

In-Habit.

Notes from the notebooks:

Table 1

Jude Anderson (Punctum), Kristy Edmunds (Melbourne International Festival), Chris Dupe (Local Government), Jon Butt (c3), Fiona Hilary (City of Yarra)

Session 1 – discuss successful examples of cultural exchange

- A group of people / person who is a bridge builder
- Capacity to return
- Spontaneity
- Voraciousness of curiosity
- Engaging differently
- Openness, willingness to admit to being lost
- Food, drink, bread – a lot happens around these
- Economics that is a part of the exchange that allows for surprises in both major and minor projects
- Adventure in life (and therefore art)
- Sharing
- Exchange is central rather than the outcome
- Value of resisting collaboration / acting with difficulty

Kristy: Lots of ARIs / artist colonies are driven by the idea of 'saving' the artist from their life of suffering. This leads to nurturing. However why not present an artist with a robust and well resourced challenge.

Some artists are ready to go: be nimble enough within the construct of your project to recognize at which stage an artist is at. If they are at the beginning of a process then they may need nurturing but if they are at a more developed advanced stage they might be rearing to go.

Session 2 – What might InHabit 'look' like?

(Chris' notes) Jude declared the spirit of InHabit but what are the nuts and bolts (how do we help with aspects of practicality?).

Cultural exchange rather than residencies.

What are the challenges? – to present a case to the ACCR. Develop a model to build, test, and present.

What are the desires of the people here?

A lot of people already have a sense of ownership of the place – need to negotiate on future opportunities – what does it offer these stake holders? Acknowledgement is important (particularly for battlers).

Kristy: who would I call upon? Pretty clear. What would I want it to be? That is open to further consideration. The MIAF doesn't offer the opportunity for artists to have future relationships – but Abbotsford could.

How do you return the 'legacy'? Continuity may be possible through the South Project. Need to communicate the opportunity. 'Palimpsest'.

Resonance of place, not just historical moment. Involvement of architects.

Need to get philanthropic engagement – capital campaign. How do you make the philanthropists interested in exchange? Kristy – look at creating a ‘convening’ – bring the most important philanthropists in the world together – create the ‘gestalt’ – bring Rockefeller, Gates, Andy Warhol, etc. – allow local philanthropists to attend / host – they will be shamed and / or inspired. Create an energy that international philanthropy cares about. Also look at artists who have benefitted. Project far and long – Kristy will help to do it.

Artist camp – potential – bring the world leaders to help solve “the problem”.

How far do you push? Physical space? Need to push the ideas as far as you can.

Need to animate the spaces – seasonal, organic. How does the architect open up to the outside?

Jude to drive the project. Need the peer squad inside the project to develop the ideas.

Artists to develop what is possible for 2009.

Link in with ‘generosity project’. Could provide a strong opportunity for engagement.

Through layers of involvement a clarity of future will emerge.

Need to take the Board on the journey.

Table 2

Amanda Browne (Arts Victoria), Nelum Buddhadasa (City of Yarra), Justin McDonnell (Anzarts Institute), Mandy Nicholson (Tharangalk Art), Meredith Lewis (Punctum)

Session 1 – discuss successful examples of cultural exchange

Neighbourhood Houses of City of Yarra:

Mandy's mural project in Collingwood Neighbourhood House – groups from different nationalities mixed together.

Some of the folks from Table 2 had recently attended a performance at the Northcote Town Hall featuring Singaporean artists. What they took away from this was the richness of the language of symbolism – exchange of symbolic language.

Mandy - Public Art / Community Art projects bring out a sense of pride in participants. Best to get all participants involved. Then everyone drives it.

Justin: what makes a good residency? Genuine association with practice in the place the artist is working in. real local connection. Buildings and centres can actually be a real impediment to creating great residencies.

Difference between the residency and an exchange: exchange emphasises social contact, whereas residency can be just about providing private space for the artist.

Communication between exchange organizers and artists and communities:

- Clarity about purpose of exchange
- Get people together a year before the exchange starts (Justin)
- Prepare to be surprised

Justin's experience in Florida: invited artist to participate in an exchange but didn't set goals or suggest outcomes – just left it open ended. Justin said that he does prefer there to be an outcome but that this is not always the case with exchanges.

Mandy's mural project: driven by a need to celebrate. Exchange of symbolism, stories, histories and affection between a diverse range of participants. Layering of history – koori and multicultural.

Mandy: ask participants what they want as an outcome. In another project Mandy had to consult with and seek permission from representatives of 5 Koori nations. (Nick said that this makes Mandy a diplomat). Knowledge and approval are important factors in the cultural exchange that occurs as a part of Mandy's practice as an indigenous and community artist.

Mandy transmits and shares the knowledge / stories / symbolism of the Kulin nation to the rest of us.

Amount of time needed for the exchanges: Justin used to allow up to 3 years for exchanges during his time in Florida. Group agreed on the preference for plenty of time. This allows for a diverse range of experiences during the exchange / residency.

Time is needed to develop friendships. Exchanges should be about the lived experience of the community. This is hard work and takes an investment of time and energy.

Don't neglect the emotional level of exchanges – they are not just a managerial exercise.

City of Yarra would require a definite outcome for community groups / subcultures if they were to commit funding to In-Habit.

Session 2 – What might In- Habit 'look' like?

Community outcome (could be a project or engagement):

- Just get the community used to the building and grounds
- Engagement needs to be a 2 way thing – artists going out into the community and vice versa
- Part of the community engagement definitely needs to happen in the Convent
- (Some of the City of Yarra Neighbourhood Houses have Artists in Residence.)

- Multiple entry points for the community.

Healing the space / site. (There is some grim history here). Healing that is relevant to layers of time.

Site specific work.

Questions (and general thoughts):

- Is it intended that In-Habit will be the centre of a process that links regional-urban-overseas artists?*
- Is it proactive or reactive or a combination in the way it attracts participants?
- Is it intended that there are a set group of artists who are in residence?*
- Is it a requirement for artists to sit together and eat?*
- Should have the capacity to be long term if needed (can be broken down into stages if need be).*
- There has to be a curatorial centre and a system of arbitration and negotiation connected to that. (Justin has written the word "Export" next to this comment).*
- What shape does the community engagement take?
- Who owns it?
- Reciprocity.
- Potential to link in with existing schemes / organizations, e.g. Asialink, South Project, CINARS, Universities, festivals, etc.*
- How can the cultural exchange bring about understanding and enjoyment of diversity?*

Table 3:

Simon Maidment (Westspace Gallery and Melbourne International Festival), Ernesto Rios (Resident Artist at Deakin University), Mike Zafiropoulos (Regional Arts Victoria), Martin Mulligan (The Globalism Institute at RMIT), Jasmine Watterson (Abbotsford Convent)

Session 1 – discuss successful examples of cultural exchange

Simon Maidment: 6 internal projects. The best results came from those which lasted a longer time – not just about one outcome. E.g. 20 contemporary Japanese artists. 9 Australian artists and 3 curators conducted a research trip to Japan. These artists selected artists from Japan and selected appropriate locations within Australia for the Japanese to undertake artist residencies.

Project lasted: 10 months prior to arrival in Australia + 18 months of the artists being based in locations all around Australia. Time is very important / longevity. Time periods may be decided by cultural factors.

Influence of outcomes – opening opportunities for artists, curators, venues, etc. to keep networks / relationships in Japanese organizations and individuals.

Martin Mulligan: When do you decide there is value in a project – and not pull the pin? (Especially in the case of projects that are as demanding and ambitious as the one talked about above).

Mike Zafiropolous: key points are the time, enthusiasm of cultural exchange – support of organizations like the Japanese Foundation.

Simon Maidment: varied people being involved helps to sustain a project because of varied enthusiasms, skills, and supports.

Mike Zafiropolous: Common ground is important. One connection with a country – Linda – Indonesia. Then people involved looked at Festivals that they could link / engage with. Echoes – presence helped bring:

- Passion and commitment
- Project aimed at engaging the community
- Calibre of artists

- Lead time was important – a year to convince the board / long time building relationships

Re models of exchange:

- Australia's position is unique because of our multicultural status
- We need to control exchange within Australia as well as bringing in International artists

Internal exchange:

- Emphasis on local multicultural artists
- Need to actively bring in multicultural local artists for true exchanges

Martin Mulligan: 2 examples –

- Broadmeadows – tree woven in various traditional weaving techniques – just in local community. Drawing on traditions that already are in existence.
- Arab – anti racist action band / dance / performance. Local artists being proud of their heritage.

Mike Zafiropolous: cultural diversity of Australia puts us in an amazing position for interacting with other countries.

Exporting back to countries, e.g. Australian Greek performing companies going back to Greece.

- Australian company makes pasta and then exports it to Italy. We can do this with Art. Link up with the Immigration Museum (as well as Abbotsford Convent).
- Centre for excellence in Multicultural Arts.

Ernesto Rios: New York City residency program included people from the local community. Governments paid for artist costs. Venue had links with 30 different countries. Created data base and networks of artists in the local community. Use technology and store knowledge. Collect data.

Mike Zafiropolous: we spend lots of dollars bringing groups in to perform. There needs to be more interaction – link with locals more rather than just performing. Collaborate with local community and other visiting artists.

Martin Mulligan: has been engaged in research work for Vic Health. Isolated and skilled people really appreciate someone listening and helping to lend skills and generally helping to create outcomes that weren't hitherto possible.

Martin has lent skills that were based around evaluation. This helped organizations that had not been collecting data or evaluations. Constant evaluation is important. Qualitative evaluation...

Importance of internal corporate exchange. 235 cultures are represented in Australia.

Drivers:

- Passion
- Generosity and collegiality
- Solid core group
- Safe environment and space and time so that spontaneous happenings can occur
- Often started from relationship
- Opportunity to make something culturally new and culturally relevant.

BRILLIANT: failures – clashes which make us reflect on working methods

Failures – not joining a local community

Mike Zafiropolous: 'Cultural Infusion'. E.g. Indonesian traditional + Indonesian hip hop

- Database of Australian artists who have had an interaction with overseas artists

- Database of cultural organizations
- Database of cultural agreements

Seek not only Arts funding but funding from Foreign Affairs / Trade

Ernesto Rios: Cuban experience – international exhibition (with conferences, workshops, party) with no budget. Limited resources – 1 computer to bring in 100 artists from varied locations.

Make a distinction between enablers and drivers.

Simon Maidment: get married before you fall in love. Commit to a project and then see what emerges.

Session 2 – What might In-Habit 'look' like?

Simon Maidment: potentially strength of In-Habit in any new platform existing structures / admin

Network across industry / communicating so that new partnerships can be forged.

ACF – role of facilitator and resource for participants. Centre for excellence for info for participants, residents, local community and organizations such as Satellite. Data bases and information and reference centre.

Local multicultural communities will need to be invited in – greater links needed with multicultural Arts Victoria.

Communal areas for interaction.

PUNCTUM INC.

NOTES FROM IN-HABIT # 1

11

One flagship annual event / exhibition – one that gets the public in

Discussion / forums about cultural exchange (perhaps coinciding with Melbourne Festival)

Formal relationships between visiting body and other organizations.

Consistency – to be known for something unique and that happens

Beginning relationships before the arrival and beyond the departure

Related to space / place

Supported networks

‘Cultural infusion’ organization like MAV or UNESCO

Resources create limitations:

- Acknowledge artists that can be supported
- Limit to ‘emerging’ artists or tailored scale / scope

Focused approach

Collegiate network to help cater for the facilitation

What does it look like?

1. Not relying on helping existing networks or models.

2. Role of facilitator
3. Resource centre (including data bases) for local community, artists, organizations
4. Flagship annual event / forum / exhibition to draw people in, create continued engagement and enthusiasm, consistency and branding.

Who?

- Linking with local network
- MSO
- Melbourne Festival
- Funding / support alliances
- UNESCO

Staffing structure – is it staffed with a facilitator who utilizes a collegiate network or outsourced due to funding.

What would drive it? Ultimately the artists

Table 4:

Andrew Tetzlaff (School of Art, RMIT Uni.), Tara Gilbee (artist associated with Punctum, Mt Alexander Shire Arts Officer), Pia Smith (The Globalism Institute, RMIT Uni), Mick Douglas (School of Architecture and Design, RMIT Uni), Phil Stokes (Phil Stokes Studio Glass)

Session 1 – discuss successful examples of cultural exchange

The best of cultural exchanges:

- Eating together

- Accommodation together
- Presentation by leaders
- Living and sharing together
- Communal rituals (eating and living) that are appropriate to the duration of the project
- Conditions that absorb the participants in the focus of working and creative making
- Enabling conversations that “need to be had” – that there aren’t the pre-existing means to be had
- Recipricocity between particular participants i.e. Focused dialogical exchange
- Located hospitality (not a universal homogeneity)
- To bring a self conscious space
- Levity and play and creativity being privileged as a basis to meet
- Overarching themes that enable reflection upon creative work through self-consciousness of exploring nature of cultural exchange
- Overarching theme evolved to suit duration / cultural / spatial condition
- Sense of ongoing relationship, alumni building. I.e. Building a means to deal with the subsequent absence of project intensity

What drives?

Clarity of host’s requirements of guests and vice versa

Openness of hosts to be flexible to ‘accommodate’ the artists

The attention and dedication of hosting and hospitality – first impressions of welcome / openness and flexibility / processes of recipricocity

Hospitality that enables the participants to reflect upon their sense of honour and keeps an open connection of possibility with the ‘exchange’

Session 2 – What might In-Habit ‘look’ like?

Exchange is relative – what you can make, cost of living + cost of materials, having family around you or not, education, time in life, etc. how to build relativity into model.

Conditions of exchange – terms of relative exchange, not given, not presumed.

Artist led – propose how the project will 'INHABIT', how the project will exchange. Question what is brought to the project

Flexibility in lifespan / duration of the project is important.

'atelier' model? Artist in residence will convert to a facility. What type of facilities do we want and how to make the residency / exchange tailored to fit "the space". Also, the place has an incredible presence. How to incorporate the multiplicity of stories into the exchange. Keep *spenner* to projects by allowing development of facilities.

Projects need to be born over time. First impression is revisited details. "The only way of learning how big a space is, is to sweep it." Building around the idea of inhabiting and reinhabiting.

Where is exchange going? Awareness of 'greening', of political / economic 'borders'. What patterns are in existence? What are you involving yourself in?

Idea of new locations and 'non-physical' space. If time / money are unreal then this space could be used. Online, blogs, photographs, stories, etc.

Who is participating in the exchange, who isn't supporting it? It should be artist driven. Regional artists are not coming to the city to be highlighted. Would be good to bring Melbourne artists out to show in regional Victoria.

More than providing a venue – about activity being embedded in context.

- Presentation of the characteristics of the situation
- Articulate opportunities or situations that eventuate opportunities
- Permeability of the artist community that exists here already
- The art that is developed here will revolve around stories / history (as opposed to architecture?)
- Artist is not a known quantity. What are their responsibilities and expectations and how do we work with this? Organically creating a project – not doing a project to a brief.

Do we invite regional artists to the convent to put forth ideas?

Clarity of the values of In-Habit and / or the Convent will help people understand this project.

This is a project for artists who have an interest and engagement in communication, community, the convent and 'inhabiting'. Must maintain the trust of the community that generated this project.

Balancing individual and collective behavior. Role of director? Need for director?