

**Square Peg interim evaluation report**

**Who has visited Square Peg exhibitions and how did they receive them?**

**Exhibition visitor data by show**

**Total visitors 7 April 2017 – 29 September 2017:** Over this period, a total of **1924** visitors attended the following shows:

* Shape: Adam Reynolds: The Shortlist **343**
* Shape: Adam Reynolds: Oliver MacDonald **252**
* Anita Corbin: Visible Girls Revisited **861**
* John Walter: Alien Sex Capsule **468**

Anita Corbin’s exhibition attracted most visitors **(861**). Average attendance was **481** visitors per show.

**Visitor feedback: Adam Reynolds Phase One**

The figures below are based on responses to surveys by **19** visitors.

**Main reasons for attending:** The most frequently reported reason for attendance was ‘Because I am a regular attender of exhibitions or activities hosted by Artlink’ (7 respondents) followed by ‘Because it’s part of Hull UK City of Culture 2017’ (5 respondents).

**Demographics:** Of the **19** respondents, **12** were women and all respondents described themselves as English / Welsh White. **12** visitors were employed or self-employed, **4** were retired and one was a carer.

**Visitor feedback: Adam Reynolds Phase Two**

The figures below are based on responses to surveys by **20** visitors.

**Main reasons for attending:** The most frequently reported reason for attendance was ‘Because I am a regular attender of exhibitions or activities hosted by Artlink’ (5 respondents) followed by ‘Because it’s part of Hull UK City of Culture 2017’ (3 respondents).

**Demographics:** Of the **20** respondents, **14** were women and all but one respondent (who described themselves as mixed / multiple ethnic) described themselves as English / Welsh White. **11** visitors were employed or self-employed, **5** were retired, one was a student and one was a carer.

**Visitor feedback: Anita Corbin**

The figures below are based on responses to surveys by**53** visitors.

**Main reasons for attending:** The most frequently reported reasons for attendance were ‘Because I am a regular attender of exhibitions or activities hosted by Artlink’ (10 respondents); ‘General interest in this type of event’ (10 respondents) and ‘Because it’s part of Hull UK City of Culture 2017’ (8 respondents).

**Demographics:** Of the **53** respondents, **14** were women and all but one respondent (who described themselves as mixed / multiple ethnic) described themselves as English / Welsh White. **11** visitors were employed or self-employed, **5** were retired, one was a student and one was a carer.

**John Walter:**

Please note, we have not yet processed audience feedback from the John Walter exhibition surveys. However, we have got a number of visitor comments extracted from the Visitors Book. The following are typical:

*I’m HIV – a great gallery. Bought the cards – so impressed.*

*The worst thing about this show is that it’s so graphic but actually quite interesting*

*A serious subject under the colour of play and intrigue*

*Very colourful and playful / honest take on HIV and in insight into the practices and focus of gay males’ priorities and concerns.*

*Would be interesting for more info on HIV plus women perhaps at some point = other countries.*

*The Alien Sex Capsule exhibition is fantastic*

*Alarming*

*Wouldn’t expect anything less. Ravishing.*

We have also been provided with extracts from the Hull 2017 visitor surveys for Alien Sex Capsule. The following are typical:

*Helped to encourage understanding of HIV and relationships*

*I got a sense of fun and reassurance from identifying with images and characters in the exhibition.*

*A really good little, local gallery doing really interesting work. Great tem and highly professionally put together exhibition.*

*Made me think about how sex education is, or was, exclusively heterosexual / for procreation, that’s just not realistic or helpful if you aren’t interested I either of those things.*

*I’ve never seen these issues explained in such a creative and colourful way.*

**Visitor quotes: All shows**

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| **ANITA CORBIN: In what ways, if any, have your thoughts or feelings about your life / future changed as a result of attending this exhibition or project?** | **ANITA CORBIN: In what way/s if any, have your thoughts or feelings about other people changed as a result of attending this exhibition or project** |
| *I feel very inspired by the works to be honest – filled with a feeling of love for the women from 30 years ago. I identify with!*  *Yes – live life to the full. Always keep your teenage ensembles (togs) for retro moments. Keep in contact with old friends – you never know when you may pop your clogs.*  *These women – I felt that there was me (still somewhere) are all around us, still same tribe. I know some of the faces.*  *Inspired by my visibility and recognised / reminded me who I am.*  *I want to get into photography again.*  *I have an urge to revisit my teenage years.*  *Its invaluable to document everyday life for future generations to see.*  *Yes – live life to the full. Always keep your teenage ensembles (togs) for retro moments. Keep in contact with old friends – you never know when you may pop your clogs.*  *These women – I felt that there was me (still somewhere) are all around us, still same tribe. I know some of the faces.* | *Prompted to think about female vs male friendships via music from early 80s when I was just starting art college as a design student.*  *I feel more positive about the sub cultures I and my friends are part of and their histories (plus other sub cultures). I hadn’t considered them much as women’s spaces until now.*  *Made me realise how few photographs of women there are – other than objectified male jazzy ones.*  *Interesting to see how some remarkable girls have grown into interesting women.*  *Being of an ethnic origin, it is quite refreshing to see the awareness shown and displayed through this Corbin exhibition.*  *It made me appreciate and be more proud of having a unique female identity.*  *Struck by the beauty of older women.*  *Some age better than others. Always keep flexible and young at heart. Stay in contact.* |

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| **OLIVER MACDONALD: In what ways, if any, have your thoughts or feelings about your life / future changed as a result of attending this exhibition or project?** | **OLIVER MACDONALD: In what way/s if any, have your thoughts or feelings about other people changed as a result of attending this exhibition or project** |
| *More open*  *Made me look at things differently*  *More positive towards disabled people*  *It hasn’t*  *I liked Oliver’s sense of playfulness with items traditionally associated with impairment, and also his use of everyday materials; if there was a message to take away from this it would be to continue seeing the world through the lens of play.*  *I have a little more hope / positivity*  *The exhibition made me consider life could change unexpectedly – disability is not necessarily understood in everyday life.* | *I’m completely changed*  *How life challenges disabled people*  *There’s more talent in the community*  *The little room with so many things has a very strong impact on me. It is beyond me to explain or put into words*  *I appreciate disabled people more and it’s eye opening*  *It brought about a need to be more aware of people around and not take ability for granted* |

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| **ADAM REYNOLDS: In what ways, if any, have your thoughts or feelings about your life / future changed as a result of attending this exhibition or project?** | **ADAM REYNOLDS: In what way/s if any, have your thoughts or feelings about other people changed as a result of attending this exhibition or project** |
| *More positive*  *It’s broadened my understanding of art in general and other upcoming events*  *Appreciating different aspects of art*  *I want to create art*  *I feel attendance has provided me with a greater empathy with disabled people*  *Makes you want to have a go / try harder* | *Positively and very inquisitively*  *It takes all sorts to make art*  *Everybody smiles in the same language*  *To be more aware of the needs of those with disabilities*  *I appreciate the skill it takes to weave his work*  *More opportunities for disabled artists*  *I’m more interested in other people’s reactions to different artwork and it excites to discuss work with strangers* |

**How have attendees received workshops delivered by the artist in residence?**

We visited CASE on 30 august and spoke to 5 women and 6 men who had taken part in at least one workshop delivered by Jason Wilsher – Mills (the Square Peg artist in residence).

The activity involved 3D arts using an iPad. Specifically, individuals took photographs of themselves and then played with the imagery, context and setting.

All of the participants enjoyed the experience:

*I did one in a disco. I did myself dancing.*

*Jason looked at me and asked what I liked doing and I used paint to colour it in. It took about yow or three hours. He said there’s going to be an exhibition.*

*I did myself next to Neil Tennant of the Pet Shop Boys.*

*I did myself at Old Trafford.*

Participants told us that they particularly enjoyed the following aspects of the workshop:

* Doing something different and getting to learn new skills
* Getting to be creative
* Learning what it is possible to do with an iPad
* Getting to work with a professional artist
* Getting good advice form an artist
* Having good fun – Jason cracking jokes

Staff, too, enjoyed the activity. One commented:

*I walked around seeing if they needed help. The second time I did a picture as Wonder Woman – we’ve got a big superhero thing going on here.*

**How have delivery team members experienced Square Peg?**

At the April evaluation meeting, we asked attendees to consider the following terms and to define them. At the August meeting, we asked people to revisit the definitions and to assess the extent to which Square Peg embodies the terms.

**User – led:**

* *Led by disabled / diverse people / artists where work is the focus and is of high quality*
* *Workshop participants determine content*
* *Ensuring participants have a voice*

**August Rating: 3/5**

**Diversity**:

* *Any person who experiences barriers to accessing arts and culture*
* *Applying learning from the social model to other marginalised groups*
* *The work is the focus and of high quality*

**August rating: 2/5**

***The social model of disability:***

* *Changes spaces and attitudes to enable access*
* *Accessibility of opportunity, ensuring that all can participate*
* ***Not*** *the medical model*
* *Language and how we communicate*
* *The work is the focus and of high quality*

**August rating: 3/5**

**Pre-mortem:** A Pre-Mortem is a process in which a project team imagines that its project has failed. The team then brainstorms all of the possible potential reasons that the project could fail and assigns a probability to each potential reason.

Once a long list has been generated, the team should go through them each in turn, identifying themes and clumping reasons as appropriate.

Once this has been done, the team should generate ideas about what measures can be put in place to mitigate the likelihood of the identified risks occurring.

Pre-mortem differs from standard risk assessment and appraisal because it allows the team to think safely about failure and can create within the team a shared sense of responsibility and ownership.

At the first evaluation meeting we asked the team to generate potential reasons for failure and at the second we asked the team to consider measures which could be put in place to address these. The exercise can be summarised as follows:

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| **Most Likely / Least Serious**   * **Limited or no continued support from Hull post 2017** * **I (Rachel) get ill and no one else knows the Programme**   **Suggested pre-emptive actions:**   * **Constant dialogue with the 2017 legacy team / own funding** * **Ownership of sections, spreading the load** | **Most Likely / Most Serious**   * **Accused of offending / upsetting minority groups** * **Poor communications** * **Only attracts disabled / diverse audiences** * **Square Peg stops after one year, letting down the community** * **Ran out of money** * **Not delivered enough workshops** * **Not enough thought given to long term programme** * **Too focused on delivery and not learning** * **Communities not engaged**   **Suggested pre-emptive actions:**   * **Active listening** * **More dialogues with all partners and audiences** * **Carving a space for reflection including with Board and staff** |
| **Least Likely / Least Serious**   * **Artist doesn’t come out of the studio**   **Suggested pre-emptive actions:**   * **The artist needs more time, hard to connect groups during summer months** | **Least Likely / Most Serious**   * **Disabled / diverse communities alienated by the process** * **Relationships break down with project partners and freelancers** * **No media coverage / failure to attract voices in mainstream media** * **No audience and poor advertising** * **Bad reviews** * **Bad management** * **Message falls on deaf ears: preaching to the converted and no new audiences**   **Suggested pre-emptive actions:**   * **Effective communication** * **Artlink to be more assertive with partners and funders / push 2017 for media support** * **Artlink to ensure manageable workloads to prevent chaotic management** * **Consider all bad reviews and take action if needed** * **Keep pushing programme to ensure new audience** |

At each meeting, we asked about aspirations for Square Peg. The table below summarises the outcomes of this exercise highlighting where and if aspirations have changed over time:

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| **April 2017** | **August 2017** |
| * **Do stuff that hasn’t been done before** * **To have been a series of interesting, impactful arts projects** * **To enjoy creativity as participant – both creator and audience** * **Create amazing art** * **To improve awareness and dialogues around disability** * **Create an open platform to identify and discuss issues around access. If the city could be wheelchair accessible, it would be a start.** * **To increase participation in the arts from people with disability and from diverse backgrounds.** * **Promote new and existing talent within Hull’s disability community** * **Increase knowledge of disability arts in Hull** * **Promote new and existing talent within Hull’s disability community** * **Work with those who don’t have a voice** * **Push forward my professional practice** * **Make friends** * **Meet people** * **To be an action learning process in this field** * **Create a specialism for Artlink and a disability arts producer on a permanent basis** * **Introduce Artlink to my creative partners** * **Give Artlink an idea of future directions for programmes based around art and disability** * **Increase audience numbers and number of people accessing Artlink events** * **More footfall from diverse groups to exhibitions** | * **Continuation of Square Peg Hull but with greater autonomy and more self - governance** * **Greater depth of conversation** * **Greater depth locally** * **Deeper links with communities: change how we work whilst maintaining standards** * **Larger scale but fewer exhibitions** * **Artlink to have ownership of programme** * **Legacy: ongoing projects; telling what worked and focusing on it** |

**How have artists experienced Square Peg?**

To date, we have interviewed three artists (including Jason Wilsher – Mills, Square Peg’s artist in residence). This subsection summarises some of the key points raised by Anita Corbin and John Walter. Jason’s reflections will be discussed in detail in the final evaluation report.

The terms of engagement were different for each artist. Anita had separately fundraised for Visible Girls Revisited and – following conversations with Artlink and one of the Visible Girls who was resident in Hull – decided to launch Visible Girls Revisited in the city. It was felt that there was a good fit with the City of Culture programme and plans began in 2016. Anita described the relationship with Artlink and with Hull as serendipitous; it meant that the new exhibition could be launched in a city which had a very real connection – through one of the portraits – to the original Visible Girls project. It is worth noting that Anita Corbin brought with her significant marketing, PR and communications infrastructure and that this proved highly successful in raising awareness about the exhibition.

The relationship between Anita and Artlink felt very collaborative; Anita did not charge Artlink a fee and Artlink did not charge a commission for merchandise sales. For Anita, community engagement is central to her practice: *Because the series is about reunion and rekindling and keeping your mates and looking to the past, I suppose it felt important that the people of Hull should feel part of the process. One way of connecting with this was to do with the workshop and artist talk and pop up event – I’ve got a writer who I work with and we went out for 36 hours in Hull and met up with people and photographed them. We got their spin on what it was like to live in Hull…art can feel elusive and exclusive so having that engagement is what it’s about.*

The arrangement with John Walter, on the other hand, felt more like a traditional commission. However, according to John it was not without its problems. The commission was initiated through a cold call from Kate West (formerly of Artlink) who had seen the exhibition in Liverpool in 2015. Kate approached John asking him if he would be interested in making a version of the exhibition for Artlink. An unusual feature of the commission, from John’s point of view was that as commissioner, Artlink did not place any expectations on him as the artist: *They could have driven it in multiple directions but they let me lead on it when they’re the commissioner. This also resulted in mistakes…the contract had some problems; there was no payment schedule and they were going to give me all the money in one go.*

Artists had contrasting views about the ways in which their work was hosted by Artlink. John Walter’s view is that recent exhibitions which have formed part of the Square Peg programme are perhaps of a scale that is unfamiliar to Artlink and that the organisation has perhaps struggled with the infrastructural support needed.Though John was impressed by the way in which Artlink transformed the space and exhibited his work, he was less satisfied with some other aspects of hosting: *The role of the host is something that I’m sensitive to…approach people before they come to you. Learn about the work. It’s the difference between something being ok and something being amazing.*

Anita meanwhile was fulsome in her praise for Artlink staff; she felt that they were knowledgeable about the work and were able to answer questions posed by visitors: *The staff were great on the desk – ready to talk to people. The space was not intimidating andpeople feel confident enough to make comments whereas if they were in The Ferens they’re not likely to go up to someone and say, ‘Don’t you think you should have out that next to there?’*