes on literature, the arts and education for a variety of national newspapers and magazines. He also enjoys being a new grandparent.

Rosemary Lee has been choreographing, performing and directing dance for twenty-five years. Her work is characterised by a desire to work in a variety of contexts, constituencies and media. Her creative output is diverse: large scale site specific work with community casts numbering up to 250; solos for herself and other performers; films for broadcast television, and commissioned works for dance companies in theatre settings.

www.artsadmin.co.uk/artists/rl

Keith Khan was trained in Fine Art and worked as a carnivalist for many years. In 1990 Khan and fellow artist Ali Zaidi founded acclaimed arts organisation motiroti.

He has been involved in national cultural projects on many occasions, including the Millennium Dome where he designed the opening ceremony, and worked with Mark Fisher and Peter Gabriel on the Central Show. He was Director of Design for the opening and closing ceremonies of the Commonwealth Games 2002, and Artistic Director of Celebration Commonwealth for the Queen's Jubilee Parade in 2002, where 4000 people presented a fresh and exciting perspective of the Commonwealth. Having recently left motiroti, Khan is now Chief Executive of Rich Mix, a major new arts and cultural centre in East London.

www.richmix.org.uk
www.motiroti.com

Helena Bryant is a Live Art practitioner who has performed and exhibited nationally and internationally, including performance works at ANTI festival, Finland, Home, London and Hull Time Based Arts. She has also been involved in a number of participatory, educational, collaborative, and therapeutic projects. She is currently engaged in a practice based research project at Oxford House, Bethnal Green.

www.helenabryant.co.uk

Jonathan Meth is Director of Writernet and Chair of CreativePeople. He trained as a theatre director at the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School and has worked as dramaturg, script editor, director and lecturer. He is also Visiting Tutor on the MA in Arts Administration and Cultural Policy at Goldsmiths College, University of London, Board Member Actors Touring Company, Scottish Playwright's Studio and Jumped Up Theatre Company; External Assessor for the MA in Scriptwriting at the University of East Anglia and a Fellow of the Royal Society for the Arts.

CreativePeople is a national network providing information, advice and guidance to support all those who work in arts and craft industries in making the most of their careers.

www.creativepeople.org.uk

Jude Kelly OBE is founder and Artistic Director of Metal. She is an award winning theatre director who, during her 26-year career, has founded Solent People's Theatre, Battersea Arts Centre, and West Yorkshire Playhouse. Jude is an ambassador for the arts, having represented Britain within UNESCO on cultural matters, served on the Arts Advisory Committee for Royal Society of Arts, and jointly chaired with Lord Puttnam the Curricula Advisory Committee on Arts and Creativity. She is chair of Culture and Education for London's 2012 Olympic bid, chair of Common Purpose International Trust, board member of The British Council and visiting Professor at Kingston and Leeds universities. She is much in demand as a commentator and spokesperson for the arts.

www.metalculture.com

Manick Govinda set up and manages the Artists' Advisor service at Artsadmin. He developed the Artsadmin artists' bursary scheme and their digital media bursary for disabled artists and project managed the decibel visual arts awards. Manick is also a guest-commissioning editor for [a-n] The Artists Information Company and has contributed to its unique new web site and magazine for visual artists. He has worked closely with a range of artists including Franko B, Zarina Bhimji, Robin Deacon, Helen Paris and Leslie Hill.

Artsadmin provides a comprehensive management service and unique national resource for contemporary artists who cross the spectrum of live art, new theatre, dance, music and mixed media work. With consistent and supportive administration we develop and promote artists' work, from the initial stages of a project through to its final presentation. Seeking to establish partnerships with producers, promoters and relevant arts organisations in Britain and abroad, we endeavour to bring the new and challenging work of our artists to an ever-increasing audience.

Based at Toynbee Studios in East London since 1994, Artsadmin is building up a centre for creation and development of new work. We have established a range of new opportunities for emerging and unfunded artists with a bursary and mentoring scheme, a full-time advisory service, school residencies and a programme of showcases.

For more information contact:
Manick Govinda, Artists' Advisor, Artsadmin

Toynbee Studios, 28 Commercial Street, London E1 6AB

T: 020 7247 5102
F: 020 7247 5103

manick@artsadmin.co.uk

www.artsadmin.com

Creative Partnerships works to give school children throughout England the opportunity to develop their potential, ambition, creativity and imagination.
It achieves this by building sustainable partnerships between schools and creative and cultural individuals and organisations that impact upon learning. Creative Partnerships is funded by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, is supported by the Department for Education and Skills and is managed by Arts Council England.

Creative Partnerships London East aims to place creativity and imagination at the centre of teaching and learning, working across the whole school and curriculum. We work with young people, teachers, support staff, headteachers, parents, creative practitioners and organisations to encourage and enable different ways of thinking about school. Through a programme of long term partnerships between educational institutions and professional creative individuals and organisations we seek to explore a different way of working together and making meaningful change.

Creative Partnerships London East
Discover, 1 Bridge Terrace, Stratford,
London E15 4BG

T: 020 8536 5558
F: 020 8555 3948

londoneast@creative-partnerships.com

www.creative-partnerships.com

Design: Thirdperson www.thirdperson.co.uk