

Cultural Mapping Project: Overview

Cultural Mapping Tool Kit for Learning

The following sections and series of questions are intended to be a 'starting point' for discussion and debate. And through this process increase awareness and understanding of the role and contribution contemporary art and artists make in our city's, places and spaces; and some of the considerations and complex processes involved in the creation of art located / viewed in the public realm. The intention is for users / participants to cross reference with the individual Cultural Mapping projects described and documented on the Cultural Mapping website.



Different kinds of art

1. Most people recognise art as statues and paintings. What other things might be thought of as 'art'? Public buildings often have ornate carving both internally and externally, or decorative flooring. What are the modern equivalents?

See Cultural Mapping website link to Tom Pearman's work in Beaumont Leys as an example of a local environment enhanced by and for the local community. See also Linda Schwab's 'Butterfly pavement' on New Walk as a modern interpretation of an old theme related to local history.

2. What do you think are the main differences between public and private artworks? Is art in a museum 'public art' (generally owned by the local authority on your behalf) – how is it different from the art on the Cultural Mapping website?

Compare Linda Schwab's – 'Butterfly Pavement' outside the New Walk museum to the art inside. See the www.artscouncil.org.uk and www.dfes.org.uk. Most teaching websites have ideas and general information. The Cultural Mapping website will offer details of local Public art.

3. Do you think the art in an art gallery is different to that which exists in the community? If you think it is different why is that?

Explore ideas around 'reasons' for art and consider how art is financed. How does this affect where it exists, private vs. public collections.

The Role of Artists

1. Do all artists work in studios – they seem to do in films/historical documentaries. Is the media image of artists correct?

The Cultural Mapping website has details of the different artists who created the public art. From the type of artwork and the artists brief you can see that some create their work in a studio e.g. Graeme Mitcheson stone carvings for the – New Walk projects. While others such as Anu Patel – (Lotus Flowers) worked with the local community to develop and exchange ideas for a large part of the project.

Do you think that's true?

Explore links to Michelangelo (1475-1464) and Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519) both obvious examples of polymaths.

2. Do artists reflect their local community?

Explore the move from 'artisan' someone skilled in a craft to 'Romanticism' and the tortured 'artist' and back to the more worldly artists of recent times. The status of artist's has changed check www.dfes.org.uk & Thames and Hudson art series for basic historical overview.

3. How do artists earn a living?

Explore the idea of competition between artists. They were traditionally considered 'artisans' or skilled in a craft, this idea changed with the 'Romanticists' but has in recent years returned to artists almost offering a service especially in the area of public art. The book by Vasari 'Life of the Artists' offers an interesting insight into Renaissance 'art and politics'.



The Place

1. Should art be in the community or reflect the community where it is placed? How do artists interpret the world around them, do they reflect the community they work in?

Look for examples of public art which exists in other large towns and cities. Explore the original purpose of art in public places to commemorate or celebrate personalities and/or events. Use the website for local sites.

2. Is there a piece of public artwork near where you live, where is it and what is it about?

Cultural Mapping website will detail information about individual Cultural Mapping projects. Other art projects or if the work is 'traditional' or 'commemorative' information may be found in your local library or by asking local people. Traditional artwork can be hard to date, but most will have some sort commemorative plaque.

3. Does the artwork reflect the environment and the community in which it is located?

As an example see Cultural Mapping website for Sam Haynes 'Chime Lines' work at Frog Island, and the details of community involvement. Other projects will also outline, in the artist's statement, any community research and involvement and the degree of local interaction.

4. If it is a new or recent artwork what do you know about it? When did it appear?

Cultural Mapping website will link to details of most new local public art.

The Artwork

1. What has the artist tried to express in the artwork?

See the Cultural Mapping website for artist's details and the project brief. What other solutions might be possible? How and why do you think the artist/s arrived at the design they did? (See the last section for a 'Public Art Game'.)

2. Do you agree with what the artist has created?

Relating back to earlier questions, consider the difference between Public Art, which is in the public domain, and private art, which may be owned and appreciated by a very small sometimes described as elite group, even by one person. The qualities can be very different. Do you think the general public own 'public art'?

3. If you were the artist what would you create in its place?

Use the individual project briefs in the Toolkit fact sheet as starting points if need be. Some projects will also show different creative solutions proposed by the artist.

4. Do you think the artist talked to the local community, and should the community be involved?

Cultural Mapping website will link to details of community involvement: for some projects this was a major part of the project structure – see Bhajan Hunjan/ Said Adrus's Sacred Spaces artwork and Public Art Plan; Anuradha Patel's Lotus Flowers and Belgrave Corridor Master plan; Tom Pearman's Milton Crescent project in Beaumont Leys or Sam Haynes – 'Chime Lines' as examples of community consultation and participation.



Community Ownership

1. In the past do you think communities had a say in what type of public art was commissioned or where it was located? Often the only community input was after the event, and then it has often been a critical response. Why do you think this might be?

Explore the idea of 'civic pride' and 'ownership'. See Cultural Mapping website link to Melanie Manchot's Portraits, Tom Pearman's Milton Crescent project, Anu Patel's 'Lotus Flowers' and Bhajan Hunjan and Said Adrus's 'Sacred Spaces'.

2. In some cases the only time communities know about a commissioned artwork or art project is when it arrives on site, is this too late? Explore the general links in citizenship, civic responsibility and crucially ownership.

For examples of community involvement check the Cultural Mapping website for project briefs and community workshop details. Consultation can take different forms and occur at different points in a project's life. The website contains projects with different community inputs and outcomes, devise and develop your own community based project.

3. Consider the social effect of public art, why is it at times vandalised? Has any public art in your community been vandalised? If so why do you think that has happened?

Consider random anti-social behaviour and 'critical' attack, as in for example the Damien Hirst's 'ink and sheep' incident in a gallery or the 'traffic/ice-cream cones' on the head of a local dignitaries statue in public space (Thomas Cook sculpture by James Butler or the Sporting Success by Martin Williams). The initial damage to Jo Fairfax's Millennium Cones; Charles Holland's Telescopes & Picnicker's Friend; link back to the earlier points in this section regarding citizenship.

4. Do you think public art has to be more carefully chosen than private art, if so why?

Explore: social suitability, do the materials used by artists to create their work reflect current concerns such as 'sustainable sources' in the case of wood. Health & Safety when materials such as metal or glass are used.

Technical Matters

1. Some public art works require power; see Jason Bruges's Leicester Lights or Simon Watkinson 'Haven' which requires an electricity supply. Does this involve other issues rather than just creativity?

Explore the long-term issue of an electrical power supply: Health & Safety regulations, servicing (who repairs it), who pays for the power, how does the artist make sure it is safe? See Cultural Mapping website for more details of 'Haven', 'Leicester Lights' or 'Lotus Flowers'.

2. As public art is located in public places, who decides what is safe, what can or cannot be built?

Look at issues of public safety. Cultural Mapping projects required careful planning and most needed planning permission before they could be constructed and installed. See Cultural Mapping website detailed section for specific examples.



Technical Matters

3. How do artists balance their creative ideas with the practical requirements of art in the public domain, what do they need to do?

See Cultural Mapping website for more detailed individual project information on examples of the process of funding, commissioning, consulting and constructing.

Culture

1. Can art broaden our vision of culture and the world in general?

2. Do different cultures have different sorts of art?

3. If art is different for other cultures how is this most apparent in their art? Is the artwork sympathetic to the community in which it is situated?

An interesting starting point for discussion Cultural Mapping website project files will detail varying degrees of cultural research by individual artists. Refer to, and examine the differences and similarities between projects based in different parts of the city. Contrast Anu Patel's work with the Belgrave community with Tom Pearman's work in Beaumont Leys or the Riverside Projects and the work of Bhajan Hunjan and Said Adrus in Evington this will highlight the needs of different communities and locations.

4. Who pays for art, now and in the past? Why do they pay for it?

Explore the basic idea of private and publicly funded art. How and why are they potentially different in why and what they support? Details of funding bodies can be found on the Cultural Mapping website.

If you were the artist how would you respond to all the issues raised to produce an artwork, which satisfied all the issues and concerns highlighted and is still creative? Would you change anything about the artwork? Include materials, location, size, design, colour, material etc.

Refer back to previous bullet points and the Cultural Mapping fact sheets for individual project details. This is also the starting point for the 'art' debate suggested at the end of the following section- how do you balance all these concerns already highlighted.



If public art is to be worthwhile consider the following

1. Do you think all communities have art?
2. Do all communities need or want art?
3. Do you think there are places and spaces where art 'should' be and where there isn't any art at the moment?
4. If you could, would you like to design an artwork for your community, if so where?
5. Do you think you would know what to do, how to do it, whom to ask?
6. Do you think you would work alone or as part of a team?
7. How would you decide what to do? If you formed as a group, how would you organise the group, would you let things just happen?

The Game

The creation of site specific public art is a complex process with the participation and involvement of many diverse groups and expertise, all essential to its success. Based on the issues raised in the previous section, a game could be constructed whereby participants (students / learners) are given characters to role-play. After some discussion the participants could role-play the following characters with the suggested 'interests'. There will need to be various stages such as:

- THE IDEA and BRIEF
- COMMUNITY CONSULTATION
- FUNDING
- ARTISTS SUBMISSION
- ARTIST SELECTION
- THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE ARTWORK
- FINAL OPENING

(Refer to the Toolkit for Learning Glossary: Commissioning Principles and Practices for a comprehensive list of the different stages of commissioning)

Participants could work in groups to design, cost and then build a scale model or (maquette), in response to a Brief. The Brief could be taken from the Cultural Mapping projects or devised by the project leader/ teacher/tutor or the participants themselves through open discussion.

One of the participants could be appointed from each group to 'sell' the proposed artwork to the community 'enacted' by the other members of the group. One artwork design could be chosen by a vote, to be built – full size if materials and space allow. As a group project different skills or functions can be delegated to 'sub' groups formed to 'deliver' different areas of the project. This would for some be essentially research based e.g. if they were to undertake the funding, land / planning regulations or health and safety issues for instance. All stages are valid and integral components of the final work, without which the final artwork cannot be completed.



These are the main people involved and specific areas of expertise / interest:
(not in chronological or priority order)

Public / Art / Community Officer(s) who want to develop a project for/with the community – and want to keep everyone happy.

Community leader(s) concerned that the artwork might offend some in the community.

A funding body that may support the project financially if they like the idea.

The artist(s) who have an idea for work they want to develop, and locate in a community.

The Contractor / Fabricator who, when the project is detailed and funded will build the artwork as designed by the artist.

The local authority: who regulate the by- laws which will apply to the site / land that is required.

The planning authority Development Control: who will require details of the artwork and consider its suitability

The Access / Health and Safety Officer(s), who will have to be consulted regarding the design and the materials specified by the artist.



Client / Commissioner

The Community
Public Art Curator/ Project Manager

Main design/construction groups

Public artists / workers / engineers / fabricators /
construction workers / other designers

Legal considerations

Planning control
Contracts
Equal Opportunities
Health and Safety Acts
Disability / Race / Sex Discrimination Acts

Public/private access

Local Issues, by-laws and DDA

Public Liability Insurance

Artists/commissioning agent's responsibility

Local Schools

Involvement and participation

Community Groups

Involvement and participation

Faith Groups

Access and consultation

Cultural Diversity

Social and cultural diversity – inclusion

Special Interest Groups

Access and mobility issues

Historical/cultural references

Integration and reflection of local community
cultural values

The artist

Creative integrity – time scale – achievable aims

The Funding Body

The agency that funds the artwork

Public and Private Partnerships

Organisations, companies and individuals who
contribute to the process both directly and indirectly.

The Press / Media

Publish stories about the project often in the most
populist way.

Green Routes

Neighbourhoods

City Centre

Gateways / Entrances

Toolkit for Learning originated / authored by Jasia McArdle with Steve Cooke © 2005 Public Art Leicester Cultural Mapping project
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www.leicester.gov.uk/publicart/toolkit/toolkit.html

