

Creative Ageing: Learnings from the UK and Japan

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2019

Report submitted 15 June 2020

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust New Zealand for the opportunity to undertake this travel Fellowship, which has provided continued inspiration, connection and collegial support and guidance since my return.

Thank you to the organisation staff and participants who gave so much of their time and the warmest of welcomes as I attended their programmes. I have remained in touch since returning to New Zealand, and this connection has proved invaluable, as we have supported each other to navigate the Covid-19 environment, sharing ideas for how to engage our older people in creativity and social connection during the most extraordinary circumstances.

Whilst my fellowship focused primarily on the positive contribution both the museum sector and community arts organisations are playing in improving wellbeing for older people and people with dementia, I encountered many other organisations that play a key role in the success of this work. Whilst the scope of this report does not permit me to include them, I would really like to acknowledge the important role these organisations play, notably the Dementia 4 Arts and the Baring Foundation.

I would also like to thank Connect the Dots participants, board members, supporters and artist educators for supporting me during my absence. As the sole person running Connect the Dots, it was a huge ask to be absent from the on-the-ground work and delivery of programmes for the five weeks I was overseas. A heartfelt thanks to all who made this possible, including those who took such good care of Connect the Dots' therapy pets, Jackson and Elton - Eimi Tamua, and Su and Kevin Walker. Finally, I would like to thank my wonderful friends and family, both in New Zealand and in the UK for your encouragement and support.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This research was undertaken with the support of a Winston Churchill Memorial Trust Fellowship in 2019. The purpose of this research was to better understand creative ageing programmes in the UK and Japan in the hopes of synthesizing and applying new approaches and methods within the New Zealand context.

This Travel Fellowship sought to answer several questions about working with arts and older people to reduce loneliness and social isolation, to improve wellbeing, and to reduce the stigma associated with ageing. Some of the key considerations during observations, programme participation and interviews were the following:

- What are the different approaches that arts and cultural organisations are taking to connect older people and people living with dementia to creative opportunities?
- How do these differ from the work of community arts organisations in their delivery and impact?
- What role does the space or venue play in the impact of the programme and challenging stigma around ageing?
- What do these programmes have in common, and what can be replicated here in Aotearoa New Zealand?
- What role does culture and ethnicity play in the consideration of design and delivery of arts-based programmes in multicultural communities? And how are programmes ensuring cultural inclusivity?
- What is the relevance of exhibitions for participants and what further benefits can public exhibitions contribute towards reducing stigma?

- With sustainability a key concern across the board, how can creative ageing programmes continue to innovate, incorporate co-design principles, and remain resilient to shifts in funding priorities?

The arts and cultural organisations this Fellowship focused on were:

- Dulwich Picture Gallery, London
- Liverpool Museum
- Manchester Art Gallery

The community organisations this Fellowship focused on were:

- Equal Arts, Newcastle
- Arts Alive, Tokyo

Some of the key learnings and resultant outcomes from the Fellowship were an understanding of:

- The importance of engaging professional artists, as well as the impact that intergenerational and long-term projects can bring. These learnings have been applied in our pilot mentoring project, TOI AKO.
- The personal and social significance that is attached to publicly exhibiting works created by elders, and the impact this has on challenging stigma and stereotypes around ageing. These learnings have since been applied in the professional national exhibition of the works of our TOI AKO participants in ‘Flirting with Form: Works by TOI AKO artists’.
- The attention given to considering the role of programmes in a bicultural and multicultural setting. The absence of clear learning in this area has led to the development of a pilot programme where Connect the Dots will be delivering our

creative arts programming in other languages across 2020/2021. Culturally inclusive learnings will be applied across all programmes as a result.

- The value of space. I understood well the limitations and benefits that hosting arts programmes in art museums and galleries can bring, having worked for both an art gallery and a community organisation. But I was less familiar with the reasons for ensuring that programmes are also delivered in rest home and community settings. The learnings here were clear, and as such the TOI AKO mentoring project was delivered in rest home settings, and a new programme Make Moments at Home will be piloted in 2020 in rest homes and community settings.
- The unintended learning was around the need for a permanent creative arts space for our participants to call home, a place that is mindful of all the considerations around access and usability, as well as space that supports their journey in creativity through engagement in all the art forms: visual arts, dance, drama, music. Connect the Dots will take steps towards realising this goal in 2020/21.

Observations of these organisations, and conversation with their participants and staff, highlighted the need for change and investment in the development of the creative ageing sector in Aotearoa New Zealand. This report outlines the following recommendations to help Aotearoa's creative ageing sector achieve our ambition to see all older people ageing well in place:

1. Co-design & Local responses
2. The Right to Art
3. National Creative Ageing Advocacy, Research and Funding Body
4. Regional Creative Ageing Centres
5. Time and Funding (not expanded upon)

6. Research around ageing in an Aotearoa New Zealand context (not expanded upon)

There are many further factors at play that this report does not touch on specifically. With reliable and consistent resources and coordination channeled into the arts organisations, art museums, artists and aged care staff, life could drastically improve for New Zealand's older population as well as society as a whole.

Scope

This report concerns itself with professional arts organisations and cultural institutions delivering participatory arts programmes. Whilst art can be interpreted broadly, this research project focused on the visual arts as well as the use of objects for conversation.

Being an older person is a relative concept, though it typically refers to someone who is of retirement age and above. Older people are, of course, a highly diverse group, and for the purposes of this research and this report, I focused on older people aged 50 and over that were experiencing some form of barrier to enjoying fulfilled lives. Therefore this report concentrates on older people who face some additional form of discrimination or disadvantage, whether it be poverty, social exclusion or isolation, health problems, or loneliness.

Methodology

This report is mainly the result of interviews with people in over 15 arts and cultural organisations working with older people, conversation with more than 30 others, close observation of six programmes, presentations from 15 specialists at the Social Prescribing conference, and reading relevant academic papers. The in-person research took place between

May and July 2019 in London, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle and Tokyo, with discussion and reading on either side of this trip.

The learning has been vast, yet it was with great disappointment that I was not able to meet many in this field in Scotland and Wales as hoped. Timing the research trip for the month of May was intended to coincide with the Creative Ageing Festivals across the UK, however, this inadvertently resulted in multiple timing clashes and a very stretched sector. It is my intention to return to these organisations, notably Luminare and cARTrefu, as well as organisations I have since learned of and connected with.

PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND

As Director of Auckland-based arts organisation Connect the Dots charitable trust, working with older people in the arts has long been my passion. I began working specifically with people living with dementia and their families in 2012 in my role as Access Educator at the Auckland Art Gallery by trialling and adapting the Meet Me at MOMA programme, tailoring it to a New Zealand audience for Dementia Auckland clients.

Fast forward eight years and I am now in the fortunate position to be working part-time as the Director of Connect the Dots Charitable Trust, an Auckland-based arts organization working to include and promote the participation of older people and people living with dementia in the arts. After co-founding Connect the Dots in 2014 offering programmes for young women, women of migrant- and refugee-backgrounds, and our programme for all older people, our focus shifted in 2016 to creative ageing and supporting people living with dementia after recognizing a looming gap in provision coupled with a growing body of research highlighting the benefits arts can bring. Working across the Auckland region, our Make Moments programme region supports the engagement of older people in their local public art spaces delivering facilitated art tours and art making workshops. The discussions and supported art making engage participants in intellectual stimulation, cultural engagement and social interaction.

After working in this area for several years, developing and refining Make Moments based on feedback and observation and supplemented by international studies, it was time to seek best practice and new perspectives on how to champion the creativity of older people and spend quality time with people who share the belief that there is intrinsic value in engaging older people in the arts.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

There are various reasons why growing New Zealand's Creative Ageing sector is timely and important. Firstly, the number of older people in our society is increasing significantly, doubling since 1998 from 0.44 to 0.74 million people. People aged 65 and older currently constitute 15% of New Zealand's population, with just over half (53.4%) being women. Ongoing increases in life expectancy mean that the older population in New Zealand is predicted to double to 1.3 million in the next 20 years, and the 85+ age group is expected to double in the next 40 years.¹ There are multiple challenges to ageing well, and three that this research focuses on are loneliness, dementia and combatting the stigma of ageing.

A study conducted by the University of Otago revealed that one in five frail elderly are lonely. The study surveyed about 72,000 elderly New Zealanders and found that more than 15,000 identified as lonely - just over 20 per cent of those surveyed².

'Loneliness can be described as the gap a person feels between the quality and quantity of social interactions they have compared with the interactions they would like or expect.'³

Whilst loneliness can effect people irregardless of age, [and] background,..... there are certain factors that present a higher risk, including physical or mental health; living alone; in isolated rural or deprived urban communities.'⁴

Loneliness has a significant and lasting effect on health. It is associated with higher blood pressure and depression and leads to higher rates of mortality, indeed comparable to those associated with smoking and alcohol consumption. It is also linked to a higher incidence of

¹ Statistics New Zealand, 2019

² The ethnic group most likely to be lonely was Asian (23 per cent), while Pacific Islanders were the least lonely group (17 per cent). The study was funded by a Government initiative to improve the lives of older people called the Ageing Well National Science Challenge.

³ David Cutler (2011) *The Tackle to End Loneliness – the Role of the Arts*, The Baring Foundation, p.6

⁴ David Cutler (2011) *The Tackle to End Loneliness – the Role of the Arts*, The Baring Foundation, p.7

dementia. Lonely people tend to make more use of health and social care services and are more likely to have early admission to residential or nursing care. Despite publicly funded health and welfare support for older citizens, the aging experience differs across ethnic groups. This creates opportunities and challenges for health and social services to deliver culturally safe and equitable care for all older New Zealanders. ⁵

Dementia is fast becoming one of the world's most significant health challenges. Figures show that more than 170,000 New Zealanders will be living with dementia with this number doubling by 2050. That is 170,000 families and communities impacted by this disease.

There is a growing evidence base that the arts are good for our health. A report published in July 2017 by the UK government's All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing (APPGAHW) presented a persuasive case that the arts help people recover from illness, live longer and more fulfilled lives, and also save money in health and social services.⁶ Their authors categorically state:

- The arts can help keep us well, aid our recovery and support longer lives better lived.
- The arts can help meet major challenges facing health and social care: ageing, longterm conditions, loneliness and mental health.
- The arts can help save money in the health service and social care.

In the Baring Foundation's 2011 report 'Tackling Loneliness in Older Age – the Role of the Arts' trustee, Janet Morrison, writes:

⁵ Louise C Parr-Brownlie, PhD, Debra L Waters, PhD, Stephen Neville, PhD, Tia Neha, PhD, Naoko Muramatsu, PhD, Aging in New Zealand: Ka haere ki te ao pakeketanga, Published in *The Gerontologist*, 2 May 2020

⁶ Creative Health: The Arts For Health and Wellbeing

‘The arts can break down barriers and inspire, they can encourage people to try, sometimes for the first time in their lives, new activities. They can give voice to the previously voiceless. Through the arts older people can build and grow their confidence and feel valued. There can be enormous social benefits - creating a ‘look forward to’ moment in the week, bringing people together and fostering new friendships.’⁷ There is a growing understanding that creativity is intact long after other cognitive functions decline.

Recognizing a looming gap in provision coupled with a growing body of research highlighting the benefits arts can bring, Connect the Dots Charitable Trust focuses on programmes which include and promote the participation of socially isolated older people and people living with dementia in the arts. Connect the Dots’ core programme, Make Moments, is delivered in art gallery spaces. The facilitated art tours and art making workshops engage participants in intellectual stimulation, cultural engagement and social interaction in a public setting, aiming to challenge the stereotypes around ageing and dementia. Enabling diverse communities to access and participate in high-quality arts experiences, the Trust’s kaupapa for social inclusion in the arts has a strong track record for removing barriers and improving access through consideration for co-design for projects, appropriate facilitation techniques, as well as removing economic and physical barriers.

‘With arts educators experienced in working with people living with dementia and a program that stimulates mental and social connectivity through dignified and meaningful activity in a sophisticated community space, Connect the Dots is uniquely placed to help combat the major challenges facing people living with dementia in New Zealand today.’⁸

⁷ Janet Morrison in David Cutler (2011) Tackling Loneliness in Older Age – the Role of the Arts,

⁸ Stewart, Sarah, 2017, ‘Make Moments: Connect the Dots Project Evaluation’

Studies recognise the importance of non-medical interventions, such as an engagement with the visual arts, to sustain and improve the physical and mental health of the elderly and people living with dementia. Despite this evidence, the challenges of a lack of research, insecure funding and ongoing barriers to access (physical, socioeconomic and cultural) mean inclusive programming in public art galleries in New Zealand remains scant. Experiencing first-hand the transformative power of the arts to improve wellbeing for our Make Moments participants, to alleviate loneliness and symptoms of dementia and change people's perceptions, it raises questions for how best to improve and grow this work in New Zealand.

The universal challenges of ageing societies provide a wide range of creative-based responses globally to learn from. As Make Moments is primarily based in gallery settings, it was expedient to visit museums overseas and investigate programme direction whilst comparing to community arts organisation best practice. I was able to consolidate these experiences and resulting data, initiating adaptations to our Make Moments programme suitable for a New Zealand context, as well as creating additional programmes to supplement this work.

It was also important to consider that there will never be a one-size-fits-all practice, and that the range of venues needs to grow, style of delivery needs to be adaptive, and the make-up of groups needs to be dynamic. Overall, there needs to be a stronger and louder voice of the older person through every part of every programme and structure. This paper covers some of the arts programmes I visited and current thinking around creative ageing best practice that we can introduce at home.

CHAPTER 2: The Role of Museums in an Ageing Society

Museums and art galleries around the world have become popular settings for programmes to support the wellbeing of individuals and community groups, particularly those with physical or mental health issues. It is becoming commonplace for museums to tailor programmes to the needs of people living with dementia. The effectiveness of art discussion and art making for people with cognitive decline encourages the delivery of art programming for this audience. Many programmes of this kind, including Make Moments at Connect the Dots and the Arts Alive programmes in Tokyo, are based on Meet Me at MOMA (Museum of Modern Art in New York, USA). MOMA's Alzheimers Project resources have been widely shared and adapted, supporting their goal to change the way people consider dementia: "We aim to contribute to an ideological shift in the way both institutions and individuals think about Alzheimer's disease."⁹ Since its inception, MOMA has broadened its scope to include all older people in recognition of the programmes application to all older people, and the positive benefits it brings.

Their success, particularly for people living with dementia, lies in the function of the mind when it comes to creativity. Authors of a 2015 research paper published in the *Gerontologist*, 'Theorizing How Art Gallery Interventions Impact People With Dementia and Their Caregivers,' note that the creative part of the mind may be preserved longer than other parts of the brain, allowing individuals continued exploration and development, as well as the well-evidenced enhanced social and psychological wellbeing of people who participate in arts activities, bringing increased enthusiasm, confidence, enjoyment, and social contact.

⁹ Meet Me: Making Art Accessible to People with Dementia Francesca Rosenberg | Amir Parsa | Laurel Humble | Carrie McGee, The Museum of Modern Art, New York

Additionally, these art programmes bring impact through the physical space itself.

‘While such interventions demonstrate some of the benefits of creative arts participation, there is further evidence to show that art programs can promote a sense of community and challenge stigma (Howells & Zelnik, 2009); this may require reconsidering the use of traditional care settings. Health psychology (Camic, 2008) and public health (Camic & Chatterjee, 2013) interventions based around creative arts offer the opportunity to provide support to those with a dementia in non-stigmatizing community settings and thus work at an individual, caregiver, and community level.’¹⁰

At Connect the Dots, it has long been our intention to harness the positive impact an uplifting and non-clinical environment brings to the experience of our participants. Whilst programmes have great success in residential and clinical settings, we hear often that the gallery itself enhanced our participants feelings of inspiration and self-worth, none more so than the Wallace Arts Centre housed in the historic Pah Homestead in Hillsborough.

Writing for In View magazine in 2019, author, architect and mental health advocate, Ben Channon explored how art and architecture can provide an emotional haven through nature, colour and a sense of the present.

‘The evidence shows that our environment can have a significant impact on how we feel, and can support good mental health, or conversely contribute to poor mental health and exacerbate existing problems. A beautiful place or building can ground us in the present moment, effectively helping us to practice a form of mindfulness.

¹⁰ Paul M. Camic, PhD, * Erin L. Baker, DClínPsy, and Victoria Tischler, PhD, (2015) Theorizing How Art Gallery Interventions Impact People With Dementia and Their Caregivers, *The Gerontologist* cite as: *The Gerontologist*, 2015, 1–10

Focusing on our present environment like this has been shown to have a number of positive impacts on our brain, improving concentration and mood.’¹¹

The resulting theory acknowledges the significance of the “valued” setting, suggesting that while social interaction was a key factor, the art gallery experience and context, referred to by Smith (2014) as the “museum effect”, played an important, and perhaps decisive, role.

Responses were similar whether from participants at a contemporary gallery looking at conceptual and installation art or at a traditional gallery, housed in a Georgian-era building, where 16th and 17th century European art predominated. Indeed, our participants reflect on the importance of the gallery being a “special and valued” place away from the everyday activities of life. Arguing for the impact of place to provide an uplifting experience, Michelle Weiner writes:

‘A professional environment, such as a place of culture, a museum, concert hall, university or artist’s studio can be a contributing factor to enhancing confidence, improving self-esteem, increasing concentration and challenging stereotypes.’¹²

A Dementia Auckland activities coordinator considered the benefit that a change of scene can bring:

‘For me, the advantage of this programme is that it is held somewhere out of the ordinary, a beautiful place they can go as opposed to a healthcare environment. I think that works well for people with mild dementia - the inclusion is what is important for them, to be included in the community. It was a meaningful outing for them.’¹³

¹¹ Ben Channon, 2019, The Art of Wellbeing, <https://www.dulwichpicturegallery.org.uk/about/news-blog/2020/may/creativity-and-wellbeing-week/>

¹² Michelle Weiner (2010) ‘Gallery and Beyond: Training to Transform Good Times: What it takes to build a sustainable creative arts programme for older adults’

¹³ Sarah Stewart (2017) ‘Make Moments: Connect the Dots Project Evaluation’, p.18

The public setting also contributes to reducing the stigma that can accompany ageing and dementia. Michelle Weiner, Winston Churchill Fellow, questioned in her report whether museums are required to change in order to bring social value in light of the changing needs of ageing communities, or whether in fact remaining in touch with their local communities is their priority. ‘Museums already possess creative tools to respond to the speed of social change and by being in tune with the challenges and aspirations of their communities, they may have the opportunity to remain relevant and be vital contributors to a sustainable quality of life for an ageing society.’¹⁴

Other strengths that museum art programmes possess are the power of the art objects themselves. The experience is often elevated by sharing ideas in front of a physical work of art, as well as the benefit that it affords by being static and available to a person living with dementia with no need for recall. These benefits are not exclusive to art museum settings, but are more readily available.

It was also apparent that these cultural institutions, with a wide and diverse audience to engage, have more resources available to them to use in education programmes. The employment of technology for instance is an avenue that many museums are exploring to stretch their reach beyond the walls of the building. As I observed at the three galleries I spent time in, they employ a combination of in-house participatory programming, digital technology as well as co-design. When offering a range of access points for audiences, as well as ensuring robust evaluation, they are able to utilize their collections and uplifting

¹⁴ Michelle Weiner (2010) ‘Gallery and Beyond: Training to Transform Good Times: What it takes to build a sustainable creative arts programme for older adults’, p.24

environments to benefit their communities.

What became clear after observing programmes and interviewing staff at Dulwich Picture Gallery, Liverpool Museum and Manchester Art Gallery, was that discussion had moved past *whether* galleries and museums had a role to play or contribution to make to the social welfare of their community. It was in fact a given. They consider themselves well placed to use their resources and collections to engage older people in socialisation and creativity. In spite of the funding challenges, all the staff I spoke with were clear on the social responsibility of cultural institutions to improve wellbeing, with UCL Umbrella Wellbeing Measures Toolkit the preferred evaluation method for measuring the efficacy of art programmes.

Museums have demonstrated that they are well placed to respond to wider societal health and social needs. But in spite of the recognised social value of museums and their unique ability to contribute to the wellbeing and resilience of our ageing society, all three museums here have spoken of the challenges that inconsistency of funding bring. Measuring the success of programming for older people cannot always determine the longevity of a programme. Large injections of cash from national funding bodies to invest in creative ageing programmes inevitably dry up, leaving open a space where boards of trustees must look at the cost-benefit analysis of programming that is by its very nature small-scale and intimate. As Michelle Weiner concludes, ‘For a large majority of museums social impact is prioritised when funders start requesting evidence that museums are achieving their missions. For these funders, museums tend to discuss outputs (i.e. how many, how much and how big) rather than outcomes or impact, whether one is discussing programmes, attendance, or collections. Historically, museums have put a great emphasis on producing outputs, citing their attendance

levels - how many school children visit; how many objects were accessioned; and how much money was raised. For ... museums to be display true resilience and (more practically) a progressive approach to programming, the communicated value of museums must extend well beyond outputs.’¹⁵

¹⁵ Weiner, M. 2010, ‘Gallery and Beyond: Training to Transform Good Times: What it takes to build a sustainable creative arts programme for older adults’, p.9

CHAPTER 3: The Role of Community Arts Organisations in an Ageing Society

With the freedom to utilise art museums as visiting groups, or to hold workshops in residential or community settings, like rest homes, schools or community halls, independent arts organisations like Equal Arts and Arts Alive are able to access the all the benefits that arts programmes bring, while shirking the cumbersome layer of bureaucracy that can slow community responsiveness to a glacial pace. By focusing participation on group art making their work is still able to tap into the much-cited improvements that the arts bring to individuals.

For older adults with dementia, participatory art can help improve cognitive functioning, communication, self-esteem, enjoyment of life, memory and creative thinking. Participants on the programmes I visited all spoke easily of the increased confidence and self esteem they have experienced by engaging in art. There also appeared to be added value when they were given the opportunity to publicly show or exhibit the fruits of their creative labour. Many of them spoke about the sense that they were still growing and learning, and developing new aspects to their identity.

Not held in traditional arts settings, these programmes may suffer impairment from the absence of works on art on display. As discussed in the previous chapter, the museum space itself lends an added dimension or sense of value to an arts programme. But it is not simply the act of engaging with art in an inspirational public setting that is at play when we consider what makes arts programmes so valuable. It seems that the opportunity to congregate also contributes highly to a person's experience of an arts programme.

‘It is worth artists and arts organisations remembering that social interaction may be the most important aspect for an older person in taking part in an arts project. This needs time and sensitivity by the artist in creating the right atmosphere and allowing plenty of opportunities for socialising. It should not be assumed that older people living in care homes cannot be lonely because they are living communally. The arts are particularly good way for people to tell their story and in itself this can be empowering for an older person but will also allow a carer (or even family members) to see that person in a new light and get to know more about them. This is all likely to deepen and improve relationships. Some of the projects or activities described have the explicit aim of tackling loneliness, although most do not set out to tackle loneliness as a core aim. However, all of the case studies show that whether explicit or not, bringing people together and keeping them connected is a central part of these arts activities.’¹⁶

In many instances, bringing people together to experience creativity may best happen in spaces that they are already in. For many, travelling to art museums is out of reach, and so there is real and immediate benefit in bringing programmes into communities, and often into homes. An organisation with a strong understanding of this is Equal Arts who offer a number of creative arts programmes to empower older people and people living with dementia in a range of settings. Older people who are feeling lonely may also feel disempowered. Evidence shows that participatory arts programmes can bring a sense of empowerment for its participants.

¹⁶ David Cutler (2011) Tackling Loneliness in Older Age – the Role of the Arts, Baring Foundation, p.9-10.

CHAPTER 4: FELLOWSHIP FINDINGS & APPLICATION OF LEARNINGS

Returning to Aotearoa New Zealand and trying to synthesise the observations and interviews with participants, facilitators and staff of programmes for older people and people living with dementia was challenging. What did I learn that could be applied or adapted to a NZ environment? What was the essence of each successful approach that could be replicated? And, what were we already doing well.

What was clear was that there is much to gain from smaller groups, an intergenerational component, and the celebration of the outcome of arts programmes. This was something we had shied away from over the past five years, with instead a focus on process and pressure-free creativity. However, it became difficult to ignore the chorus of participants' voices calling for the 'concrete' outcome of their time and energy that an exhibition affords. This learning also strongly reinforces the overarching learning – projects and programmes must incorporate real and authentic co-design.

Whilst one of the standouts was the realisation that Connect the Dots can not do it alone, and is best to focus on what we do best in the form of authentic connections with our older people through meaningful art experiences and supporting others to do the same, I have been able to apply some key observations into my work and programming.

Some of the findings below have informed developments and adaptations of current CTDCCT programmes, and others are waiting in the wings for future projects.

- There is real personal and social significance attached to publicly exhibiting works created by elders. These exhibitions have a profound impact in challenging stigma and stereotypes around ageing. These learnings have since been applied in the professional national exhibition of the works of our TOI AKO participants in ‘Flirting with Form: Works by TOI AKO artists’.
- The value of space. I understood well the limitations and benefits that hosting arts programmes in art museums and galleries brings, but I was less familiar with the reasons for ensuring that programmes are also delivered in rest home and community settings. As Alice Thwaite writes in her report, it is important to consider the value of delivering professional arts programmes in residential care settings, particularly the added value of the indirect upskilling of the aged care workers.
‘As the field grows, there is an increasing demand for high-quality programmes, particularly in care settings. There are unprecedented pressures on an underfunded social care system, which relies on a workforce, which gets little training and support. The combination of an exciting arts programme and a care workforce that is well trained and resourced could revolutionise the experience of older age.’¹⁷

The learnings on this Fellowship were clear, and as such the TOI AKO mentoring project was delivered in rest home settings, and a new programme Make Moments at Home will be piloted in 2020 in rest homes and community settings.

- Technology can play a big role in improving access to opportunities for creativity for older people and people living with dementia. Both the Liverpool Museum’s House

¹⁷ Alice Thwaite, Growing the Creative Ageing Movement: International lessons for the UK, p.35

of Memories App, and the UK-wide app ‘Armchair Gallery’, were excellent examples of co-design with the service user, and a reminder that there are multiple indirect ways for people to participate in professional-level programmes from their own homes.

CTDCT is hopeful that we can collaborate with other community arts organisations and cultural institutions to develop an app in the future.

- Non-art techniques can be used effectively as a complimentary addition to creative arts programmes. This was demonstrated at the Mindfulness session I attended at Manchester Art Gallery. The slow looking at a single art work brings improved physical and mental wellbeing and will be incorporated into future Make Moments programmes, both online and in person.
- It was evident from observations and interviews during the Fellowship that you cannot underestimate the importance of engaging professional artists on programmes. The role of the artist educator is key in building rapport and supporting individual expression, and those with experience are most able to ensure that participants’ wellbeing is not unintentionally undermined. Also, the benefits that come from an intergenerational component were clear, as well as the need for consistency and long-term projects. These learnings have been applied in our pilot mentoring project, TOI AKO.
- An unintended learning was the clarity of need for a permanent creative arts space for our participants to call home; a place that is mindful of all the considerations around access and usability, as well as space that supports their journey in creativity through

engagement in all the art forms: visual arts, dance, drama, music. Connect the Dots will take steps towards realising this goal in 2021/22.

- The attention given to considering the role of programmes in a bicultural and multicultural setting was not investigated fully on this Fellowship as planned. However, this has not interrupted our commitment to the development of a pilot programme delivering our creative arts programming in other languages.

TOI AKO Mentoring Project 2019

Figure 21 'I do feel proud that you [CTDCT] are going to do something with my art or put it somewhere. It makes my heart jump out of my shirt.' Josephine (Joy) Shephard (Toi Ako participant)

Intergenerational programmes have much to commend them, and are enjoyed by all participants as a time for improved understanding and increased empathy and curiosity. It was with this in mind that I had planned to observe programmes between elders and youth on my Fellowship. However, in the time that passed between receiving the Fellowship and leaving for the UK, I began to think more deeply about what 'intergenerational' can be. In my 40s I am definitely of a different generation to our participants in their 60s, as is a 70 year old to a 93 year old. I came to realise that our intergenerational project did not have to involve youth, although that is something that would bring its own unique attributes.

As Kate Organ notes:

‘The term inter-generational has tended to be applied to a kind of generic idea of grandparents and school children, while in reality a 70 year old and a 90 year old might hail from two quite separate generations and for many people a grandparent might be in their 30s and great grandparents in their 50s. This reminds us that any generality about a group called “older people” is a very difficult concept and yet being coy or embarrassed about the facts about ageing and old age seems to me to be problematic too.’¹⁸

The project’s title, TOI AKO, references the rich and mutually rewarding exchange between Kaumātua artist and Mentor. Toi references art, but also the toi toi plant, whose tall flower offers shade and shelter for the ecosystem below, while the ecosystem feeds and and nourishes the toi toi. Ako speaks to the reciprocal nature of learning, where the teacher teaches the learner and the learner teaches the teacher. As our six practising artists have shared their art skills and knowledge with their mentees, our older participants have shared their outlooks and approaches informed by their wider experience of life. This exchange has stretched and humbled both mentor and mentee, and the visual arts practices of all, emerging and more established, will be informed by this relationship from this point forward.

Thirteen older people aged 56-91, regulars on our Make Moments programmes, participated in our pilot mentoring project TOI AKO over six months in 2019-2020. Working in groups of 2 (or in one case 3), they had a minimum of ten workshops with a practicing artist in their care homes. With a keen and developing interest in art, these older adults have enjoyed the opportunity to work more closely with practising artists over an extended period of time. It has been a pleasure watching their visual language develop under the guidance of their

¹⁸ Organ, Kate (2017) After you are two. Exemplary Practice in Participatory Arts with Older People, published by the Baring Foundation, p.50.

mentors, and their works individually and collectively describe the diversity in ageing and the freedom those untrained in the arts can bring to a new and blossoming practice.

It has been rewarding to learn that a more intense and long-term engagement, like our TOI AKO mentoring project, is recognised as having a valid role in this field as found in the the most recent research on the creative ageing sector's strengths in the UK.

‘Over time, there has been a shift towards more sustained work, building relationships with people through extended residencies rather than one-off projects. As an example, Arts Care’s Here and Now Older People’s Arts Festival began as a six-week extravaganza, with a substantial part of the program being delivered into older people’s services. This has been extended into a six-month community-wide project, culminating in a six-week showcase of artwork. According to Arts Care CEO, Jenny Elliott, this ‘gives older and vulnerable people the time to really enjoy the process of making rather than rushing them through in the process of reflecting.’¹⁹

¹⁹ Dr Gordon-Nesbitt, Rebecca, Research Fellow King’s College London, ‘Older and wiser? *Creative ageing in the UK 2010–19*’. Published by the Baring Foundation



Figure 20 Eric Pritchard, Toi Ako participant during one of his sessions at his rest home in Papakura, Auckland, with artist mentor Linda Roche, and his neighbours Puasau Isaia and Mark Devicich, February 2020

Eric Pritchard, who lives in a rest home in Papakura, South Auckland, shared his feelings on working alongside Artist Linda Roche: ‘I like it, I am happy here. Something different every time you come at it with a paint brush.’ His Artist Mentor, painter Linda Roche, on her thoughts on the project: ‘I think above all what I have truly valued is the opportunity to form intergenerational friendships. The support I have given really has been more than offset by what I have gained from the experience.’

TOI AKO Exhibition 2020

Figure 22 Outside window of Papakura Art Gallery, where works by TOI AKO artists were exhibited in March 2020. This show was unfortunately interrupted by Covid-19 and ended in late March 2020.

A tried and tested tool for exposing the lives of older people, and providing a platform for them to share their stories and points of view through art, is an exhibition of their works. This can be in the care home setting, which also improves the environment as seen at Wood Green, or within a public setting, like the Carers Cultural Adventures group who had a pop-up show at Shipley Art Museum the week before I visited. Reflecting on the exhibition Tony commented: ‘It’s nice to have something concrete. It made it alive.’

From March through May 2017, University of Edinburgh PhD candidate Sarah Stewart interviewed our Make Moments participants including family caregivers and dementia activities coordinators. She identified themes in the interviews and pulled out representative

quotes so that CTDCT could see what's important to the people in their own words. A key finding in this research document was the desire for our Make Moments participants to be engaged in art sessions that focus on works in the gallery created by them. They, like many, wanted to see themselves represented in gallery exhibitions. We decided to work towards this goal with our Make Moments participants, developing a project that afforded a smaller group of older people a more intensive opportunity to work on their art practice with a dedicated arts educator.

‘The surprise expressed at the ability and insight displayed by participants was the most common observation among interviewees. This shows that a major strength is the program’s ability to combat excess disability (the belief that someone’s limitations are greater than they are) in people living with dementia and those who care for them. If the reach of this aspect were extended via strategic partnerships that enabled, for example, community exhibitions of the artwork of people living with dementia or artworks in galleries being accompanied by the descriptions/reactions of these members of the community, Make Moments could amplify this strength to combat excess disability and stigma amongst the public.’²⁰

Jos Forester-Melville, HenPower Project Manager, agrees: ‘One of the things that is really important to us is that all the work that is made is displayed.’

The exhibition ‘Flirting with Form: Works by TOI AKO Artists’ engages audiences from around Aotearoa in viewing art and engaging in conversations around creativity and wellbeing, ageing artfully, dementia and inclusion, though we expect the conversations will also focus on the artistic merit of the works and encourage further arts participation.

²⁰ Sarah Stewart (2017) ‘Make Moments: Connect the Dots Project Evaluation June 2017’ p.15.

‘The Toi Ako touring exhibition speaks strongly to the goals of the [Chartwell] Trust – to enable participants the opportunity to find freedom, their voice, new relationships and creative understandings.’²¹

It was interesting to hear from Family and Volunteer Lead at Equal Arts, Joanie Crump, about her views on the need to integrate care homes in our communities better through holding events and exhibitions, bringing schools and artists in: ‘We need to crack the care homes open and make them more outward-facing and open to the community.’ With this in mind, we have decided to travel our exhibition to rest homes as well as art galleries.

As our exhibition travels to Hastings, Wellington, Dunedin and Nelson, so too will our Make Moments programme. We look forward to bringing older people and organisations to view the works and respond through discussion and making. We hope to collaborate with the health workers and arts educators to promote the benefits of ageing artfully and support local initiatives so that all older people and people living with dementia can improve their lives through creativity.

‘There is no shortage of research that demonstrates putting paint to paper, needle to fabric and hands on clay stimulates different sensations to other activities. This exhibition presents tangible evidence to bolster such claims, but, more importantly, joyfully proclaims the merits of artistic expression for anyone who has the urge to create. Through working together, participants demonstrate how creative expression can transcend physical and psychical

²¹ Gardiner, Sue, 2020. ‘Exercise for a Creative Life’, published in *Flirting with Form: Works by TOI AKO Artists*, the accompanying catalogue published by Connect the Dots, 2020. The online version can be found on Connect the Dots’ website page www.connectthedots.org.nz/toiako

facility and how the pure act of making can open new ways of communicating through visual language.²²



Figure 23 Betty Geraerts, TOI AKO participant from Henderson, Auckland, receiving a gift from Director Andrea Gaskin at the Flirting with Form: Works by TOI AKO Artists Exhibition Opening, 7 March 2020

It is the undertapped resource of creativity, experience and social connection of older people that we believe should have a louder voice in our communities. Providing people with the opportunity to continue with things that they have done before and build on what has been an important part of their lives in the past is central to the work of Connect the Dots. It can be equally important to provide the conditions that allow people to try things that they have never attempted before and which they may have assumed were for others and not for them.

²² Zoe Hoerberigs (2019) Toi Ako: An exhibition celebrating the virtues of creativity and collaboration.” Essay written for *Toi Ako Exhibition 'Flirting with Form: Works by Toi Ako Artists'* for use in Exhibition Catalogue

Multicultural Make Moments



Figure 24 Cynthia Rubena, Māori Kuia (elder) who regularly attended Make Moments and was also a TOI AKO participant. Cynthia passed away shortly after our Toi Ako exhibition, and we are so pleased that she was able to see her work exhibited.

An aim of the National Science Challenges project in 2017 is to enable early detection of pathways that lead to loneliness and social isolation for older Māori and Pacific people in NZ and the mitigating factors that will facilitate social connection and enduring relationships during old age. This will lead to the development and delivery of better-targeted services and policies will improve the quality of life of older Māori and Pacific people and increase the cost-effectiveness of services.

Understanding that ethnicity, language and cultural customs are form a large part of our individual identities, it is paramount that at Connect the Dots we are thinking of ways to be culturally-inclusive in a meaningful way. Whilst the barrier of language poses a significant

challenge to access when people for whom English is a second language start to struggle with cognitive decline, there are many other factors at play in our work that cause me to consider that we are not culturally inclusive.

‘New Zealand’s health, socioeconomic, and justice systems recognize positive aging as a right for all older citizens, yet the aging experience differs markedly by ethnicity... Barriers for Māori and other ethnic minorities to access care in the health system are readily acknowledged. Despite changes in policy, research, and health service priorities, it will take some time before those barriers are fully addressed, and ethnic minorities experience equitable aging, health, and well-being. Therefore, we must continue to advocate for changes to policies throughout health and well-being, socioeconomic, justice, and education sectors to address the roots of aging inequities. Once this is achieved, all older New Zealanders will receive culturally appropriate care in place, facilitating strengths-based positive aging.’²³

The finding that feelings of loneliness were highest amongst Asian older adults, particularly those who lived with others, appears to contradict the assumptions that collectivity or interdependence and cohabitation guard against social isolation and the absence of companionship or meaningful relationships. Those who live alone may well enjoy social or cultural contact outside of the home environment that mitigates feelings of loneliness, and conversely, those who live with other extended family members may experience social isolation or loneliness nonetheless. The relative benefits of functional as compared to structural social support (size and frequency compared with quality or perceived value of

²³ Louise C Parr-Brownlie, PhD, Debra L Waters, PhD, Stephen Neville, PhD, Tia Neha, PhD, Naoko Muramatsu, PhD, Aging in New Zealand: Ka haere ki te ao pakeketanga, Published in *The Gerontologist*, 2 May 2020

social contacts), as well as culturally specific support, need to be explored for non-European ethnic groups.²⁴ According to NZ Statistics, our aged population will be changing dramatically in Auckland over the coming years. Our Māori population is increasing and will continue to grow. Stats NZ's latest ethnic population projections (medium series) suggest the Māori population is likely to grow at a rate of 1.7 per cent per annum over the next 25 years and will make up 11.6 per cent of the Tāmaki Makaurau population by 2038.



Figure 25 Cook Island kaumatua, Terepai, at our Make Moments programme in Papakura. Terepai will be able to participate in future programmes delivered in Cook Island Māori

²⁴ Jamieson HA, Gibson HM, Abey-Nesbit R et al. (2018) Profile of ethnicity, living arrangements and loneliness amongst older adults in Aotearoa New Zealand: A national cross-sectional study, *Australasian Journal on Ageing*, Vol 37 No 1 March 2018, 68–73

Pacific people will continue to play a significant role in Auckland's growth and change. Stats NZ ethnic population projections (medium series) suggest that the number of Pacific people could increase from 15 per cent of Auckland's population in 2013 to 17 per cent by 2038.

Our Asian communities have already grown substantially over the last few decades.

In the latest data available (Census 2013) almost a quarter (23 per cent) of Auckland residents identified with an Asian ethnicity, and Auckland was home to two thirds (65 per cent) of all Asian peoples in New Zealand.

While we always want to ensure we are delivering multi-cultural programmes as we do now, we hope that some of our learnings from this pilot will assist us to tweak our current model.

For instance, we begin our sessions with a discussion around a work of art, hoping for input and idea sharing from all participants. However, in some cultures it is not appropriate to contribute to discussion in this format, often out of respect for the educator and the perceived hierarchy in that context. How do we create an environment in which all participants feel comfortable expressing their point of view?

Aligning with the Auckland Plan, 2050²⁵ our kaupapa for our pilot programme is:

- To ensure that all older people can engage in creativity and socialization activities in their communities.
- To ensure that older people for whom English is a second-language can engage in proven and professionally-delivered arts programmes in community spaces.

²⁵ Auckland Plan, 2050 objectives:

Belonging and Participation, where all Aucklanders will be part of and contribute to society, access opportunities, and have the chance to develop to their full potential.

Māori Identity and Wellbeing - where a thriving Māori identity is Auckland's point of difference in the world – it advances prosperity for Māori and benefits all Aucklanders.

- To ensure that programmes for older people reflect the diversity of language and culture in our communities, and that the recognized language of Te Reo Maori is incorporated.
- To promote the multiculturalism of our communities through language and art practices.

The need is, and will grow to be, that our Maori, Pacifica and Asian Kaumātua can engage in their own language, with further consideration given to other cultural customs that impact their enjoyment and participation. This pilot will test the feasibility for Connect the Dots to work with our communities and partners to deliver our successful Make Moments programme in other languages. We expect there to be many adaptations to the structure and delivery of the Make Moments programme. Initial research on programmes in Hong Kong confirm this to be so.

‘In Hong Kong and many other Confucian communities, traditional values are still largely held by older persons, with the Six Arts being viewed as a virtue of lifelong learning at an individual level and of communal harmony at the societal level (Marginson, 2010). By adopting it as a framework for cognitive health, the emphasis is shifted from illness and treatment to health and self-actualization potential, which may help reducing the stigma and fear often associated with dementia’.²⁶

²⁶ Gloria H. Y. Wong, MA, PhD, Carmen K. M. Ng, BSW, MSocSc,³ Claudia K. Y. Lai, SRN, PhD, Maggie N. Y. Lee, BSc(OT), MSc, Terry Y. S. Lum, MSW, PhD, Nan Jiang, MSW, Henry W. H. Shie, Jimmy Y. M. Wu, MBBS, FHKAM, FRCP, and David L. K. Dai, MBBS, FHKAM, FRCP, LLB (Hons), Development of Six Arts, a Culturally Appropriate Multimodal Nonpharmacological Intervention in Dementia, *The Gerontologist* cite as: *Gerontologist*, 2015, Vol. 55, No. 5, 865–874

Make Moments at Home

Reflecting on fellowship research undertaken by Winston Churchill fellow, Sylvie Silver (Fellow 2015), Alice Thwaite comments on the benefit and challenges of having professional artists in rest homes: ‘Sylvie noted that there is a growing recognition of the value of skilled artists in care settings in the UK, but a reluctance or inability to commit resources to fund their work. NAPA has been involved in a number of initiatives to promote the use of skilled artists to work alongside activity and care teams to support them to engage more through the arts. It has found that it can be a challenge in the UK to find artists of the right calibre and skill sets.’²⁷

Observing the benefits of bringing high quality arts programmes to residential care and community settings outside of galleries, we have developed a pilot project called Make Moments at Home to be piloted with our not-for-profit partners: Selwyn Foundation, Age Concern, and Dementia Auckland.

By supporting artist development, creative practice and knowledge exchange within and between sectors, Make Moments at Home aims to embed high quality creative practice within Auckland’s care sector. The pilot programme includes two days of training for 3 artists, building skills and knowledge in working in care home settings.

A central aim of Make Moments at Home is to develop the confidence and capacity of care homes to host creative activities, so close cooperation and dialogue between artists and care homes will be essential.

²⁷ Alice Thwaite , Growing the Creative Ageing Movement: International lessons for the UK, p.30

Artists will be supported by a programme of training and peer mentoring delivered by Connect the Dots, a leading creative ageing charity supporting older people and those living with dementia. By connecting artists from across Auckland, this programme hopes to build a strong community of practice that will support ongoing work in the sector.

CHAPTER 5: Recommendations for Aotearoa's Creative Ageing Sector

As the number of New Zealanders struggling with social isolation or living with the dementia continues to grow, government and communities are increasingly pressed to find ways to fundamentally improve wellbeing. It was immensely encouraging to observe the work being achieved in the UK towards this, and I have returned eager to shift learnings into action. In short, what stood out as particularly significant for our work here is the importance of co-design in our programmes; the value of supporting older people as artists through quality arts programmes and the professional exhibition of their works; the wider benefits of artists residence programme in care homes; and woven through all of our work needs to be a clear intention to be more culturally diverse and inclusive in every aspect of our programming.

The United Nations 'Principles for Older Persons' are embodied within the World Health Organisation 'Principles for the Age Friendly City Strategy'.²⁸ In practical terms, an age-friendly city adapts its structures and services to be accessible to and inclusive of older people with varying needs and capacities. Alongside interventions that cities and countries need to make in order to allow older people to age well in place, must be interventions that promote and celebrate the contributions our older persons can and will make in their communities.

What needs to be in place so that we benefit fully from the experience, talents, knowledge and wisdom of our elders in the wider community?

When one considers the United Nations principles for older people it is clear that Creative Ageing practices embody all of them and also that these very principles must underpin our work in this area.

²⁸ The WHO Age-Friendly Cities Framework (WHO, 2007)

The principle of ‘Participation’, describing older people who are integrated into community life and actively participating in the formulation of policies affecting their well-being, reminds us of the importance of co-design in our work.

The principle of ‘Care’, maintaining that older persons should have access to social and legal services and to health care so that they can maintain an optimum level of physical, mental and emotional well-being, considers that our Creative Ageing programmes must be physically accessible and free from barriers such as cost, transportation, cultural exclusion.

The principle of ‘Self-fulfilment’, the right of access to educational, cultural, spiritual and recreational resources to develop their full potential, speaks to the key that these programmes are about growth and potential. They should be delivered in a manner that promotes inclusion, challenges stigma, and acknowledges that each participant is an individual with the right to full expression.

Finally, the principle of ‘Dignity’, where older persons live in dignity and security, free of exploitation and treated fairly regardless of age, gender and racial or ethnic background, reminds us that our work cannot be a one-size-fits-all approach.

‘Older persons’ are not an homogenous group, and neither does each person living with dementia experience it in the same way. By ignoring the diversity that our participants bring to each programme we are failing them and not honouring their dignity.

Some recommendations that will help us to achieve our ambition to see all older people ageing well in place are listed below, and some will be expanded upon briefly.

1. Co-design & Local responses
2. The Right to Art
3. National Creative Ageing Advocacy, Research and Funding Body

4. Regional Creative Ageing Centres
5. Time and Funding (not expanded upon)
6. Research around ageing in an Aotearoa New Zealand context (not expanded upon)

1. Co-design & Local responses

A Finnish research project²⁹ into the methodologies and impacts of co-design investigated the possibilities for co-design methods to enhance older adults' participation and inclusion, and began with the following inquiry questions:

- . Do co-design methods enhance older adults' inclusion?
- . How is inclusion achieved? What are the possibilities and threats in co-design methods from the perspective of inclusion?
- . How does interaction in co-design workshops enhance inclusion and what are the limitations or threats for achieving older adults' participants?

Co-design and locally led approaches could be seen to go hand-in-hand. Whilst resources can be used and shared internationally, the long-term efficacy of programmes designed for particular users, like older people, is impacted by the authentic input of those it is designed to serve. We know that older people are not a homogenous group. There are many differences that need careful consideration for programme design, making co-design principles, and evaluation, an important part of any work. Genuine co-design takes time, and limits on funding and resources, with a focus on outputs, undermine the opportunity for this work. By prioritising the input and ideas of participants in the design of resources and programming for them, they will not only be empowered, but the projects are more likely to be sustainable and have the desired impact.

The World Health Organisation sees older people's input as key in the design of Age-Friendly Cities:

²⁹ Marjo Outila (M. Soc.) Hanna-Riina Vuontisjärvi (B. Des) Co-Design as a Method of Inclusion for Older Adults in Public Social and Health Care Services?

‘The bottom-up participatory approach involves older people in analysing and expressing their situation to inform government policies. It is recommended by the United Nations for empowering older people to contribute to society and to participate in decision-making processes.’³⁰

Whilst there are challenges that must be mitigated when engaging in co-design with people who may have impaired cognitive function, it is essential that all practical interventions be employed to ensure that people are given the opportunity to contribute. Bowen’s remarks are a stern reminder, ‘... The voices of older people with high support needs are so quiet as to be practically silent or indistinguishable from the other people who speak on their behalf.’³¹

Reflecting on her experience of co-design with older people as part of technology design, Cheng describes the mutually beneficial exchange: ‘Co-designing with older adults is definitely an eye-opening and rewarding learning experience. I learned so much from their life experiences and wisdom, as well as the tactics of participatory design approach. Leave your assumptions at the door and let them surprise you.’³²

A vivid example of this is the HenPower project which began in Newcastle, UK. Although the programme is part of an arts organisation, it was the intimate connection and relationship with the older people in their community that enabled Equal Arts to engage the local elders in a project that was meaningful to them. Jos Forester-Melville, HenPower Programme Manager since 2012, explained the idea for hen keeping came from growing concern of the number of

³⁰ Global Age-friendly Cities: A Guide, 2007, WHO Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data p.12

³¹ Bowers H. et al. (2009) Older people’s vision for long term care, p.5.

³² Cheng, Evie, 4 things I learned from co-designing with older adults <https://uxdesign.cc/4-things-i-learned-from-co-designing-with-older-adults-60b291a1ccad>

older men staying in their rooms at care facilities, and the physical and emotional challenges that come from isolation. Staff recognised the different life experiences that older men bring to their community, and understood that they needed to promote activities that encouraged ‘useful’ activity in order for the men to participate. It also happened that many of the men had kept chickens growing up, so Equal Arts piloted the HenPower project. This visit highlighted how important it is for projects to be mindful of the life experiences people bring to these settings.

2. The Right to Art

“There is no denying the problems that accompany ageing. But what has been universally denied is the potential. The ultimate expression of potential is creativity.”³³

An overriding theme from the people I spoke with and the places I visited during the research fellowship was the myriad players involved in Creative Ageing and dedicated to the task of engaging older people and people living with dementia in the arts. Not only is there a long history of cultural organisations working directly with older people, but collaboration is strong within this community of practitioners. It is widely acknowledged that creativity leads to better health outcomes, that participating in art can alleviate depression, reduce falls, improve coordination, reduce blood pressure. By focusing on these outcomes in order to can support and funding, it is negating that value that art holds for all people, for all of time. Art for art’s sake (“L’art pour l’art”) is a catch-cry first proclaimed in the 1835 book *Mademoiselle de Maupin* by author Théophile Gautier (1811–1872).

We can acknowledge the very real health effects of art, but we must not diminish the need and right for all people to be engaged in creativity for the sake of creativity. The ‘Right to Art’, as enshrined in the 1948 United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, proclaims “...the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts...”

As Kate Organ interprets: ‘it has sought to promote the radical idea that each individual and each community deserves respect, a voice and access to the means of expression. It is based on the belief that each of us is creative and has the right to participate in decisions that affect

³³ Dr Gene Cohen, *The Creative Age: Awakening human potential*

the quality of our cultural lives, as an extension to the fundamental freedoms of political franchise.’³⁴

The Baring Foundation recognises that the arts have intrinsic value, that they are ‘fundamentally important for their unique ability to give joy and express the world’.³⁵

The establishment of Te Ora Auaha: Creative Wellbeing Alliance Aotearoa, celebrates the link between creativity and wellbeing. Indeed, it is an exciting time to be working in arts and wellbeing. Peter O’Connor, professor in the Faculty of Education and Social Work at the University of Auckland, notes ‘It’s a long game – research clearly says there’s a link between the arts and creativity and better health and wellbeing so, ultimately, if we can have a healthier New Zealander, that’s the gain. If we want a happier and healthier New Zealand, then we need to recognise the arts have a significant role to play in that.’

However, we cannot assign all participatory art, community art, or inclusive arts projects, to the realm of wellness. We must acknowledge these participants as artists equal to all others, and that the work produced is being created with authenticity and creative intent. Our participants do not come to our programmes with the thought ‘I will explore printmaking today so that I feel less lonely tonight’ or ‘I will work on this dance sequence so that I can improve my balance and reduce my chance of a fall’. Let’s ensure that all engagement and contribution is treated with the respect it deserves. I see the contribution of Connect the Dots as using our skills and knowledge to create the optimum conditions in which all older people can thrive creatively, in whatever way that means to them.

³⁴ Kate Organ (2017) After you are two. Exemplary Practice in Participatory Arts with Older People, published by the Baring Foundation, p.5

³⁵ D. Cutler (2010) Ageing Artfully – Older People and Professional Participatory Arts Practice in the UK, The Baring Foundation

3. National Creative Ageing Advocacy, Research and Funding Body

The Baring Foundation is a key contributor to the growth and strength of the UK's creative ageing sector. Set up in 1969, its purpose is to improve the quality of life of people suffering disadvantage and discrimination. It aims to achieve this through making grants to strengthen organisations that serve disadvantaged people and by bringing added value to this process, especially through learning from grant making.

In September 2009 the Baring Foundation launched a new Arts Grants Programme to provide around £3 million over five years in core costs grants to arts organisations working in a participative way with older people in the UK. They extended this Programme by an additional five years, taking it to 2019. It commissioned a report into the impact this has made on the sector which have been published in 'Older and Wiser? Creative ageing 2010-2019' by King's College London, researched by Rebecca Gordon-Nesbitt. She review reveals a flourishing sector, with many high-quality programmes having sprung up all the country over the past decade. Training for artists and care workers has grown with improved availability of resources to guide practitioners. Additionally, she finds that the idea of ageing creatively become more widely accepted among arts organisations, care organisations, funders and the general public.

However, Rebecca Gordon-Nesbitt says that a concerted effort is required by funders, politicians, policymakers and national arts bodies in order to sustain and develop the excellent work that is now happening. In particular, she claims that there is an urgent need for the sector to reach out to older people who are not already engaged with the arts and to extend its reach further in terms of gender, class, ethnicity and sexuality.

Alice Thwaite observed in her report, 'Growing the Creative Ageing Movement: International lessons for the UK' which synthesized the findings of several Winston Churchill fellowships

in the UK:

‘As the field grows, there is an increasing demand for high-quality programmes, particularly in care settings. There are unprecedented pressures on an underfunded social care system, which relies on a workforce, which gets little training and support. The combination of an exciting arts programme and a care workforce that is well trained and resourced could revolutionise the experience of older age.’³⁶

It is precisely this mapping of the sector that we urgently need in Aotearoa New Zealand in order to clearly understand our strengths and weaknesses and what opportunities are present. Whilst we have fantastic activity happening in the sector, with research being carried out on ageing through the National Science Challenge Ageing Well and the University sector, and into the role of creativity through organisations like the Creative Thinking Project, we do not have a central home for older people and the arts. The impact the Baring Foundation has made in the ten years they dedicated funding to this area is all the evidence required to demonstrate our need for something comparable.

³⁶ Alice Thwaite , Growing the Creative Ageing Movement: International lessons for the UK

4. Regional Creative Ageing Centres

Physical spaces that are designed with the needs and requirements of older people first and foremost are essential. We need spaces that accommodate the diverse needs of people living with dementia, for example plain and even flooring, clear text, minimally furnished, clear demarkation of spaces with different uses. With the closure of many of our community art gallery settings post-Covid, we have come up close and personal with the absence of suitable venues for uplifting arts programmes for older people, and find ourselves compromising our commitment to an elevated experience by booking dark, cold and large community halls. It is an urgent need that we create a purpose built arts centre for programmes that include all the arts for older people. These spaces will be used by all local elderly to engage in the arts in non-clinical settings. A space where practising artists are able to collaborate, storytelling, intergenerational projects. A space that has high quality performances and exhibitions, that offers training for health workers in bringing creativity into clinical settings. Senior artists would be championed, have studios, exhibition spaces. Innovative practices could be developed here, with a strong focus on co-design, and as such would be suitable for a wide range of cross cultural, intergenerational programming.

We have a long road to travel in terms of ensuring that our programs are fully accessible, that our kaumātua feel a sense of ownership of the design and delivery of our programs, and that we grow to reach those older people and people living with dementia who face further challenges and increased isolation.

We aspire not only to affect positive change for our older populations through creativity, but to amplify their voices and ensure that the unique gifts each of them possess are acknowledged, valued, celebrated and utilized by the entire community. By achieving these goals, we will provide a strong challenge to age-related stigma and stereotypes that prevent our kaumātua thriving in their golden years.

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Gloria H. Y. Wong, MA, PhD, Carmen K. M. Ng, BSW, MSocSc,3 Claudia K. Y. Lai, SRN, PhD, Maggie N. Y. Lee, BSc(OT), MSc, Terry Y. S. Lum, MSW, PhD, Nan Jiang, MSW, Henry W. H. Shie, Jimmy Y. M. Wu, MBBS, FHKAM, FRCP, and David L. K. Dai, MBBS, FHKAM, FRCP, LLB (Hons), Development of Six Arts, a Culturally Appropriate Multimodal Nonpharmacological Intervention in Dementia, *The Gerontologist* cite as: *Gerontologist*, 2015, Vol. 55, No. 5, 865–874

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APPENDIX 1

Travel dates / places

15th May 2019

Kelly Robinson, Dulwich Picture Gallery, London

16th May 2019

Social Prescribing Conference, London

21st May 2019

Meditation Exhibition and Programme, Manchester Art Gallery, Manchester

21st May 2019

Nicola Cullough, Manchester Art Gallery, Manchester

22nd May 2019

House of Memories Programme and training, Liverpool Museum

22nd May 2019

Dawn Carrol, Liverpool Museum

28-30th May 2019

Equal Arts Team over three days, Newcastle

8th June 2019

Yoko Hayashi, founder and CEO, Arts Alive, Tokyo

APPENDIX 2 – MUSEUMS VISITED

Dulwich Picture Gallery

Dulwich Picture Gallery is the world’s first purpose-built public art gallery: it was founded in 1811 when Sir Francis Bourgeois RA bequeathed his collection of old masters “for the inspection of the public”. The website is clearly outlines the Gallery’s top three purposes, listing Community Engagement alongside Caring for our Collection and World Class Exhibitions. It places great importance on the role its community play in engaging with its collection and enlivening the works through their own connections: ‘At Dulwich Picture Gallery we empower our audiences to connect, create and make sense of their world through meaningful interactions with art. We place people at the heart of everything and carefully craft our offer to meet different people’s learning styles and need. Our inclusive programmes cater for audiences of all ages from 0 to 100 year olds inviting people to unlock the stories behind paintings and find personal connections with the collection and temporary exhibitions.’



I met with Kelly Robinson, Community Engagement Manager, to find more about the ways Dulwich Picture Gallery supports the engagement and contribution of older people in the Dulwich neighbourhood as well as the surrounding boroughs of Southwark, Lambeth and Lewisham. My original intention was to learn more about Visual to Vocal, an intergenerational, music-based programme I had long admired from afar. It has

Figure 1 Kelly Robinson, Community Engagement Manager, Dulwich Picture Gallery, London, May 2019

long been my ambition to grow our intergenerational programming, as evidence suggests these spaces bring additional benefits to the wellbeing and understanding of both age groups. Contact between generations can promote understanding and reduce ignorance about ageing and older people, and these experiences prove enriching for all ages.

Unfortunately the 10-week intergenerational programme Visual to Vocal ended prior to my trip after running for three consecutive years. Kelly explained, ‘We have moved away from the project model towards a new programme called Create and Connect which aims to support the whole gallery to become dementia friendly through regular programming rather than short term projects. At present we are not running any direct intergenerational elements as we are just at the end of our pilot year [of Create and Connect], and additionally we have relaunched our youth programme with a new strategy, but we are hoping to build more intergenerational work into both programmes.’ As it was the short-term project, coupled with music and cross-generation participation that interested me, I was keen to discover why the Dulwich Picture Gallery had moved on from this model. By all accounts it has been incredibly meaningful and successful for all involved. As we discussed the merits of the programme it became clear that it was not sustainable. Kelly explained that the 10-week programme, which brings music students and elderly together to create and present original music in response to the works in the gallery, required six months of work and already stretched gallery resources. She shared that ‘doing project work does not fit with our resources’ which has long been a challenge for art museums. Projects, no matter how successful and transformative for the participants, are expensive, and when the numbers are crunched of the cost per person, they seem enormously costly.

Given the conversations regarding the resource-heavy short-term projects, it will be interesting to touch base with Kelly later in 2020 to discuss how this project was experienced by its participants, and how sustainable it may or may not be given stretched resources.

Dulwich Picture Gallery's offers three strands of short and long term programming for both groups and individuals, with a focus on providing activities for older adults who may be socially isolated, who have lived experience of dementia and, or are experiencing mental health issues, with activities taking place in the Gallery or in community settings. The Ageing Well programme uses creative workshops, interactive and sensory guided sessions, tours of the gallery and movement and mindfulness sessions throughout the year, with the aim to combat social isolation. Their bi-monthly Creative Arts Café has been designed specifically for individuals in the community who are at risk of social isolation. Participants take part in a wide variety of creative artist-led workshops with regular visits to the Gallery supported by the community team and volunteers. The Create and Connect programme supports older adults living with dementia and their carers and is part of their commitment to creating a dementia-friendly Gallery.

Dulwich Picture Gallery works in close collaboration with local organisations, like the Lambeth and Southwark Alzheimer's Society, using Outreach to deliver dementia-friendly workshops at Dementia Cafes and Support Groups, and monthly Dementia Friendly creative drop in sessions at the Healthy Living Centre (Yalding Centre). Additionally, the Dulwich Picture Gallery is a member of the Southwark Dementia Action Alliance. Dulwich Picture Gallery has also committed resources and knowledge to the creation of a gallery-wide technology app, Armchair Gallery, that has been designed for people who would struggle to get to museums and art galleries. It provides an opportunity to explore collections, take part in

activities and use creativity to support wellbeing. ‘This collaboration enhances our older peoples programme and our programmes for older adults living with dementia, and includes interactive games and suggestions for follow-up activities, which could be run by activity workers in care residential settings or community groups.’³⁷ This authentic and deep engagement and participation in the local community with individuals and organisations connected with dementia is truly encouraging, and an ideal model for other local galleries to emulate.

³⁷ Dulwich Picture Gallery website

Liverpool Museum

The social role of the museum and the art gallery in an outreach capacity through the use of technology has long been understood in theory and practice at the Liverpool Museum.

National Museums Liverpool includes Liverpool Museum, International Slavery Museum, Lady Lever Art Gallery, Merseyside Maritime Museum, Sudley House, Walker Art Gallery, and World Museum.

The Museum has taken a unique and groundbreaking approach to supporting people living with dementia. In addition to the regular dementia-friendly drop-in tours across all the venues, the Liverpool Museum uses its resources and collections to run free Dementia awareness training for health workers and family carers, and have co-designed the House of Memories app with people with dementia as a tool to facilitate conversation around familiar objects from their history. As well as the app, the Museum has created Suitcases which care homes can loan, filled with objects that might prompt conversation and reminiscence. As stated on their website: ‘Museums are great at looking after people's memories. Using our experience in reminiscence work, and access to museum objects, we've got activities and resources to help people living with dementia share their memories with family, friends and other carers.’

The suitcases contain photos, memorabilia and objects that help promote conversations about memories of days gone by. The suitcases can be booked by groups who have attended House of Memories dementia awareness training, as the training covers how to use objects in reminiscence sessions. Examples of what you might discover inside a General suitcase are transport posters, Music and fashion memorabilia. They also offer themed suitcases, which can be themed by cultural groups like the Chinese community suitcase, African-Caribbean

memories, or the Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT+) heritage suitcase, or hobbies like sports and gardening, interests like music and art.

They also see their role as providing free education and support for people working in the health sector. The House of Memories Dementia awareness training for health and social care professionals is a half day training workshop that provides skills and resources for health and social care staff to help people to live well with dementia. Using real-life experiences of people living with dementia, played by actors on videos, participants appreciate that dementia can effect people differently. I was fortunate to attend this programme, which since its inception in 2012 has seen 15,000 carer participants attend. As our facilitator Chris explained, team Leader for the Education at the Museum of Liverpool, a key objective of the training session is that participants leave understanding that ‘if you’ve met one person with dementia, you’ve met one person with dementia.’ A core focus for the programme is that enables a greater understanding of the value of a person’s history and life experience.

Manchester Art Gallery

Manchester Art Gallery provided a different approach to my previous experiences. There was a more overt focus on the gallery as a space for mental wellbeing, and in particular its role in supporting mindfulness activities. During my visit I participated in the Mindfulness session, Take Notice, led by a Mindfulness Practitioner. I explored a gallery exhibition, And Breathe, deliberately curated as a space for quiet contemplation and slowing down.

This exhibition and its accompanying public programme are intended to serve as an entry point for visitors in need of mental health support, and an opportunity for the Gallery to signpost them on to other services. As well as these initiatives, the Gallery open up their workshop spaces to community groups to use as they need and host a 'baby space' where visitors can meet with visiting health practitioners. It seems that they clearly see their role and function to be useful and to operate as a civic institution. The purpose isn't to the exclusion of the purpose, beauty and function of art in society. The gallery see that this focus on mindfulness in an arts setting has health benefits, but also paves the way for a deeper and clearer appreciation of art.

'For the past four years we have been developing mindfulness across our learning programmes and with different audiences, we have explored just how this valuable skill can be employed in the appreciation of art. In this way, we have helped people to engage more

Four times per month, a professional Meditation coach guides visitors in close looking at one artwork for thirty minutes using mindfulness techniques. Whilst it inevitably leads to an appreciation or understanding of the work of art, despite the absence of historical content or information, the artwork's primary purpose in this programme is to be an object of attention.

The focussed looking at every part of the artwork brings about a slow and calm sensation, and shuts out other thoughts and worries. It provides all the benefits of mindfulness, and with regular sessions, it can alter the brain with particular areas of the brain shrinking or growing in response to regular mindfulness practice. The grey matter in your brain’s amygdala that controls stress can become smaller, your pre-frontal cortex can become strengthened, allowing for increased abilities for planning, problem solving, and emotion control. Mindfulness can also thicken the part of your brain that helps with memory and learning, the area known as the hippocampus.³⁸



Figure 2 A mindfulness session I participated in at the Manchester Art Gallery, May 2019

³⁸ Dr Meera Joshi (2017) ‘How does mindfulness affect the brain?’, <https://www.bupa.co.uk/newsroom/ourviews/mindfulness-my-brain>

Using these techniques with their older audiences, they describe the results: ‘Older people have told us that mindfulness has helped them to see life in a new way and how they have become more aware of the curious, the strange and the beautiful. They are therefore enriched by the realisation that irrespective of age, there is still so much left to see and appreciate in the world. And they are able to do this with a renewed sense of wonder.’

APPENDIX 3: Arts Organisations

Equal Arts

Equal Arts are a Creative Ageing charity based in Newcastle, but with project teams working across England, as well as supporting projects reaching as far as Australia and ambitions to set up HenPower in Aotearoa New Zealand.

One of their programmes, Creative Age, began with a substantial initial grant of £200,000 (approximately \$400,000 NZD). This programme is delivered predominantly in art gallery settings and is designed for older people with dementia, long-term health conditions and their carers. The sessions run weekly and are facilitated by trained, professional artists. This programme bears the strongest resemblance to Connect the Dots Make Moments programme, but due to scheduling clashes I was not able to observe one of these sessions. Connected to this programme is their Creative Age Challenge which sees people across the UK and Europe taking on this mass challenge to provide more creative opportunities for people living with dementia. Offering an alternative to physical fundraising challenges, Creative Age Challenges aims to boost dementia-friendly creative opportunities with cultural venues at the hub of the community.

The programme Carers Cultural Adventures is designed for carers and open to all, and I was able to spend the day with them during an art session in the basement art studio at the Shipley Art Gallery, Gateshead. Whilst they are used to moving about a fair bit as they work with local schools, they were a little out of sorts as they had recently lost their permanent home when the local council decided to repurpose the building the Equal Arts team called home.

I spent time chatting with a participant called Tony who has been in the group for three years now. He explained that he joined the group because he was looking for something to widen his horizons, and the group had done just that. He attends the workshops weekly, and enjoys both the art making with different artists, the exhibition tours, and the chance to work alongside children from the local schools.



Figure 3 Equal Arts facilitates a weekly group called Carers Cultural Adventures for family of people living with dementia but it is open to anybody to attend who is older and looking for something creative and cultural to do.

Like Connect the Dots, Equal Arts wants to enable access to creativity for as many new people as possible, but not to the detriment of those who find a place with us. The answer can not be to move participants on after a time to allow new members to join the group. It can only be to find more resources to be able to support more groups. It was encouraging to meet with staff who shared this sense of responsibility, and was in contrast to the path of museums

like the Dulwich Picture Gallery, who do in fact ‘signpost’ participants after ten sessions to allow access for further people. Dulwich Picture Gallery wish to support their groups to meet independently, but acknowledge that the facilitation of groups and sessions is often the glue. Having a space to call home is key to the development and longevity of the improved wellbeing that is supported through the social connection programmes like Carers Cultural Adventures nurture.

Family carers of people living with dementia experience the highest health challenges of all carers. As Pat from Wood Green explained, she had felt invisible while caring for her husband. As noted at Make Moments by a daughter caring for her Mother: 'Getting out and about with people who are doing really interesting things like [Make Moments] is massively stimulating for me as well as Mum... I can't think of another programme that meets that need in such an amazing way. It would stimulate memories beyond the actual art itself, and it stimulated us to do art at home - the groups have spilled over into everyday life.' Whilst carers enjoy the time they have with their family or friend at Make Moments, perhaps a separate space for personal expression and respite for carers would also be beneficial.

Now in forty care homes across the UK, HenPower creatively engages older people in arts activities and hen-keeping to promote health and wellbeing and reduce loneliness, primarily in the rest home setting. A key part of this project is utilising the knowledge of the older people by supporting them to become the lead trainers for local school children in hen keeping. This two-way intergenerational project ensures both young and old are being seen for the gifts that they can share on an equal footing.

Experiencing the projects of arts organisation Equal Arts, and spending time with staff and participants, it was clear to me that they approach their work with a high level of integrity and

creativity, taking the time for evaluation and as many opportunities for co-design with participants as practicable.

Arts Alive

Both Connect the Dots' Make Moments programme in Auckland, and the Arts Alive programme I observed at the Tokyo Fuji Art Museum in Tokyo, are based on the Meet Me at MoMA programme. A further similarity between Arts Alive and Connect the Dots is that we are not-for-profits arts organisations taking this programme into public arts venues, unlike many galleries which run in-house programmes. Yoko Hayashi, the founder and CEO of Arts Alive, was formally trained at MoMA in the delivery of this framework, and now trains artists and art historians in Tokyo in the techniques.

In terms of the role galleries are playing in improving wellbeing for older people, many have adapted MoMA's (Museum of Modern Art, NYC) programme Meet Me at MoMA, the MoMA Alzheimer's Project, which began in 2007, with the aim to connect people living with dementia to their collection, but at the same time to develop training resources intended for use by arts and health professionals on how to make art accessible to people with dementia using MoMA's teaching methodologies and approach. The programme is based on art discussion, following a framework that focuses on careful observation of up to three artworks, directing conversation towards personal connections, with sharing of the artist's intention or context as a conversation prompt. People living with dementia and their carers are able to contribute more easily when the focus of the conversation remains clearly within view. Authentically acknowledging the different interpretations of an artwork sets the tone for the art making part of the programme.



Figure 18 Arts Alive is the leading Creative Ageing organisation in Tokyo, headed by Yoko Takashi. Her programme for seniors living independently in their homes was lead by trained 'conductors' in the Fuji Art Museum, Tokyo.

It was interesting to observe it in action and spend time with Yoko discussing any adaptations she made to suit Japanese culture.

I found my time with Arts Alive to be incredibly valuable, and have remained in contact with her since our brief time together. There was so much to learn from her work, from the emphasis they also place on exhibiting works made by participants, to the way she manages the suitability of arts educators. Her approach to recruiting educators was to provide training for which interested parties pay to participate. At the end of the training, Yoko then employs those that she has observed to possess the right skills. As we followed the three different groups around the art gallery, it was clear even without an understanding of the language,

when educators (called ‘conductors’ at Arts Alive) dominated that conversation. Comparing two we observed, one was very quiet, allowing time for long pauses, and relying a lot on body language to encourage responses from the group. The other conductor’s approach was much more conductor-focussed. She was the centre of the group, and participants did not speak unless asked a direct question. Yoko and I talked at length about the measure of success of these sessions is when participants dominate the conversation, and chat to each other about their ideas. The dominance of the conductor is a common problem, and there is a correlation to their interest or education in art history.

