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Transient Places: The Public Benefits of Short-Term Artist-Led Spaces

SHANE FINAN

Abstract: *This paper explores the role of transient artist-led spaces in Ireland, and looks to discern whether short-term initiatives may become a strong model for sustaining artist-led activity in Ireland. It focuses on identity of local places for individuals and societies, and the role that artist-led initiatives have in altering this identity.*

Keywords: Artist-led space, transience, place, identity, urban development

Introduction

Artist-run spaces fit all kinds of models...They are little pockets of activity that serve particular audiences at particular times, filling gaps and holes for all that the art-world fails to provide. Sometimes they are meant to be temporary, and other times they can grow to become professionalised institutions that a later generation of artists define themselves against. (Satinsky, 2009, p.4)

The goal of this research is to explore the nature of transient artist-led spaces in Ireland under the theme of place-making, and to discover whether transient spaces have a unique ability to form an identity of place that more permanent spaces do not. This exploration will be carried out through an analysis of the role of people and location in giving an identity to a place, with the example of Granby Park in Dublin offered as a case study. Past research into urban development and the role of artistic projects will be discussed, taking into account the nature of transient and permanent urban spaces, urban planning, and how artist-led spaces contribute to place and identity in cities.

The first section will discuss in more detail how places develop social identities and what role cultural spaces can play in urban areas. Place-making is a key theme in the development of an identity of place, and it is through individual and community engagement with place that this identity is formed. The artist-led model is one example of place-making, as artist-led initiatives often use old buildings with distinct identities which have formed as a result of use or association, and which are then repurposed as artistic or cultural spaces.

Situated within this context, the second section will explore the role of transient artist-led spaces in Ireland, using the example of the artist-led pop-up park Granby Park in Dublin in 2013. In the context of this essay *transient* artist-led initiatives will incorporate art projects that have a *defined start and end date* and operate in places of urban significance, as distinct from spaces that are set up with no specific beginning and end at a particular point in time.

The Irish context seems particularly relevant in the current climate. After the sudden recession in 2008, Ireland faced an abundance of empty buildings and spaces. These disused buildings lacked function and so contributed to an identity of place that reflected the landscape of post-recession Ireland, becoming landmarks that represented the end of the construction boom. Recently renewed development has begun to take place across Ireland, and in this climate the role of changing identities of many of these buildings will come into question. These spaces, which function as urban landmarks, are prime locations for place-making artist-led

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initiatives.

Although often transient due to the unstable nature of low-rent occupation of premises, the model under which these spaces are established is different, as they do not set out to be transient projects with a specified start and end date, and as such do not fit the transient model as initially described. This notion will be explored further in the following sections.

1. Urban Places and Cultural Identity

This section will explore the abstract concept of identity of place, in order to develop an understanding of how the identity of places can influence a local society. It will analyse the idea of transient places and will draw from recent urban geographical history in order to analyse the potential for artist-led spaces to have an influence on local groups in urban areas. In particular, it will deal with 'place-making', a concept that determines how people create identities for places based on their social or community role.

1.1 Place and Place-Making

Place as a theoretical concept is broadly understood but somewhat difficult to define. Yi Fu Tuan suggests that 'An object or place achieves concrete reality when our experience of it is total, that is, through all the senses as well as with the active and reflective mind' (1977, p.18). Recent theories on 'place-making' show how societies can change the identity of a place through their own engagement with it (Andres, 2013; Haydn and Temel, 2006; Ley, 2003). Place-making is a phenomenon that comes about both through individual and social engagement with a location, creating an identity through engagement or activity that is not usually connected with the function(s) of that place.

Place-making involves community or individual engagement with the formation of the identity of a place (Healey, 2009). This can include community engagement with the development of plans for redevelopment of a place, or a community repurposing a place to be used in a way that was not necessarily intended. Artist-led projects can become examples of place-making processes where, for example, old factories or business premises are re-appropriated as art spaces, changing the role of the place for a local community or group (Bishop and Williams, 2012).

It is often argued that identity of places are formed through individual or social memory and experience (Tuan, 1975; Relph, 1976). Both terms are related to one another – the experience of a place helps to form place-memory, and this in turn develops an identity of place (Augé, 1995; Cresswell, 2002; Tuan, 1977). A group or community's active role in how a place is developed, for example through participation in public debate on local governance, is key to community understanding of place, particularly in urban areas (Mouffe, 2001). Public artist-led initiatives can bolster this community engagement, and can subsequently influence place-making, particularly in urban areas. Sharon Zukin provides a summary idea for the overlap between culture, identity and place in social theory, whereby 'place expresses how a spatially connected group of people mediate the demands of cultural identity, state power, and capital accumulation' (Zukin, 1991, p.12).

1.2 Urban Places

Taking the definition of a place as a location with a specific context or identity, urban areas can be particularly interesting examples of the interplay between place and space. Urban areas are divided into collections of localised places, and the interplay between public and private

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place is significantly pronounced in urban settings (Relph, 1976).

Michel de Certeau explores the concept of perceptions of identity in the urban landscape by addressing the participatory role of the observer in forming the identity of an urban place. Through visual mapping and moving through urban areas, an individual creates a personal identity of a city that relates to their own understanding of that place (1984, pp. 91-102). Marc Augé argues that modern urban developments such as shopping centres create anomalies on the urban landscape that lack specific identities as each is arguably a carbon copy of the last (1992). As such, Augé believes that these anomalies do not act as places because they do not add to a social experience of the urban landscape. By observing how repetition can cause anonymity of place-identity, the potential for artist-led projects to have a major influence on an otherwise unidentifiable urban landscape can be illustrated.

The cultural scene in a city is an important contributor to how residents develop an identity of a place (Zukin, 1989). Community engagement with an artistic space alters the social and cultural understanding of this place, and can contribute to the cultural economy of an area (Jacobs, 1961; Lloyd and Clark, 2004). Control or governance over how a place is run or managed can also affect place-making for community groups. The inclusion of community as part of the decision making or policy making process has in the past built stronger ties between communities and local places (Mouffe, 2001). This inclusion of community can strengthen the development of place identity by forming a relationship between community and their own autonomous control over a place. This is relevant particularly in urban regeneration, where communities can be involved in taking abandoned or derelict sites and creating something new from them, contributing to place-making.

1.3 Place-Making: Urban Artist-led Initiatives

Although many initiatives can be described as artist-led (for example public artworks), artist-led initiatives here are defined as places that are altered or changed through artistic intervention and lead to an altered identity of place. In urban environments these projects often involve artists using, or repurposing, disused or public spaces that can interrupt the regularity of perceived functional urban locations. Transient artist-led initiatives run for a finite amount of time, planned in advance of the project taking place, and lead to an altered perception of place by those impacted or conscious of the initiative. Included in this definition is leadership: artist-led initiatives are established and governed by artists, which can be important when considering community engagement in place-making.

Currid comments on urban artistic environments, stating that '[i]n this nexus of people and place, art and culture have received increasing attention as important contributors to urban and regional development' (Currid, 2007, p.455). By repurposing an existing place for cultural output or cultural gain, artist-led spaces can redefine the purpose and subsequently the identity of an urban place, which can have a knock-on effect on urban planning and often an increased economic value of urban locations (David and Foray, 2003; Krivý, 2013).

Generally artists occupy areas that have cheap rent, although recent studies have also shown that areas with high crime or social and economic diversity can also attract artists 'because these places serve as a mark of social status and inspiration' (Grodach et al., 2014, p.2823). As artists subsist on low incomes, they move into low-income areas with cheaper property prices and set up studios and galleries that begin to develop the cultural value of an area. Artist Grayson Perry described artists as the 'shock troops of gentrification', summarising this perspective:

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We're the first people to go we like this old warehouse, yeah we need a cheap studio. You know so that's what happens - artists move into the cheap housing and the cheap spaces and they make them...you know they do their work and they're quite cool and a little bit of a buzz starts up. And then maybe a little café opens up and people start saying, 'Ooh, that's kind of interesting, that area where those artists hang out. I think I'm going to go down there' (Perry, 2013).

Perry here introduces the idea of an overlap between artistic activity and urban development. Gentrification is an urban phenomenon that involves the rejuvenation of post industrial urban spaces that have fallen into disuse and disrepair. Prior to rejuvenation, Florida (2002) notes that there is often artistic activity and/or residence of these spaces not least because of low rents and ease of urban access. Ley develops this point in his final summary of the connect-edness between art movements and gentrification, with a particular influence on the cultural economy of artist-led spaces, stating that

the artist's very presence, the deployment of a critical aesthetic disposition on the streets of old neighbourhoods, has become a principal tool for goading on gentrification, thereby lining with gold the pockets of buyers and sellers in the inner-city property market. (Ley, 2003, p.2542)

The combined effect of artistic and cultural association with places, and the gentrification of these locations, leads to rising land values, rental charges and increased economic wealth which becomes directed to the property developers, civic boosters and city planners. The negative effect of this is that low-income residents, including artists, are often forced to leave these areas in the wake of gentrification.

1.4 'Transient' Artist-led Initiatives

Transience is naturally a problematic phrase. Arguably all ventures are transient, as they will all begin and end at some point. As such, this paper will define transience in art projects as a project that is established with a finite beginning and end, that is planned before it is created.

The use of spaces by artists as temporary places for exhibitions, workshops etc. has been common internationally over the last three decades (Andres, 2013; Haydn and Temel, 2006). Typically these uses take place in times of economic downturn or in areas of cities that have become less occupied (Bishop and Williams, 2012). Transient artist-led initiatives in contrast are finite in their initial planning – they do not set out to establish 'permanent spaces'. In this way they can become associated with urban development, not through their incorporation into an urban landscape, but through their use as place-making developments for local communities.

Community development of place-making can often be dependent on a local community having some level of control over how a local place is developed. This influence can include active participation in rejuvenating or creating a place, and engaged roles in governance or planning on how a place will be established and run. Artist-led spaces, organised by members of an artistic community, contribute to the development of identity and memory of places. In Ireland, the recent abundance of disused or vacant properties has led to a large number of places that do not serve a public or community function located in central urban areas. The development of artist-led initiatives, as discussed above, can then assist in rebuilding a sense of place through place-making techniques.

2. Artist-led Initiatives in Ireland

In Ireland, artists in urban areas in recent times have established projects such as the collaborative initiatives in Limerick that included Ormston House, Faber Studios and Occupy Space in the last decade. Although disjointed by location, these places collaborated on exhibition displays, group governance and funding initiatives, creating a linked artist scene in unoccupied

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industrial or commercial spaces in Limerick city (Conlon, 2012). The collaboration of artists in rejuvenating abandoned areas and working toward establishing a cultural scene helps drive artist-led initiatives. However, there is a marked difference between establishing a cultural scene and developing a transient project, and the long-term effects of more permanent projects can be detrimental to a cultural community (Florida, 2002).

Many artist-led initiatives are established with no finite beginning or end. An Irish example of this is MART, an artist-led initiative that was established in 2006 in Galway, and set up a 'permanent' space in Dublin in 2013. The Galway incarnation of MART involved events held in different locations. Its relocation to a permanent space did not result from strategic planning, but from a spontaneous reaction to the possibility of opening a permanent gallery space. Permanence was secured through ongoing rental payments, which in turn created a more tangible and fixed space for this artist-led initiative in Dublin city (MART, 2014).

Although MART has continued to stage events, including pop-up shops, gigs and exhibitions, the current aim is to retain a permanent artist-led initiative in the Irish capital. This can be viewed as a developmental step in moving away from the transient model, which arguably can promote place-making through a different method of community engagement and participation.

2.1 Granby Park in Dublin as Transient Artist-led Initiative

In 2013, Granby Park was established as a 'pop-up park' by Upstart, a group that stage events and happenings in Ireland (Granby Park, 2013). Granby Park was an ambitious project, led by Upstart's core group of administrators and artists, and contributed to by a voluntary community group of over 1,000 members. It was situated on a derelict building site in the area of Granby Road/Parnell Street in central Dublin which had fallen into disuse and disrepair. The park was open from 20 August–20 September 2013, a time-frame set and vigilantly adhered to by Upstart.

During its one-month run, Granby Park's schedule included workshops, music shows, art projects and community activities that were organised voluntarily. The local community were invited to participate in the events of the park as participants, volunteers, facilitators and artists. Other events were facilitated by non-local artists and practitioners. This created a sense of community engagement and collective activity that constructed a temporary identity from an altered use of place. This was achieved by artistic activity and engagement with individuals and groups from the local community, as well as the general public.

Community engagement in the planning and implementation stage, through surveys and suggestion boxes, ensured that Upstart, the artistic community and the local community were all active participants in the governing decisions during the ongoing run of events at the park. This created a localised public sphere, where debate about events and organisations were actively encouraged.

Those who attended Granby Park were not just the local residents and community groups but individuals and groups drawn from a broader area. The event was highly publicised and attracted large audiences as both spectators and participants. Through this, Granby Park was transformed for people both locally and from broader regions into a place of activity for a strictly defined time-span, and encouraged physical communication between a local neighbourhood and a broader outside group.

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2.2 Advantages of the Transient Model

In recent years artist-led initiatives have been criticised for following a set of governance rules that derive from the management of historical artist-run spaces (Shaw and Ramsden, 2007). This criticism has been aimed at art spaces that seek to establish permanent bases, ultimately imitating the systems of governance that exist in permanently established art spaces. There has been ongoing criticism of the diminishing role of the public in how places are developed, citing a decline in a political and democratic public sphere as a reason for this (Mouffe, 2001). However, transient and event-based initiatives offer models of public engagement that work outside of these restrictive systems of governance because they do not look to establish the stability of a long-term project.

The Granby Park pop-up park introduced mixed art forms into a disused building site and created a place that was in stark contrast to the one that had been in situ prior to the park's opening. The constant engagement of both the local and the artistic community in the organisation and running of the park contributed to a situational democratic public sphere. Pluralistic points of view were key to the central organisational structure of Granby Park. This allowed for a sense of community ownership, which helps develop a place identity through community participation in governance (Provisional University, 2013).

The specific temporal restraints of Granby Park, incorporating a large degree of fore-planning (2 years) with a short execution time of 30 days, meant that the nature of the event was fundamentally different from that of many other more permanent urban artist-led spaces (Hade, 2013). Although exhibitions can change regularly in a museum or gallery space, the identity (and associated conceptualisations) of place in a museum remain the same for a visiting or engaging public. If identity of place is established through meaning and experience, an event-based model implies a different experiential perspective than a less transient model in terms of place-making – one that is malleable and more immediately responsive to the needs of its public.

The short-term experience of a place relates to the idea of place-memory (Lewicka, 2008). The formation of place-memory can be developed even through transient engagement with a place, such as with Michel de Certeau's gaining an understanding of a city while moving through and observing it. With place-memory, social memory and personal memory are intertwined, where an individual response to a place becomes part of an overall social understanding of that place (Hayden, 1997, pp.44-8; Lewicka, 2008). This place-memory is far more localised (and indeed embodied) than the general place identity of a city, and thus cultural initiatives which activate the formation of place-memory (even in transient ways) can be key in reshaping the individual and collective identity of urban places.

2.4 Contrasts with the Non-Transient Model

The short-term benefit of transient art spaces can have long-term effects on the economic state of an urban area. Lauren Andres, using Lefebvre and de Certeau's theories on place as based on experience of a city through active engagement and human mapping, described the social benefit of short-term cultural projects in post-industrial European cities (2013). She showed how urban development can be led by planned short-term artistic activities, but also highlighted the importance of collaborative public planning in the long-term successes of artistic projects. The conclusions of her research highlight the role of power relationships in the long-term maintenance of urban places; she points out how La Friche in Marseilles which, although not without its own problems, granted further autonomy and decision-making to the local public in the urban development of the area. This collaborative effort allowed artist oc-

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cupants and local tenants to have some level of control over how the area was transformed during the urban development stage. This, she argues, had a benefit for the development of an identity of place in La Friche that outweighed those of other cities where urban planners developed culturally-rich areas without consulting or granting autonomy to local groups or people (Andres, 2013, p.771-772).

A parallel can be drawn between La Friche and Temple Bar in Dublin. Temple Bar was originally developed to be a cultural hub in Dublin City centre during the 1980s and 90s. A collective of planners and involved parties oversaw the development of the area, including urban planners (business developers, public services) and cultural partners (artists and cultural professionals) (McCarthy, 1998). This long-term relationship between the arts and urban development in a central locale helped to create and maintain the cultural places in Temple Bar, including Temple Bar Gallery and Studios and the Project Arts Centre. This system has been described as 'urban stewardship', where a certain degree of autonomy of control is afforded to the cultural bodies involved in planning to help direct the development of the area (Montgomery, 1995). However, the development of Temple Bar has been criticised due to the continued diminishment of artistic activity in the area. In 2013 the Temple Bar Cultural Trust, a body involved in planning for Temple Bar that has included artist members since the original developments in the area, began to be folded up. The following period also saw the closure of long-running semi-permanent spaces Monster Truck Gallery & Studios and The Exchange.

This echoes the importance of collaborative and community management in urban development around artist-led areas, and highlights the fragility of this relationship when the collaborative element is removed. The hypothesis that emerges is that the eventual development of cultural spaces into the permanent model can create a public alienation due to a lack of community engagement in programming or procedure.

Conclusion

Considering comparatively the examples of transient and non-transient artist-led spaces discussed, Granby Park engaged in community place-making through community engagement and development of experience and identity. This was achieved through the democratic governance of this artist-led initiative which allowed for local community involvement in the developmental processes of this space. This democratic engagement was also seen in La Friche's more long-term plans, but in this instance the problems encountered by La Friche (in terms of the alienation of one community from another) have not occurred. Or rather perhaps because of the temporary nature of this pop-up event, the conditions do not exist which allow them to occur.

Conversely, the problems associated with the long-term decline in artistic and community involvement in the Temple Bar area seem directly related to this idea of local community involvement in governance: a failure to sustain community engagement culminates in place identities that have an otherness or dislocation with the people who live near or pass through them.

Community co-creation of a transient place like Granby Park allows for the development of a cultural place identity that is temporary, but continues to function as part of the space's place-memory. Conversely, Temple Bar's originally planned and managed cultural place-identity has receded in the wake of gentrification, as it has become a central tourist zone more associated with social and retail offerings. Although its place-memory as a cultural quarter persists and is maintained by its remaining arts centres, this identity and memory will continue to erode if tenants depart and cultural activities reduce.

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However, the place identity temporarily applied to Granby Park was not permanently allocated to the space, and so regardless of what the (currently) derelict building site becomes, it may not be *called* a cultural space, but it will be notably be *remembered* as one. This is perhaps the crucial point: that cultural place-memory is not necessarily contingent on permanent infrastructure or design, and transitory projects may equally (or even more effectively) support cultural experience.

Finally, community identity of a place stems from collective involvement in specific place-making activities. Granby Park was built by a community (of artists, organisers, cultural practitioners, volunteers and local residents) who created an identity of place for the derelict site that did not exist previously. With more permanent art spaces this community involvement is often reduced over time, something that is apparent in Temple Bar and also in visitor numbers in regional art spaces or large galleries, although the latter discussion is perhaps for another paper. However, the place identity that was formed and cultivated by the individuals who conceived, developed and experienced Granby Park demonstrates the value that transience as a structuring principle may have, if we aspire to seed 'pockets of activity' across our cultural landscape.'

Shane Finan is a visual artist and researcher from Sligo. He holds a BA in Fine Art from IT Sligo and an MSc in Interactive Digital Media from Trinity College Dublin. His artwork centres around concepts of place and identity, and as part of his practice he has been involved in running artist-led spaces in Ireland, as well as organising events and pop-up exhibitions in Ireland, Iceland and the USA. He has given talks on artist-led spaces, the digital public sphere and place and identity in Dublin and Vermont. He currently works for Trinity College Dublin as research officer and project manager on Slándaíl, an EU FP7 project.

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Just Public Mausoleums? Museums and Intangible Heritage: A Case-study of the National Museum of Ireland - Country Life

SARAH KINGSTON

Abstract: *Following an expansion of international conceptions of heritage to include the intangible, it has also been questioned what role museums have to play regarding our living cultural heritage. Using the National Museum of Ireland - Country Life / Ard-Mhúsaem na hÉireann - Saol na Tuaithe (NMI-CL) as a case-study, this research explores why intangible heritage should be incorporated into a national folklife museum, the extent to which this is already being done, and analyses some of the related difficulties. This paper shows that although the museum values and involves intangible heritage, it is treated as secondary to tangible culture and supplementary to the tangible collection, which limits its use in the museum. This paper suggests that engaging intangible heritage in its exhibitions and programming can serve as a one tool to help museums become more engaging and lively institutions. It outlines a story-focussed exhibition and programming approach that would allow tangible and intangible material to be treated as equals, and enable the museum to more closely interweave its many different activities.*

Keywords: intangible heritage; Irish museums; museum theory; museum practice

By expanding on its traditional role, adopting a more holistic view of heritage and pursuing a story-focused approach in its exhibitions and programming, the museum could involve the intangible more successfully and equally, rendering it a more exciting, hybrid and living institution.

Introduction

All the galleries, the museums
Here's your ticket, welcome to the tombs
They're just public mausoleums
The living dead fill every room
But the most special are the most lonely
God, I pity the violins
In glass coffins they keep coughing
They've forgotten, forgotten how to sing

(Regina Spektor, 'All the Rowboats')

This song by the artist Regina Spektor (2012) revives the metaphor coined by Adorno (1955) of the museum as a mausoleum, a sterile, lifeless, boring place, a morbid show-case of dead objects resting in glass caskets. However, over the last half-century, museums have worked hard to move away from this classical perception, trying to become more engaging, open and lively institutions. Following an expansion of the international conceptions of heritage to include the intangible, the ongoing debate has also focused on the role museums have to play regarding our living cultural heritage. Yet how can something that is constantly evolving and changing, 'occup[y] the fluid, slippery space between people and things' (Harrison and Rose, 2010, p.240)? How can this be incorporated into the rather static environment of a museum, and what difficulties does this create?

Using the National Museum of Ireland - Country Life / Ard-Mhúsaem na hÉireann - Saol na Tuaithe (NMI-CL) as a case-study, this research explores why intangible heritage should be incorporated into a national folklife museum, the extent to which this is already being done and the difficulties pertaining to this. This paper shows that although the museum values and involves intangible heritage, it is treated as secondary to tangible culture and supplementary to the tangible collection. This paper argues that a more holistic view of heritage should be adopted by museums. By changing the focus on the story to be explored, rather than the tan-

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gible collection, museums could include the tangible and the intangible as equals. Finally, the paper addresses the question of what role the museum ought to play in safe-guarding intangible heritage practices, arguing that it is neither within a national folklife museum's possibilities nor remit to ensure the survival of intangible traditions.

The literature surrounding intangible heritage has focused largely on, for lack of a better term, non-Western settings and the heritage practices of indigenous tribes or so-called 'first nations', such as aboriginal communities in Australia. By conducting a case-study on the NMI-CL, this paper addresses a gap in research and literature. A range of different methodologies were employed for the case study. Interviews were carried out in 2012 with a total of seven museum staff in the NMI-CL from the curatorial and education department, as well as the manager-keeper of the museum. Additionally three museum workshop facilitators who are involved in intangible heritage traditions (such as traditional music) were interviewed. Observation of museum events such as workshops and tours was carried out and the museum's strategic plans and policies, as well as its exhibitions, were analysed. To add a comparative dimension to the research, interviews were carried out with two curators at the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum (UFTM), Cultra Northern Ireland, who have experience in dealing with intangible heritage. The UFTM, which is part of National Museums Northern Ireland (NMNI), has a long-standing tradition of dealing with intangibles, such as dialects, music, story-telling and narrative, especially in the area of collecting.

Defining Intangible Heritage

While the term 'intangible heritage' is quite a new one, the concept itself is not. It builds on 'historically familiar' terms such as folklore, traditional culture, oral heritage and popular culture (Kurin, 2007). The most used definition of intangible heritage is that set by UNESCO at the 2003 convention:

The 'intangible cultural heritage' means the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history [...] (UNESCO, 2003, p.2)

Intangible heritage is seen to manifest itself in oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals and festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe and traditional craftsmanship (UNESCO, 2003, p.2).

Although UNESCO separates heritage into three different sections (tangible, natural and intangible), there is increasing awareness that these categories are arbitrary and interconnected (Kirschenblatt-Gimblett, 2006). The definition reinforces the fact that the tangible and the intangible are linked. Or as Matsuzono states: 'the tangible is always embedded in the intangible' (2004, p.13).

The definition makes explicit reference to the 'aliveness' of intangible heritage in the sense that it is seen as constantly evolving and changing. Yoshida (2004, p.109) warns that ignoring this would mean the denial of what intangible heritage is about. As Kirschenblatt-Gimblett (2004, p.53) explains, the conception of intangible heritage has changed greatly over the last twenty years. Whereas the earlier models supported scholars and the documentation of folklore, the most recent model seeks to sustain 'a living, if endangered, tradition by supporting the conditions necessary for cultural reproduction' (Kirschenblatt-Gimblett 2004, p.53). The new conception recognises the key role of the transmitters, artisans and practitioners of a tradition and intangible heritage is seen as inherently connected to communities and people. To simply collect and document 'intangible heritage artefacts' is therefore no longer sufficient

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(Kirschenblatt-Gimblett 2004, p.53).

The efforts by UNESCO to protect the intangible are a reaction to a fear of losing the world's diverse national, regional and local traditions and culture due to the homogenising effects of globalisation (Kurin, 2007). This implies that intangible heritage is vital but vulnerable, because of its intangibility. However, Kirschenblatt-Gimblett questions this notion, pointing out that if something 'is truly vital, it does not need safeguarding; if it is almost dead, safeguarding will not help' (2004, p.56). There is also a difference between disappearance and evanescence. Everything intangible is by its nature evanescent, yet that does not mean it has necessarily disappeared. Taking conversations as an example, Kirschenblatt-Gimblett explains: 'conversations are intangible and evanescent, but that does not make the phenomenon of conversation vulnerable to disappearance' (2004, p.60).

There have been some criticisms of the UNESCO definition of intangible heritage, one being that defined in this way intangible heritage tends to become all-encompassing and synonymous with culture at large. Harrison and Rose (2010) pose the question that since the definition allows for the re-invention of practices and forms, would not everything become heritage? This is, of course, a general issue with heritage definitions. As Cooke points out, the difficulties in containing heritage begin with the 'elusive nature of the thing itself' (2003, p. 4-5).

A West without Intangible Heritage?

The UNESCO convention on intangible heritage has been seen as a response to the dominance of the West in world heritage policy, and lobbying for the convention has come from a variety of non-western countries, in particular Japan. However, the notion that intangible heritage is something 'non-western' appears to be reciprocated by the West, not least by Britain and Ireland. On a national level, there has arguably been little recognition of intangible heritage in Ireland and the United Kingdom. Neither of the countries has ratified the convention (UNESCO, 2003), and the Heritage Acts of both nations focus mainly on the tangible aspects of heritage, such as monuments, landscapes, buildings or objects.

Conducting interviews with staff working in the heritage sector in the UK, researchers Smith and Waterton (2008) encountered deep suspicion and reservations about the concept of intangible heritage. One interviewee even claimed that the UK did not have any intangible heritage. As Smith and Waterton show, underpinning such opinions is an understanding of material culture 'to not only symbolise, but actually "embody", heritage and cultural values' (2008, p.290). If the tangible object is seen as being heritage, then intangible heritage of course creates a problem. Yet, to borrow Kirschenblatt-Gimblett's term, is not all heritage in fact 'metacultural production' (2004, p.55)? Smith and Waterton argue that heritage itself is indeed intangible and created through the process of selection and ascription of value and significance to a certain place or object (2008, p.292). Heritage is not inherent in any tangible object, but it is the 'performance and negotiation of identity, values and a sense of place' (Smith and Waterton, 2008, p.292). This links into long-standing sociological and anthropological discussions on value creation and the politics of value. German sociologist and philosopher Georg Simmel (1907), for instance, defines value as a judgment made about objects by humans, rather than an inherent property of any object. Based on this, Appadurai's (1986) discussion of commodities examines the various ways in which objects hold value for individuals and groups and how this value is constantly in flux.

Museums and Intangible Heritage

After the UNESCO convention, the International Council of Museums immediately expressed

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its support by holding a conference entitled 'Museums and Intangible Heritage' in 2004. Many saw museums as having a part to play in safeguarding intangible heritage (Kreps, 2009; Kurin, 2004; Matsuzono, 2004; Shouyong, 2008; Van Huy, 2006).

However, museums have traditionally devoted themselves wholly to objects and collections, and as Kurin (2004) argues, because of this they may be poorly equipped for the inclusion of intangible heritage. According to Sheila Watson (2007), there has been a shift away from an inward focus on collections and the maintenance thereof, to an outward focus on the public and the museum's communities. Concepts such as Hooper-Greenhill's (2000) 'post-museum' advocate an institution that is alive, open, responsive and shares power, that no longer subscribes to the top-down approach of disseminating knowledge. Such a museum does not tell a cohesive story, but becomes a museum of 'many voices and many perspectives' (Hooper-Greenhill, 2000, p.152). Intangible heritage, due to its connection to local communities and people, could offer the museum an opportunity to become just that.

As has already been addressed, the tangible and the intangible are always linked. Museums collect objects because of the intangible traditions surrounding them. As O'Dowd, curator at the NMI-CL, writes: 'the value of every individual object acquired is only as good as the information pertaining to it - the object's spoken word. It is that information which gives the object life and meaning' (2007, p.232). Cooke identifies an opportunity for museums to become 'hybrid institutions,' where the tangible and the intangible 'can be woven together' to create a 'culturally challenging and enriching whole' (2005, p.41).

There are numerous studies on the integration of intangible heritage into the museum and the issues pertaining to this (Golding, 2007; Hart Robertson, 2006; Māhina-Tuai, 2006; Van Huy, 2006). Yet most of them tend to focus either on smaller community or eco-museums, which by their very nature serve a defined community, or larger museums of world cultures in places where a source community is relatively easy to identify, such as the Maori in New Zealand, or the Aborigines in Australia. There appear to be few such studies in Britain and indeed none in Ireland.

Smith's (2009) account of the National Museum of Rural Life in England highlights some of the issues for museums dealing with intangible heritage in a Western context. As Smith shows, it would be futile for a national museum in a multicultural society such as Britain or Ireland to attempt to identify a 'first nation', and this could 'actually serve to further marginalise already socially excluded voices' (2009, p.19-21). This author also highlights that in Britain, intangible heritage traditions and crafts are no longer passed down from generation to generation as envisaged in the UNESCO definition, but maintaining them is part of a lifestyle choice by an individual or group, and traditions are often actively revived. For these reasons, national museums frequently have to rely on existing heritage or preservation groups and movements, when engaging with intangible heritage.

Stefano's (2009) study of six museums in the North East of England identifies some key obstacles to the inclusion of intangible heritage for museums: the exclusion of intangible heritage from policy statements, the limitations inherent in documentation, and inadequate resources to manage intangible heritage. Stefano (2009) shows that underpinning these issues is the notion that the intangible is secondary to material culture. It is viewed 'as an accompaniment, or background resource, to tangible heritage,' which creates an obstacle to its inclusion because 'it fosters a narrow view of its nature, as well as of the role museums can play in safeguarding it' (Stefano, 2009, p. 121).

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The National Museum of Ireland - Country Life (NMI-CL)

The NMI-CL forms the fourth and newest site of the National Museum of Ireland / Ard-Mhúsaem na hÉireann (NMI). Located on the grounds of Turlough Park House, Castlebar, County Mayo, the museum opened to the public in 2001. While the museum is very young, it was the culmination of decades of work. The Folklife division was established within the National Museum in 1974, yet the collecting of folklife objects has been happening since the early days of the NMI (O'Dowd, 2012). Renewed interest in Irish culture after the establishment of the Free State in 1922 led to the development of a Folklife section. The first major exhibition of folklife material took place in 1937. Yet, while material was continually added to the collection, it spent the majority of its time since then in storage.

The formal purpose of the NMI, as in many other museums, clearly focuses on tangible heritage. The museum's mission, as declared in its Statement of Strategy, is 'to collect, preserve, promote and exhibit all examples of Ireland's portable material heritage and natural history' (National Museum of Ireland, 2008). A secondary focus on people is allowed for in the role the NMI has in making the collections 'accessible to audiences at home and abroad' (National Museum of Ireland, 2008).

In the museum's Acquisitions & Disposals Policy, it is stated that 'collections are at the core of the National Museum of Ireland's purpose' (2008, p.3). The only part of the policy that alludes to intangible heritage is the description of the Folklife collection, which is said to be 'complemented by extensive archive documentation' (2008, p.24). In comparison, the description of the UFTM folklife collection in the Acquisition & Disposal Policy (2009) of NMNI makes more frequent mentions of intangible heritage. Almost all sections of the folklife collection, even the ones listed under 'material culture', are described to include audio, visual or oral material. Indeed from the beginning, there appears to have been a focus by the UFTM on both tangible as well as intangible heritage. In the museum's first Annual Report, it is stressed that a folk museum's collection 'does not consist merely of physical objects' but also includes 'records of non-material aspects of folklife' (1960, p.9) and in 1975, the UFTM established a department of 'non-material culture'. However, this department no longer exists today.

Similar to the findings of Stefano's study, the rare mentions of intangible heritage in the NMI's museum's policies solely relate to how it supports tangible heritage (2009, p.116 & 117). It is therefore not surprising that staff at the NMI-CL show low awareness of the UNESCO concept of intangible heritage. Out of the seven museum staff interviewed, only two, Deirdre Power, education and outreach officer and Tony Candon, manager-keeper, showed awareness of the UNESCO definition.¹

However, this does not mean that there is no understanding among staff of what intangible heritage is. As Candon (2012) affirmed: 'There is an awareness of the importance of [...] intangible heritage, not using that term.' Overall, intangible heritage is mainly understood as folklore. The examples mentioned first in most interviews conducted for this study relate to such things as beliefs, stories, spoken word, customs and also music and dance. Crafts and skills are usually mentioned later, or after the interviewer has explained the definition of intangible heritage.

This focus on folklore and oral traditions may foster a narrow view of what intangible heritage is. Linda Ballard (2012), former curator of folklife at the UFTM, pointed out that one of the benefits of the UNESCO definition is that it lets different intangibles, such as belief systems, performances, and narratives, be understood together, which is important 'because [...] the boundaries between those are porous and they interact.'

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Although the formal focus lies on material culture, the importance of intangible heritage is recognised by staff in the NMI-CL. There is an awareness that the intangible and tangible are linked. As curator Brenda Malone (2012) put it: 'The object becomes entirely useless if it doesn't have its story surrounding it.' Candon similarly stressed that intangible and tangible cultures are 'of a piece' and cannot be divided. Curators emphasised that objects are not collected for their own sake, but because of the people behind them. Despite acknowledging this, for curators the tangible objects remain most important and they understand intangible heritage mainly in its relation to these objects. When asked why the museum should include the intangible, curator Dr. Séamas Mac Philib (2012) stated that it should be done because it 'enhances the object' and adds a 'further dimension.'

There is, however, also a sense that the combination of intangible and tangible heritage is stronger than either individually. This links into the opportunity of museums to become hybrid institutions, as highlighted by Cooke (2005). Education staff emphasised that having the object in combination with the intangible heritage enables a deeper engagement and understanding on the side of the visitor. Lorna Elms, education assistant, explained that including the intangible enables visitors to engage with objects in a 'much more meaningful way' because it 'relates to their own experience' (2012). Intangible heritage is valued by education staff, as it brings in the human dimension. Power (2012) stated that since the museum should not only focus on collections but also on people, including the intangible is important, as it is 'a way of including more people and giving ownership to more people.'

Although intangible heritage is not a priority in museum policy, it is clearly recognised and valued by museum staff. Yet how does this inform the museum's activities? A look at the museum's galleries and its public programme highlight certain problems the museum faces when trying to include intangible heritage.

Exhibitions

The museum's exhibitions are on display in a spacious, purpose-built exhibition complex. Exhibition themes include customs and festivals, farming and fishing, trades and crafts, and domestic life. One of the most interesting uses of intangible heritage is featured right at the beginning of the permanent exhibitions: one of four introductory panels explains the difference between 'folklife', the tangible heritage, and 'folklore', which is concerned with the intangible. The panel establishes the link between the two and highlights the importance of both. To illustrate this, an iron tongs is on display along with a listening station, where the visitor can hear an oral history account of folklore relating to the tongs. The panel on the right of the display emphasises, much as the curators did, that the museum focuses more on the people behind the objects, rather than the objects per se. However, apart from the tongs' audio installation there is only one more point in the galleries, the Forces of Change video, where the voices of real people can be heard. Other oral recordings, such as a school teacher administering a lesson, are performed by professional actors. Otherwise, oral history is included in its most static representation, scattered around on panels and flipbooks as written quotations. Even the highly intangible topic of seasonal customs is largely represented through tangible artefacts. The exhibit includes traditional music played out of loudspeakers as well as a recording of a wailing woman. Both the music and the recording serve to create an atmosphere for and underline the displayed objects.

The folklore and folklife panel mentioned above establishes craftsmanship as part of folklife not folklore. Interestingly, intangible heritage is most strongly represented in the parts of the exhibition dealing with traditional crafts and not in areas dealing with "typical" folklore topics.

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At the time of visit in 2012, there were 16 working videos depicting different craftsmen at work.

An effort has undeniably been made to include intangible heritage in the exhibitions through sound and visual recordings. There are those who see the use of recordings as problematic as they are yet 'another tangible piece of evidence of an event' (Stefano 2009, p.121). Naturally, the recording of an intangible heritage performance is not the same as the performance itself. Yet, while a performance may allow for a more immediate and richer experience of intangible heritage, it also has to end at some point, resulting in only a limited number of visitors being able to enjoy it. This discussion links into to the question of the museum's purpose in incorporating intangible heritage, whether it is to represent the tradition or to safeguard it. This is discussed later in the paper.

There is always a danger, as Cooke points out, of 'the intangible turning into the impalpable' (2005, p.32). However, from the way intangible heritage is used in the NMI-CL exhibitions it becomes apparent that it is in the background, its main role being to support the objects. Mac Philib (2012) agreed that the use of intangible heritage in the galleries is 'very much supplementary.' He explains that because the collection had been in storage for such a long time, the emphasis when planning the galleries was 'to get the objects out.' Mac Philib acknowledged that there is a 'certain reluctance' to delve into the 'complexities' of planning an exhibition with a focus on the intangible. Both he and Folklife curator Rosa Meehan described it as easier to put objects on display. Underlying this attitude appears to be a fear to deviate from the perceived norm, as Mac Philib further mentioned that seeing objects is what people expect when going to the museum. However Robbie Hannan, head of agriculture and folklife at the UFTM, disagreed with this view. He recounted that the main 'objects' of his first exhibition, called *They Love Music Mightily*, were recordings of traditional musicians. Hannan explained that it was possibly the first time they put an exhibition of music 'per se' on display that was not 'forty flutes on the wall [...] or ten accordions in cases' and the exhibition proved very successful (2012).

The fact that intangible heritage is treated as supplementary and secondary to material culture may mean that it is not paid the same amount of curatorial consideration. Ballard (2012), taking story-telling as an example, stressed that 'it's every bit as important to get the narrative right as it is to get the type of chair right.'

One of the first reasons mentioned by staff at NMI-CL on why intangible heritage is not being included more is a lack of resources. As Elms (2012) explained, the permanent exhibitions were originally designed to be changed after ten or fifteen years, yet the museum will now not be in a position to do so until more funding becomes available. There is, of course, no guarantee that should more money become available that it would be spent on the integration of intangible heritage.

Furthermore, while there appears to have been some activity in recording intangible heritage in the 1960s and 1970s, especially in the area of craftsmanship, there is almost no museum fieldwork happening today. This is, to some extent, due to financial and technical limitations, but mainly it has to do with vision. As Mac Philib (2012) explained, doing field-work is not encouraged. There is no strategic approach within the museum regarding the recording of intangible heritage, even relating to objects that have been collected. All of the NMI-CL curators emphasised that the collection of intangible heritage is not within the museum's remit, but that this is done by other bodies, such as the National Folklore Collection in University College Dublin. Yet, there appears to be no formal agreement between the two institutions, but rather an informal arrangement based on personal relationships.

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Public Programme

The permanent exhibitions are by no means the only activity of the NMI-CL. The museum has, ever since it opened its doors in 2001, operated an active education programme, for which it has won numerous awards.² As both Candon and Mac Philib (2012) point out, including intangible heritage is generally seen as the task of the education department. Power stated that with the education programme they aim to include 'not just the recordings of [...] the tradition as it manifested in the past, but also to have some element of the tradition as it is now' (2012).

As can be gleaned from its calendar of events, the museum has been very active hosting events involving intangible heritage. In 2010, it hosted thirty crafts events on skills, such as basket-making, wood-turning or felt-making. The museum also hosted twenty-four events involving performing arts, like traditional music, dancing or storytelling and others involving such activities as traditional cooking or customs.

Keeping the variety in programming high can be a challenge. This is also a result of financial restrictions, as some courses, such as black-smithing, are more costly to host than others. Due to staffing and financial limitations the number and variety of events the museum hosts has decreased in recent years. However, the museum has found other, low-cost ways to programme intangible heritage traditions. The Knitting Group and Music Circle meet at the museum twice a month, the Knitters to share patterns and up-skill in their craft, and the Music Circle to jam together and practice traditional music. The museum offers them the facility for free and brings in the occasional professional to work with them. In return, the groups are open to visitors and occasionally help the museum out by facilitating a workshop or participating in museum projects. This symbiotic relationship is a way for the museum to actively involve intangible heritage while incurring almost no cost. Paralleling Smith's (2009) findings at the National Museum of Rural Life in Britain, the NMI-CL frequently cooperates with existing preservation groups, such as the Seed Savers Association, the Connacht Textile Crafters or the Mayo Road Bowlers Association in its programming of intangible heritage. This, however, is done as a conscious effort to involve the museum's community.

The education department also organises longer-term projects. One such project, Common Threads, was run by the NMI-CL in conjunction with Mayo Intercultural Action (MIA) in 2008 and 2009. The project, which aimed to deepen museum engagement with new communities living in Ireland, involved eight women from different cultural backgrounds, such as Burma, Nigeria or Poland. The women undertook weekly visits to the museum over two months in 2008 to work on their textile craft pieces, using methods traditional to their country of origin. The finished pieces were subsequently put on display alongside the permanent exhibitions.

Projects such as this demonstrate that intangible heritage offers the museum an opportunity to remain relevant and engage with contemporary society, despite its collections focusing on the past. There is no strategy within the education department concerning intangible heritage and the inclusion of it is not formally encouraged by the institution. Power (2012) stressed that despite this, the involvement of intangible heritage is not ad-hoc, but embedded in the education department's ethos as part of an effort to involve the museum's communities and bring the collections alive. As Elms (2012) explained, the department has been 'doing it without putting a name on it.'

One of the concerns raised by curator Clodagh Doyle with regard to programming intangible heritage activities is authenticity. Doyle (2012) explained that heritage traditions, like traditional music, are handed down from 'generation to generation, from knee to knee'. By having a traditional music performance at the museum it becomes removed from 'where the tradition

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was based.' Ballard (2012) argued along the same lines when she stated that staging intangible heritage in a museum setting can be achieved very well, but 'it can never be quite the same thing' as intangible heritage living in the community. This may well be true, however, the question is: does it have to be? As traditional musician Emer Mayock pointed out in the interview (2012), traditional music is no longer handed down in the same way:

If I had lived a hundred years ago, I probably wouldn't have moved out of my locality, so I would have learned from a local musician [...]. But the way I learned was from being brought to musicians, [...] or [from] buying records and listening to traditional music. So [...] I'm kind of widely influenced like all musicians are nowadays.

As highlighted by Smith (2009), taking up and maintaining an intangible heritage tradition in our Western world is often a lifestyle choice people make and not necessarily something they were taught by their ancestors.

Power (2012) regarded finding a more holistic exhibition approach to include the museum's many activities as the more pressing issue. The museum has to explore how to include an intangible heritage event so it is no longer just 'a piece of programming that gets added on after a particular exhibition has been done and dusted'. O'Neill notes that in many national museums and galleries, the work by education departments is seen as an 'additional, subordinate and usually almost entirely separate function to the core tasks of collection, preservation research and display' (2006, p.99).

As has been shown, the museum involves intangible heritage both in its galleries and its public programming. This is not, however, guided by any agreed strategy or policy. As there is no formal recognition of intangible heritage within the museum, the inclusion thereof is voluntary, and, as Power put it, sometimes even has to go 'slightly under the radar' (2012). As Candon (2012) observed, the museum's traditional role as a repository for objects may not change, but it is a 'question of developing and expanding that role [...] so that it enlarges upon that rather narrow definition.'

To achieve this, a new perception of what an exhibition is, or can be, would be required. As both Candon and Power suggest, instead of building an exhibition around its tangible collection, the museum could make the story it wants to explore the new starting point. The elements of this story, which will most likely include objects, but may also include recordings, film, performance, events etc., could then be defined. Candon (2012) explained that by exploring the story in this way, building the exhibition, adding tangible and intangible elements, the intangible 'is not an add-on, but integral to the exploration of the subject.' In this story-focussed approach the inclusion of intangible heritage is not tokenism. It is a holistic, interdisciplinary approach including all the museums activities of collection, exhibition, research and programming. For a story-focused exhibition, a full programme of collecting is not necessary, but what is needed is meaningful collaboration with the people, communities and institutions involved. As Meehan (2012) stressed on more than one occasion, the museum 'can't be all things,' and collaboration with other institutions is vital.

Candon (2012) emphasised that the aim of such a 'multi-interpretive' approach must be interrogative instead of didactic: 'If an exhibition is only to tell something, then there's something wrong with that. There must be questions.' Planning an exhibition in this way, he admits, requires a 'lot of willingness to think outside the box'. So at the heart of this matter, a change in the culture and mindset of the museum would be required. Staff and management would have to be convinced 'that there is another way of looking at the world through the museum's eyes.' Yet Candon admits that engaging in critical reflection about the purpose of the museum is not currently encouraged.

A story-focused approach would allow the museum to involve the tangible and the intangible

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more equally. Many scholars and professionals advocate that the museum should go a step further and become an active safe-guarder of intangible heritage traditions. Yet, is this truly part of a national museum's remit and should it be? As Ballard points out, the museum's role is one of representation. The museum can be a place for reflection, a 'time suspension,' as facilitator Carmel Balfe (2012) observed, that gives you 'a time in your day that's specifically about your understanding of the world.'

The museum's role regarding intangible heritage can, therefore, be seen as one of observation, representation and facilitation. As Power (2012) explained, the museum should be interested to observe if and how intangible heritage traditions are still alive, but not to be 'artificially propping up anything.' Ballard, reinforcing Kirschenblatt-Gimblett's (2004, p.56) argument, stressed that if heritage traditions still prove relevant to people, they will survive:

... if the stories are relevant then they will continue to be re-told and if people find them relevant in the future then they may revive them and re-tell them according to the requirements of that time and to their relationship to them. (2012)

Not only is it questionable whether the museum should attempt to keep intangible heritage alive, but it may also simply not be in a position to do so. As Mayock (2012) pointed out, the museum's audience is of a transient nature and the museum has only 'a short window to grab people.' Meehan (2012) highlighted that the museum's education programme is not aimed at passing on skills, but rather at offering 'tasters'. It often takes years to perfect an intangible heritage skill. Yet, by representing intangible heritage, the museum can spark interest in the traditions and customs, which may lead to people reviving them.

As a facilitator, both the NMI-CL and the UFTM offer their premises to existing craft and heritage groups. As Hannan (2012) highlighted, the museum can offer 'people interested in such traditional crafts and practices [...] a platform,' which, due to the status of the museum, may enable these groups to reach a bigger audience than usual. Of course these actions by the museum may contribute to keeping intangible heritage alive. However, Power (2012) doubted that what the museum does will 'make or break' any craft, skill or tradition. Intangible heritage survives because it has proven and still proves relevant to people and communities.

Conclusion

Despite no formal acknowledgement of intangible heritage within Ireland and at the NMI, staff at the museum nonetheless understand and recognise it, and the museum has been engaging the intangible in many ways, both in its exhibitions as well as its public programming. Possibly due to the exclusion of intangible heritage from formal policy and strategy, it is still treated as secondary and subordinate to the tangible collection, which limits how it is understood and used. As museum staff have pointed out, intangible heritage is one of the main reasons for the collection of objects and provides one of the main ways to make them accessible to audiences. Therefore, the singular focus on material culture by the museum makes little sense. By expanding on its traditional role, adopting a more holistic view of heritage and pursuing a story-focused approach in its exhibitions and programming, the museum could involve the intangible more successfully and equally, rendering it a more exciting, hybrid and living institution. This does not mean that it is the responsibility of a national folklife museum to keep intangible heritage traditions alive. The museum can and has successfully adopted a role of inspiration and facilitation, but ultimately, whether or not traditions survive depends on the people and communities that make use of them.

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NOTES

1. The seven NMI-CL museum staff referred to here do not include the three museum workshop facilitators interviewed.
2. The museum received the Sandford Award for Excellence in Museum Education in both 2004 and 2009, and in 2003 the Education Department in the NMI-CL was awarded the Best Access and Outreach Initiative in the Museum of the Year Awards: National Museum of Ireland/Ard-Mhúsaem na hÉireann, Annual Reports 2003, 2004, 2009.

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Feelings Matter: How Curatorial Practice can be Informed by Insights on the Dynamics of Artists' Emotional Experiences

PIPPA LITTLE, SARAH MOORE, MIKE FITZPATRICK

Abstract: *This article uses evidence from six visual artists' own accounts of their artistic processes, in order tentatively to propose that there may be a commonality of emotional experience when it comes to producing artistic work. Through qualitative analysis we generated six categories of feelings that artists appeared to experience as they worked through the artistic cycle. This paper names and categorises the articulated feelings that appeared common to the artists. For each individual artist, we were able to identify feelings of engagement, disengagement, fear, a sense of constriction, freedom and relief. The emotional experiences associated with producing artistic work have been underexplored in the literature to date and we argue that knowledge about common feelings associated with producing artwork could be extremely useful, both for artists themselves and for curators. By recognising and naming feelings associated with different stages of the artistic process, both artists and curators might be more self-aware and facilitators or artistic mentors, including curators, might be more equipped to normalise the 'artistic struggle', to anticipate moments of motivation and to encourage persistence in the face of perceived obstacles. The implications of these findings for contemporary curatorial practice are explored.*

Keywords: Artistic process, feelings and emotions, contemporary curatorial practice, arts management, museum and gallery studies

In recognising that there are feelings, both positive and negative, characteristic of different stages of making a new artwork, we can allow for a deeper appreciation of artistic process, and help anticipate the ups and downs of artists' struggles and triumphs as they work towards an often very challenging set of goals.

Introduction

This paper examines an aspect of the artistic process that is often talked about, but rarely subjected to empirical analysis, i.e. the feelings or emotions associated with undertaking the artistic cycle. Our findings show that feelings seem to emerge as an inherent part of the process involved in making a new artwork, and were described articulately by the practicing artists in our study.

We discuss and present this previously under-investigated aspect of the artistic cycle, drawing from, documenting and categorising data collected from artists and its analysis. We argue that this aspect of the artistic cycle is important; it seems significant to artists, given how frequently they described and assessed these feelings, and it is potentially useful both to artists themselves and to the curators and arts managers who facilitate the completion and presentation of their work. For the purposes of this study, we define the curating of contemporary art as involving, but not limited to the process of working with an artist to produce and present a new artwork. Knowledge about how artists feel as they make work, and what they may be likely to feel at different stages in the artistic process could, we argue, increase an understanding of that process and the potential for developing and enhancing it.

A brief review of the literature

This study is informed by an interdisciplinary, empirical approach, drawing from the fields of curatorial practice, arts management, psychology and creativity. This offers an alternative means of approaching the data from philosophy, or art history, both often utilised in contemporary curatorial practice. An examination of the literature shows that artistic process is little examined and that the existing information remains largely unapplied to curatorial practice.

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Arts management and curatorial practice

There has been an increased call for a reflective approach to arts management practice, internationally DeVereaux (2009) and in Ireland, Cooke et al. (2013) and Benson (2013). Marincola (2006) has argued that establishing quality in relation to the curatorial role and exhibition making practice has become a subject for discussion. Selected literature in curatorial practice, for example, in Hopps (in Obrist, 1996, p.101), Tucker (2001, p.171) and Bos (2001, p.33) describe the importance of understanding artists, of interacting with them and of respecting their processes in order for curators to fulfil their roles effectively. However, the artistic process remains poorly empirically understood.

Mumford (2003, p.114) and Sternberg and Lubart (1999, p.3), recommend increasing our understanding of creativity in order to identify techniques and strategies to support its enhancement. This consideration informed our examination of the feelings associated with the artistic process and the implications and recommendations for curatorial practice based on this study are structured accordingly.

Feelings and emotions

Csikszentmihalyi offers a significant platform of investigation, which informs this study. He uniquely began his research work with a pioneering interest in the artistic process, moved into studying engagement and disengagement and has also investigated creativity. Csikszentmihalyi's (1975) main discovery was to define abstractly a state that was based on autotelic experience, experience that was intrinsically rewarding. Csikszentmihalyi named the state from some of the words of the participants, that of 'flow' (p.36). Csikszentmihalyi identified various features that encourage flow. One of the characteristics of his model is that flow is located between boredom and anxiety, 'when opportunities for action are in balance with the actor's skills' (p.49).

We also draw in this paper on understandings of feelings and emotions, as described by Dirkx (2001, 2006), who uses as a framework Jungian and post-Jungian theory, seeking self-knowledge, exploration and progression. Crucially, this approach is understood as a means of offering enhanced conscious awareness, through the recognition and understanding of experience and by elaborating on this experience and the balancing of both individual and common aspects. Many studies have suggested that emotions play an important role in creative behaviour. Emotional abilities, or an individual's capacity to notice, understand and marshal emotions (often referred to as 'emotional intelligence') have often been cited as in some way related to creativity. Emotional intelligence can mean that someone is more aware of and in touch with their emotional states, make links between those states and their performance outcomes, and use that knowledge to manage their creative performance more effectively (Palfai and Salovey, 1993; Isen, 1999).

Artistic process

A focused examination of the literature within the field of creativity research identified a number of studies of artistic process and confirmed that there is a scarcity of empirical data and analysis of the feelings associated with the artistic cycle.

Various methodological approaches to examining the artistic process have been undertaken. One of the earliest studies, undertaken by Patrick (1937), investigated creative thought during sketching and focused mainly on detailed statistical analysis. More recently, Sapp (1992) carried out a qualitative, informal study, which identified and elaborated on the 'Point of Creative

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Frustration'. Cawelti, Rappaport and Wood (1992) chose Interpretive Structural Modeling and Nominal Group Technique to develop three alternative analytical models of artistic creativity. Mace (1997) took a grounded approach and her main analysis concentrates on problem finding and problem solving.

We examined and analysed from these studies the few findings and assertions relating to the feelings associated with the artistic cycle. In many cases the available material is two to three sentences presented in the context of a larger study, with a different thematic focus.

A common theme in all of these studies is that participating in the artistic process is characterised by sometimes intensive feelings; Patrick concluded from a four-fifths statistical association with 'an emotional state' during illumination that 'an artist is often emotionally stirred up...but it is not necessary or essential that he be so' (Patrick, 1937, p.54). Sapp (1992, p.21) centralised the 'Point of Creative Frustration' as a key feature of a model, which included denial and new growth. Cawelti et al. (1992) distinguished forty-three elements, a selection of which we identified as associated with feelings of failure and engagement. For example, those related to failure included elements numbers 15 and 33, (e.g., 'risking failure and starting over' [Cawelti et al., 1992, p.86]), and those related to engagement, numbers 4, 31, and numbers 37, 39 and 39 (e.g., 'feeling shock of leaving deeply altered state of consciousness' [Cawelti et al., 1992, p.85-86]). Mace (1997, p.274) alluded briefly to some of the feelings involved with undertaking the artistic cycle and identified artists' primary interest and enthusiasm for the process of experimentation, as opposed to the completed artwork.

From this study of the literature a highly incomplete impression of tensions and polarities between engagement and frustrations became apparent. In our study, by taking a grounded approach, a number of common feelings emerged from the data. The artists' descriptions and candid assertions around some aspects of the experiences associated with undertaking the artistic cycle demonstrated an emotional articulacy, indicating high levels of self-awareness among these artists.

Research Methodology

Our research study was prompted by curiosity regarding the activities of artists as they produced new artworks for exhibition. This was informed by the lead author's experiences as a researcher situated in a contemporary art gallery, which focused on producing exhibitions of new artwork. The study was driven by the recognition that the artistic process that leads to the production of an artwork often remains unobserved and uninterrogated.

Informed by the literature we selected a qualitative exploratory approach. The lead author curated an exhibition, as a means of providing a real world context from which to gather data and analyse artists' experiences as they made a new artwork. Crucially the research process was informed by the insights associated with undertaking the normal activities necessary to ensure the success of the exhibition and its delivery to the deadline of the opening. We recognised the limits of objectivity in this context, and addressed this by ensuring in cross-case analysis that data was replicated across several studies, before findings and conclusions were drawn.

The artists' brief was to make a new artwork that reflected in some way on the permanent collection at the gallery for an exhibition, *Fresh: re-imagining the collection*, at Limerick City Gallery of Art, Ireland, in 2006. It took approximately eighteen months from the initial application for funding to the presentation of the exhibition.

The lead author devised the brief for the exhibition, supported the artists as they progressed

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their new artworks and co-ordinated the other aspects of the exhibition. She recorded and transcribed descriptions of the artists' experiences through in-depth interview.

Glaser and Strauss (1967, p.66) emphasise the importance of selecting an appropriate method of data collection based on the type of information required from the study. In-depth interviewing is a technique that centralises the experiences and knowledge of the participants, a research conversation to record information. This information is informed by both participants in the interview and is specific to a particular time, as experiences and understandings may change. Charmaz (2002, p.676) has described the aim of the in-depth interview as providing a deep and significant understanding of the participants' experiences. The in-depth interview is particularly suited for use with grounded theory analysis, which emphasises continual analysis to assist in informing interview questions throughout a research project.

The artists made their artworks for the exhibition as normal and when a convenient opportunity arose in the co-ordination process, perhaps after a meeting, an interview would take place. Interviews took between approximately twenty minutes and an hour. The interviewing process was informed by knowledge of co-ordinating the exhibition. During the interviews, descriptions of key events and processes were gathered, to find out what the artists were doing and thinking about, while preparing and making their new artwork.

The lead author used theoretical sampling, a grounded theory technique defined by Strauss and Corbin (1990, p.201), Glaser and Strauss (1967, p.45) and Charmaz (2002, p.689) as a means of focusing data collection. Theoretical sampling involves selecting groups or individuals to interview next who appear likely to provide insights into emergent themes. There were particular benefits in the methodology of the study, as while the artists were working on the same broad brief towards the same end date, they were often at different stages in the process and this allowed for comparison in accounts.

Artists Amanda Coogan, Sam Ely and Lynn Harris, Alan Magee, Linda Molenaar, Melanie O'Rourke, and Alan Phelan contributed a total of nineteen in-depth interviews during the process. Each artist contributed a minimum of two interviews of varying lengths between October 2005 and June 2006, when the exhibition opened.

All of the artists participating had a third level qualification in Fine Art or a cognate discipline. At least five of the artists had, or were undertaking a postgraduate qualification. Many were teaching as visiting lecturers in art colleges around Ireland and internationally. Most had exhibited their work in at least one solo exhibition and received bursaries or grants from the Arts Council, or from Culture Ireland, or from equivalent international funding agencies. There was a range of experience, from emergent to established practitioners, working in a variety of media including installation, performance, intervention, sculpture and print-making.

While there are plenty of biographical accounts by artists, the gathering and analysing of data collected from a number of artists during the process of working towards the same group exhibition, enabled the generation of a comparable account of common feelings associated with their artistic processes. In the studies discussed, Mace (1997) also utilised a grounded approach, but uniquely our study focuses on artists working towards the same exhibition.

Artists' emotional articulacy was revealed through the in-depth interviewing process, which recorded emotions of different kinds and levels of intensity. These in-depth interviews did not ask specifically about the artists' feelings, but about describing what was important to them, or what was happening at the time. Artists spontaneously described the feelings and emotions associated with making an artwork when asked to talk about the general processes involved.

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Following the completion of the exhibition, the data was further analysed through individual case studies, followed by detailed interpretation through cross-case analysis. From this, a fine-grained model of artistic process was initiated, one category of which captured the self-reported feelings associated with the artistic cycle. Six intense clearly articulated feelings were identified as an inherent part of the artists' experiences of working through the rewards and frustrations of the artistic cycle.

Our research study had the methodological advantage of tracking artists as they each worked towards a single project, allowing for a greater level of comparison than the previous studies discussed in the literature review. As the artists explained their activities, interests and priorities, a number of recurrent vivid descriptions of emotions and feelings emerged. By analysing the articulated feelings it was possible to identify overarching categories. This is a tentative mapping, which does not intend to be conclusive, but which offers a means to support further exploration.

Findings

The analytical part of this study involved classifying artists' expressed feelings into overarching categories. Figure 1 presents six categories of emotion identified through the analysis of artists' interview transcripts. These are: engagement, disengagement, fear, constriction, freedom and relief. These can be further extrapolated into three clusters of emotional themes: participative emotional states, liberated (positive emotional states) and tense (negative emotional states). From the analysis and interpretation of the data it seems likely that all of these feelings were a normal aspect of involvement in the artistic cycle.

Artists' accounts of their processes referred variously to intense satisfaction (usually associated with some of the aesthetic, or tactile aspects of art making), deep frustration (often related to necessary repetition, or some associated sense of tedium), a fear of loss of control or command over the work, feelings of constraint and entrapment, but also feelings of freedom and liberation. These experiences appeared so frequently and were so generally shared, that it seems important, perhaps fundamental, to define such emotions as key components of the artists' experiences as they made a new artwork, at least among the sample of artists who participated in this study.

Figure 1: Summary of the emotions

Feelings			
Participative	1	Engagement	The artists appeared to experience a totality of absorption and concentration.
	2	Disengagement as indifference	Disengagement could be experienced as indifference, or an inability to respond.
Tense	3	Fear	The artist could be afraid the final artwork was going to be dreadful, afraid of an unknown disaster, afraid that no clarity would emerge from the cycle; that they would remain in the same point trapped forever, afraid that this time they would be unable to finish the artwork and that they would fail.
	4	Constriction	Some of the artists described time as a yawning eternity, in which they were threatened, frustrated and deprived.
Liberated	5	Freedom	Some of the artists described rare, vivid experiences of freedom.
	6	Relief	The artists were relieved once the artwork was installed in the gallery. There was a sense of release.

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Participative: feelings of engagement and disengagement

Engagement

All the artists in the study talked about an intense interest and absorption in their work at various times during the process. While the source of the draw towards immersion may have been different in each case and at various times (for Coogan and Harris, it was articulated as an intense awareness of shape and colour, for O'Rourke, it was described as a profound appreciation of particular materials), there appeared to be a common sensitisation to the fundamental elements of their art, a fascination and curiosity, which supported a self-sustaining engagement.

Aesthetic appreciation and materials

The artists often displayed an intense appreciation of elements of their practices, sometimes in the visual appearance of resources, at other times in the use of specialist materials. A strong sense of satisfaction with colour and composition is demonstrated as Coogan explains her appreciation of the visual diversity from the filmed footage that she used:

You know there's lots of glorious variations in body shapes in the piece [...] the sensuality of people's hair flinging around, that [...] gorgeous celebration of legs kicking in the air [...] (7 June 2006).

And Harris admires the posters, which originated from a diversity of designers and cultures: 'Really interesting aesthetic to work with' (10 April 2006). O'Rourke expresses a fascination with the tactile surface of the canvas that she would oil paint onto: 'I've just gone straight back to canvas first, because I miss canvas [...] I'm really enjoying the canvas' (4 March 2006).

Narratives

Some of the artists located narratives, which they incorporated into the development of their artworks. Molenaar often uses cultural references, in this case focusing on those which featured swans, (The Children of Lir and Hans Christen Anderson), and she explains: 'But my original [...] inspiration comes from the legends and [...] from myths and stories [...] I love to combine those' (15 February 2006).

Phelan was fascinated by the information he researched about the portrait bust:

There is a great book about busts in NCAD: "Libraries are amongst the most important setting for busts in the 18c." [...] "A canon of worthiness repeated from library to library." (11 May 2006).

The artists appeared hyper-aware, or sensitised to the fundamental elements of their art as particular triggers for their engagement. It was as if they were poised in a position that generated their responsiveness to further, continued engagement, that engagement became self-sustaining. During the case studies they often intuitively seemed to select a path of immersion and exploration, which fed their progress.

Disengagement

Both negative and positive disengagement featured in the data. Each of the artists experienced at least some feelings of disengagement. Negative disengagement was experienced as indifference, a type of blinker, or an inability to see, a set of experiences that resulted temporarily in a loss of responsiveness either in relation to the artwork, or to selecting an additional source to feed into the artwork.

It was noteworthy that disengagement was triggered by the circumstances and the context.

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Sometimes, engagement could rapidly switch to disengagement. There might be a particular trigger, when an activity that was previously enjoyed, suddenly, under slightly different circumstances became unsatisfying, or exasperating. Repetition of an activity, theme or approach was an underlying feature that appeared to instigate disengagement.

These examples were related to undertaking an activity that eventually became repetitive and potentially boring and seemed to be associated with indifference. In a particularly illustrative example, Harris describes her inability to recall the hundreds of posters that she had turned over the pages in order to film. Over an intensive weekend she processed thirteen drawers of posters and she explains that she could no longer remember them: 'I have amnesia I realise. [...] I don't remember that one, or that one, or that one' (10 April 2006).

Molenaar explicitly describes her choice of materials as a means of maintaining her engagement, as she makes objects that involve labour intensive, repetitive activities: 'I need to have respect for the material otherwise I will not have the patience' (15 February 2006).

The subtle factors that could influence an artist's move from immersion to indifference are illustrated by Phelan's comment describing his satisfaction on making multiple pine twig branches: 'very therapeutic, very fast to make' (20 January 2006), in contrast to his frustration at constructing five busts from papier-mâché: 'too much work, too much time' (2 June 2006).

In an ambiguous moment, in which both the celebration of progression and the realisation that this line of exploration is nearing a close, O'Rourke describes the beginnings of her need to undertake something fresh: 'I've spent two and a half years developing my practice to a stage [...] where it really can't go any further in my view' (14 October 2005).

The impression of bubbling enthusiasm and delight, which is demonstrated by the artists in the previous section on engagement, is in marked contrast to the frustration and boredom associated with feelings of disengagement. In the case of each of the artists we studied, it seems that making an artwork involves grappling with both.

Tense: feelings of fear and constriction

Tense emotional states, feelings of fear and constriction were also associated with undertaking the artistic cycle. To participate in the artistic cycle it seemed necessary to tolerate these feelings at some level, as high aspirations drove the artists. There were memorable examples of fear and constriction in the data. These feelings could be unpleasant to experience, particularly feelings of constriction.

Feelings of fear

All of the artists made comments that implied that they experienced feelings of fear. Fear could be inspired by many different factors, depending on the artist and the artwork that they were trying to make. The artist could be afraid of failure (that the final artwork was going to be dreadful), afraid of an unknown disaster (that some unanticipated crisis or event would prevent them from completing), afraid that no clarity would emerge from the cycle (and that they would dwell in ambiguous territory unable to proceed with or finish their work); that they would remain in the same point trapped for ever.

One common fear seemed associated with a loss of control and chaos and consequently being unable to complete the artwork in a manner that preserved its integrity. To demonstrate, Coogan explains her concerns relating to the outcome of the performance and also her solution:

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What I was worried about is that it would become a very badly acted documentary and that is why I have bounced completely the other side, and [...] we are going aerobics... (19 April 2006).

Harris describes how some ideas never achieve a result, or even a level of consolidation: 'we can just talk about some stuff for ever and never pin it down' (10 April 2006). And Magee conveys a sense of dread at annihilation through display: 'if you don't put the right thing in there [...] it will destroy your work' (11 May 2006).

The overall impression was of anxieties related to being unable to impose an order, of unpredictability emerging and of failing to complete the artwork.

Much of the fear was moderately low-level minor fretting concerning deadlines and the meeting of high standards, and spurred the artists to anticipate and solve problems. The artists tended to appear concerned with order and control, while on other occasions displaying awareness that this could be counter-productive. In some cases, artists selected their own artistic constraints by defining the scope of their work, for example, Coogan decided to progress with group performance.

Feelings of constriction

From the analysis of the data, the artists displayed occasional strong feelings of constriction. This was associated with a particular use of language and a description of time as yawning eternal purgatory, in which the artists were threatened, frustrated and deprived. The artists often described feelings of constriction in terms of an almost tangible physical pressure, or a sense of psychological heaviness.

Indifference was one of the factors that could eventually lead to feelings of constriction. The artists seemed to dread constriction and their descriptions often provide a sense of a perpetual, tedious cycle of repetition in which no progress is made.

Coogan describes not only a loss of progression, but also her awareness of this, that when filming she realises the necessity of being organised to capture the required footage early on: 'I have a very bad habit of going back and back and back, especially when [...] it is just me' (7 June 2006).

Ely and Harris express dismay at the potential repetition of undertaking the same thing as an approach to making a new artwork: 'Just do what we did before, again and again and again' (Harris) (10 April 2006).

O'Rourke's comment here relates to her reassessment of a technique, which she was confident in, but where her proficiency seems to have blurred into potential negativity: 'I really needed to shake up the languages I was using in my work. Painting, on its own, I'd done it for so long [...]' (13 June 2006). Phelan describes a feeling of having exhausted a theme of his biographical work: 'not to make my life's work about it, because I want to get onto more general topics in a way' (20 January 2006).

It was noteworthy that experience, or an over-engagement with a particular topic, or medium, or way of working, that had previously been positive, could become negative and worn out. An unchecked desire for perfection could endanger the entire process, or prevent completion of a particular artwork, or result in increasingly unproductive tinkering with minor changes. The artists sometimes seemed to balance precariously between proficiency and sureness, and depletion and over-use.

Coogan gives the impression of physical pressure, psychological heaviness and restriction, as she describes her previous experiences of organising filming and her eventual relief on the

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identification that it is normal practice to have a structure of assistance on set: 'That sometimes you feel an onus that you must be able to do everything and you must be able to take everything on your shoulders while you are running a shoot [...]' (7 June 2006).

O'Rourke explains a deliberate strategy to collect newspapers from local Irish newspapers weekly in London, to increase the quantity and variety of images that she used: 'what I am doing is loosening myself up [...] as my paintings have been so tight and so very designed and very meticulous' (4 March 2006).

Liberation: feelings of freedom and relief

Feelings of freedom

An extended quantity of time invested in making an artwork seemed to be associated occasionally with feelings of freedom. Freedom was intensely positive, but infrequent and brief. Feelings of freedom were striking as the lead author collected and analysed the data, probably due to the artists' memorable descriptions of these. The selected examples suggest freedom and are often articulated by the artists using metaphors of momentum.

On occasion the artists displayed a focused concentration followed by a release. Coogan describes how practice from rehearsals and then several filmed takes supports increased confidence in the participant performers, as their recall of the individual moves deepens and develops, until: 'then they can let go of the choreography. So it was [...] trying to get them to [...] just go through the moves without worrying about it [...] just let it go and go with the flow' (7 June 2006).

Molenaar explains the balance between the story and the materials was different in working on *They will become flax...*, that as she centralises the painting as a way of advancing: 'I followed the feeling and let go of certain concepts, which was the most exciting part for me' (15 June 2006). O'Rourke indicates a dualism between the freedom of the poster format and the restrictions of working on canvas: 'it's a really exciting thing [...] the poster, it frees you a little bit from the confines of the frame of a canvas, [...] you know the preciousness of painting is [...] left by the side' (13 June 2006).

Consequently, feelings of freedom and relief can be clustered into the overarching category that we define as 'liberation'. These feelings seemed to take place in brief moments of reflection and self-awareness, at a distance from the cycle.

The above data seems to indicate a pattern of a discipline of undertaking work, followed by an intuitive increase in understanding and the identification of areas for progress, potentially in unexpected directions.

Some of the language that the artists used gave a physical impression of movement and space; floating, flying, landing, jumping, soaring through air or water. There seemed to be a commonly experienced wide-open sense of possibility and potential and the identification of a moment of significance, which had triggered this understanding of progress. To demonstrate, Coogan explains that the studio research she had previously undertaken, the opportunity of the commission and the resolution to challenge herself, prompted her decision to undertake a large-scale project: 'the liberty and safety I felt in this commission [...] that I felt that I could take a leap and not play safe' (7 June 2006).

Magee describes how, since receiving the invitation to participate in the exhibition, he has been excited about the many potential possibilities: 'my imagination has been flying' (22

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March 2006). And Molenaar talks about a rich set of options to explore, associated with swans and the format of the final artwork: 'that is for the future to find out where I land' (15 February 2006).

While Coogan describes retrospectively her feelings at the beginning of the project, Magee and Molenaar are speaking at this early point. There is a common sense of suspense, involving the rich unknowns and the freedom associated with the evolving artwork. This is perhaps based on their understandings of the opportunities and confidence in their own capabilities, that their efforts will be rewarded. The patterns involved in both sets of data, indicates cycles of intense engagement and feelings of freedom.

Feelings of relief

Feelings of relief seemed to be associated with an element of retreat or distance from the work, and can be interpreted as a type of positive disengagement. Based on the examination of the data, we have focused on feelings of relief that the artists appeared to experience once the artwork was finished and installed in the gallery. Relief was connected to the sense of having succeeded, and to freedom from the intense engagement required when immersed in making the artwork.

The artists had completed a period of intense work and had successfully finished, or almost finished the artworks. It seemed likely that the usually positive assessment accompanied by feelings of relief, contributed to the identification of areas for exploration and progression, reflection and re-evaluation for the next artwork.

In contrast to other studies, a number of interviews were recorded shortly before the artists finished, and in some cases, after the exhibition opened. There was a difference between the sense of striving for excellence in the earlier interviews and associated anxieties and these positive assessments. It's clear that many of the artists see qualities in their work at this point, which they do not seem to have noticed, or recognised while they were working on it.

Coogan assesses one of the vignettes that composed the film and partly attributes its success to the performers involved: 'The skirt girls [...] were very experienced performers, [...] there is a lovely intensity [...] and straightforward connection with the camera' (7 June 2006).

Harris' comment the day after the exhibition opening demonstrates a positive assessment of the artwork, that the filmed element was successful: 'It is just beautiful' (16 June 2006).

Magee, as he installs, talks about the concrete cubes and his overall satisfaction with the installation: 'but it's working quite nicely, the chaotic swirls where the two mediums in the concrete separate or gel together, which matches the floor [...] I'm quite happy with it now' (10 June 2006).

Molenaar describes her contentment with the result of displaying some of the sweaters on the wall: 'I'm happy now there's some on the wall, but maybe in West Cork it will be too much' (15 June 2006). The exhibition was to travel and this seems to reawaken a sense of monitoring and correcting.

The artists' self-assessments of their artworks and the associated relief demonstrate a tension between balancing the positive and negative, to perhaps enable moving onto the next artwork. The casual assessments may form a component of a protective measure to avoid discouragement.

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Discussion

The data and analysis from this fine-grained detailed study named and categorised various feelings associated with undertaking the artistic cycle. The artists describe in detail a rich variety of emotion, and they display emotional articulacy and awareness. This investigation suggested that experiencing the feelings of engagement, disengagement, fear, constraint, freedom and relief is a normal feature associated with the artistic process. The artists capably navigate through the challenges and tensions of the three clusters of emotional types, 'participative', 'tense' and 'liberated' and achieve the goal of completing a new artwork and progression to the next artwork.

This study took a grounded approach to explore an area that is little investigated. Using qualitative research methodologies, it documented and revealed feelings associated with making a new artwork, as described by artists. Based on empirical data and analysis, the research demonstrates an understanding that is not based on romantic or professional stereotypes of the artist. This has implications for curators of contemporary visual art, offering increased understandings from which to enhance their work.

Current research assessing and documenting feelings associated with the artistic cycle is sparse. By explicitly identifying feelings as a subject for examination and analysis, and by demonstrating the participative feelings of engagement and disengagement, the tense feelings of fear and constriction, the excitement of the experimental stage and the liberated feelings of freedom and relief our study supports and adds to the present rare evidence in relation to current understandings of the feelings and emotions involved in the artistic process.

Our study does reverberate with other work: the emotions the artists display relate to the possibility of actively managing Csikszentmihalyi's (1975) 'flow', between boredom and anxiety. Patrick's identification of an 'emotional state' (Patrick, 1937, p.54), is broadly consistent with our study, in which the artists experience feelings of engagement and also, sometimes, disengagement as indifference. Sapp's (1992) states of denial and new growth, that are presumably respectively unpleasant and pleasant to experience, chimes with the positive and negative states we identified. Mace (1997, p.274) recognises the tensions between an enjoyment with experimentation and the disengagement involved with completion.

Our study explores some of the emotional nuances of the artistic cycle that elaborates on and develops the findings of previous writers in this field. We do not draw any generalisations on the creative process beyond the sample studied, but note that there are patterns of experience in this data, that reflect literature on the creative process across a range of domains.

Implications for arts management and curatorial practice

Several eminent curators have identified the requirement for an artist-focused ethos, in order for curators to fulfil their roles effectively. There is a shortfall in empirical information and understandings as to how artists work. Consequently, there is considerable potential for improving and enhancing curatorial and arts management practice by reflecting on empirical information and responding to it. This suggests the scope for the examination of possible approaches and techniques, which anticipate the feelings associated with the artistic process and which may increase the effectiveness of curators and arts managers in supporting artists.

There are potential benefits for curators derived from the insights presented in this study. This involves taking an artist-focused approach that is cognisant of context and encompasses reflection, rather than a prescriptive list of actions. Fostering good communications provides an enhanced understanding of the artist's particular experiences involved in making the artwork

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and provides the information to offer timely support.

Understanding that the artistic cycle involves particular dynamics of feelings, of engagement and disengagement suggests a versatile approach that includes discussing the challenges and the conflicts. Appreciating the normality of disengagement, of fatigue and perhaps a sense of occasional depletion and undertaking dialogue to identify techniques to address this may be appropriate. There are logistical factors that can be practically tackled through the allocation of resources; additional technical support and buying specific items.

Maintaining an awareness of engagement and encouraging artists to identify and embrace new challenges, to consciously pursue areas of focus and select new themes seems to generate an interest and a curiosity that sustains the entire process, both for each artwork and over the course of several cycles.

The impression gained from this research and from the literature is of a complex, multi-faceted practice in which many possible responses may be appropriate and many different potential roles are available. This suggests the possibility of an extended repertoire of professional identity for curators and arts managers. The individual practitioner may develop this according to experience, requirements and environment. We recognise that some of the ways in which curatorial roles may be extended, or changed as a result of the insights from this study may not be acceptable to all types of curators, or applicable to all circumstances.

For the curator adopting an artist-focused approach, this framework of feelings offers some possibilities for increasing awareness and understandings, and on occasion the potential means of navigating some of the challenges involved. In recognising that there are feelings, both positive and negative, characteristic of different stages of making a new artwork, we can allow for a deeper appreciation of artistic process, and help anticipate the ups and downs of artists' struggles and triumphs as they work towards an often very challenging set of goals. The responsibility for achieving the exhibition rests with the curator and supporting the production of new artwork may become a component of this aim. Sometimes there are tensions and ensuring completion becomes the main goal.

The identification of these feelings of disengagement, fear and constriction, normalises the context for the inevitable frustrations, dilemmas and tensions on both sides. Within this context therefore, this research can offer insight and a perspective of increased understanding to assess these feelings, and perhaps, to sometimes offer reassurance.

The artists displayed competence relating to emotional articulacy, an awareness of their feelings and emotions, an understanding of their experiences, and confidence in their validity. There seemed to be occasions when this consciousness was harnessed by the artists, as the feelings could be an indicator that progress was satisfactory and making an artwork was on schedule, or indeed that things had gone awry and that ameliorating action was required. That these were all experienced artists, is not an insignificant fact. Their emotional experiences, analysed in this way, can also provide useful emotional signposts for curators working with less experienced artists, providing a helpful framework for dialogue. Curatorial commitment to supporting the artistic cycle requires a number of approaches, which could include paying attention to emotional information: observing, listening, understanding and conversation.

Whether curators perceive that attending to the emotional aspect of artists' work is part of their job, may be a matter for debate, and may depend on the way in which curators have appropriated their own work-related identities. We argue that accommodating, recognising, understanding and being able to engage in dialogue about the emotional aspects of artistic work could substantially enhance curatorial impact and effectiveness. For some, this may

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already form a central part of how they work with artists, but for others this may also require a reconceptualisation of what it is that curators do, how they work and the kinds of dialogue they are prepared to engage in when it comes to facilitating the artists whose work they help to interpret and display.

Conclusions and directions for further research

Feelings are a source of increased awareness in all manner of contexts, possibly particularly during the artistic process. There could be a much stronger role for emotion-related dialogue between the curator and the artist as a means of enhancing artistic process. Routinely acknowledging the emotional dimensions of artistic work, and understanding artistic concerns on a broader level could substantially enhance curators' capacities to work with artists and to be facilitators of their creativity.

For a curator, managing pressures on resources and often attempting to balance conflicting priorities, combined with an understanding of the artistic process and recognition of the feelings associated with it, this therefore offers a framework with which to explore appropriate effective support.

With this examination of the feelings comes an understanding that some aspects of these emotions may also be general features associated with the process, rather than related purely to any challenges that may have emerged. Knowing this offers the possibility of avoiding becoming unnecessarily sensitive, or anxious alongside an artist, or defensive in the face of a possible obstacle.

In conclusion, feelings are an important aspect of the artistic process. This study has offered a tentative structure for the development of a lexicon of the emotions, which are relevant to the artistic cycle. The emotional categories presented here offer a possible framework for further research. Such research could focus on testing whether the categories identified in this small-scale study are generalisable, and if so, to what extent. More complex and precise typologies might be uncovered and remain to be explored, but the empirical establishment of the emotional dynamics and contingencies of artistic processes could offer a useful tool both for artists and curators.

An in-depth understanding of the artistic cycle offers curators the potential to enhance the professional context of working with artists to support the production of new artworks. Certainly, the intuitive insights and knowledge from practice suggest the potential for a greater understanding through dialogue. The emotions and feelings associated with the artistic cycle offer an enhanced analysis and understanding of participating in that cycle and an insight into some of the motivations involved. It seems likely that the emotional articulacy demonstrated by the artists in this study supported their artistic process and that facilitating that self-reflexivity through dialogue in a coaching role may support aspects of this practice.

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From a UK perspective, the modern European cultural paradigm can appear sophisticated, cosmopolitan and thoroughly mature. From a Northern Irish perspective, however, it is futuristic, otherworldly and positively utopian.

REVIEW:

Sustaining Cultural Development: Unified Systems and New Governance in Cultural Life (Biljana Mickov and James Doyle, eds.: Ashgate, 2013)

STEVEN HADLEY

In *Sustaining Cultural Development*, Biljana Mickov and James Doyle argue that substantial investment in both research and strategic planning is required if programmes to promote greater participation in cultural life are to be effective. Mickov is a cultural manager, researcher and consultant working in Serbia, and Doyle is a cultural manager and practising artist based in Dublin. Both editors thus bring different European perspectives and practitioner backgrounds to bear in assembling a collection of case studies from contributors throughout Europe to evidence their claim that ‘arts and cultural management is increasingly becoming associated with facilitating the mobility and development of society and of urbanisation at a global level’ (p.233).

Given the plethora of arts management courses in universities across the UK and the island of Ireland, one might suggest that the initial premise of this work – namely that research and planning are key to strategic management – is self-evident. However, what this collection of case studies and reports argues is that the combination of cultural concepts relating to ‘identity’, ‘diversity’ and ‘creativity’, with an increase in the cultural participation of citizens, will effectively promote democracy. Enveloped within this idea is a desire to shake up the traditional hierarchies of arts governance, and move to a more horizontal, less top-down bureaucratic structure and networked approach. Democratising the structures of cultural management leads, in this scenario, to a democratisation of cultural participation.

The book’s publication comes at an interesting point in the narrative of civic cultural development, as Derry/Londonderry’s year as UK City of Culture 2013 came to a close amidst the clamour and success of bought-in cultural brands (Turner/Tate, Lumière/Artichoke), and Limerick’s first months as Irish City of Culture 2014 were marked by widely reported funding and management crises. Studies within the book range across Europe’s cities – Barcelona, Luxembourg, Bologna, Cork, Helsinki, Ljubljana, and Eindhoven – names readily associated with cultural accolades and titles. As the editors note, such studies “have been used as sources of research in the field of development of cultural policies in both regional areas and cities” (p.1). The lack of a UK perspective may strike some readers as odd, given the book’s theme: ‘Liverpool’, for example, does not warrant inclusion in the index, though perhaps enough has been written on this topic and city already.

The introduction to this work sets out a confused and confusing manifesto – part call to arms, part retrenchment, part explication and part definition. Such are the vagaries of a broad cultural and editorial approach. This nonetheless is an ambitious book, seeking to articulate a Europe-wide perspective and to gather lived experience and academic analysis into a coherent whole. Many cultural managers from the UK, myself included, can initially struggle to find themselves within the EU paradigm. This is a place where cultural exchange, knowledge

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sharing and inter-cultural dialogue seem to be assumed elements of everyday life, and where unity is a lived philosophical and geographical reality. From a UK perspective, the modern European cultural paradigm can appear sophisticated, cosmopolitan and thoroughly mature. From a Northern Irish perspective, however, it is futuristic, otherworldly and positively utopian.

It is difficult not to conclude that the avowedly EU-wide focus of the book has permitted an assumption of contemporaneity of intellectual ideas across regions that simply may not resonate with readers from all areas. Equally, the phrasing of the introduction soon takes on the gloss of Euro-speak, familiar to anyone who has wrestled with the linguistic jargon (and collaborative demands) of an EU funding application, with terms like 'transversal', 'platform', 'network', 'interchange' and 'laboratory' – and similar metaphors of connectivity – all appearing in the first few pages.

In the context of a section on 'The Facebook Generation', for example, an air of digital utopianism pervades, with the current socio-economic and cultural situation being compared to May 1968. Most arts marketers and cultural managers will be fully aware of the recent decline in Facebook use amongst the key teen demographic, and the subsequent migration to messaging apps which presages another shift in social media consumption, and may find such prose anachronistic. The assertion is further made that 'We live in the age of creativity' (sic). Consider the following:

Economic chaos and climate change sometimes cause natural disasters. The new generation is fresh and free of preoccupied behaviour. They can judge and formulate their own thoughts about their parents' generation. Somehow they are our teachers now... a 2.0 society has been born. (p.231)

These themes of disavowal and renewal permeate much of the text, with seemingly little regard being paid to the vast cultural infrastructure and heritage of Europe. As the introduction notes:

There is no doubt but that the creation of a new and functioning system of cultural development should begin immediately [...] (p.6)

and

Permanent innovation is crucial and the use of new technologies can facilitate the availability of culture to all citizens. (p.6)

Such conceptualisations suggests a break or rupture with the past, as if that which is culturally current is past, and if something is worthy of 'development' it must first be 'new'. The imperative of 'permanent innovation' claimed by the editors brings to mind Lyotard's critique of the postmodern, where

In an amazing acceleration, the generations precipitate themselves. A work can become modern only if it is first postmodern. Postmodernism thus understood is not modernism at its end but in the nascent state, and this state is constant. (Lyotard, 1984, p.79)

The unwritten assumption of the editorial introduction appears to be that, at a time of seemingly unprecedented change at a number of macro levels – across technology, climate, demographics, mobility, economics – we must dismantle and begin anew. Perhaps this is correct, but such a theoretical position would require a sustained and developmental argument, and is ill-served by a collection of reports and essays which were not commissioned for such a purpose. Part of the challenge with the way the book is structured, both in terms of its conception and physical layout, is that different regions of the EU benefit from different levels of resource, expertise and professional development/practice. To this end, a chapter is devoted to informing the reader that 'successful engagement with visitors, audiences or participants is essential to the success of our work in the cultural sector' (p.151) – a point that seems rather remedial from the perspective of most developed cultural regions.

Review: *Sustaining Cultural Development: Unified Systems and New Governance in Cultural Life* (Biljana Mickov and James Doyle: Ashgate, 2013)

Steven Hadley

John Holden's work on cultural value opens this collection and will already be familiar to anyone who has been engaged in this particular policy debate over the past ten years. His 'value triangle' of intrinsic, instrumental and institutional value has, it seems fair to say, been the dominant mode of conceptual transport for the bulk of the UK arts sector's discussion. Setting Holden's argument and methodology at the outset somewhat erroneously implies to the reader that subsequent chapters will proceed, either chronologically and/or conceptually, from this starting point – yet some way into the work the reader is asked,

In such difficult economic times, there is a strong impulse to engage with the language of funders and to limit culture to economic value. But what will it mean if we start to define culture in terms of economic value alone? (p.114)

This is not to say that there is not value in tracing differing trajectories of philosophical and policy development across a range of countries, but a framework to assist the reader in situating the case studies developmentally would help.

Like Holden's work, several of these case studies have been previously published elsewhere, though that is not to say that there is no value in a project which seeks to bring them together under one cover and to offer a unifying theme. 'Agenda 21 for Culture', arising out of Barcelona City Council's Department for Culture provides an interesting example of a political drive to recapture the Catalan cultural identity, suppressed for forty years under Franco, whilst simultaneously developing a promotable cultural identity for the city and advocating the cultural rights of citizens. The chapters on Barcelona seem, in effect, to be Holden's value triangle in action, and it would have been interesting to see a piece written in that vein.

What afflicts some of these studies is that they often read like poorly evidenced final project submissions to public funding bodies (chapter 7), manifestos (chapters 6 and 9), straight narratives (chapter 8) or a combination of all of the above (chapter 22). As such, they tend to be light on empirical evidence, overly conceptualised, and offer the reader little opportunity to make an objective assessment as to their success or, more importantly given the theme of knowledge transfer, their potential applicability in other regions/countries. Moreover, there is an awful lot of 'should' but not very much 'how'.

What becomes apparent (and may be of particular interest to students of cultural policy) is that many of these studies focus on former Capitals of Culture. Their accounts often rest on a teleological narrative of strategy and policy-led initiatives, where the development of documents, strategies and cultural policy led to natural and desired outputs and accolades, and ultimately the Capital of Culture designation. However, the history of two most recent such events in the UK – Liverpool's year as Capital of Culture in 2008, and Derry's year as UK City of Culture in 2013 – suggests a more complex set of contextual factors. In the case of Liverpool and Derry, the recent socio-economic history of the two cities played a significant, if not deciding, role in their selection as Cities of Culture. From the Toxteth Riots in Liverpool in 1981, to the findings of the Bloody Sunday Inquiry in Derry in 2010, and the brutalisation of communities in both cities via the machinations of central government rule – the wider political context of cultural award designations should not be overlooked. In this sense, cities 'deserve' a cultural accolade not simply as a reward for having developed a citizen-focused, community-engaged, diversity-embracing cultural offering, but precisely because their deprivations in other social areas mean that they lack such a thing and 'deserve' to have it put in place. In this regard, a curious note is sounded in the chapter on Bologna, a paragraph of which it is worth quoting in full:

The fact that renowned world orchestras frequently perform in Bologna determines the position and reputation of the city as one that is rich and educated. However, it is the quality of its orchestras, the unique repertoire and the connections that it has with drama and contemporary composition that determine whether

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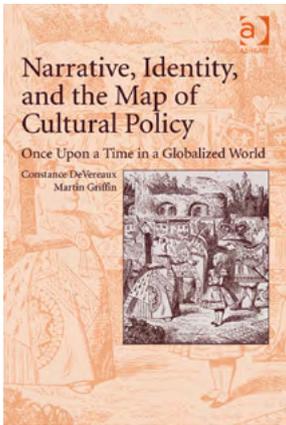
Steven Hadley

Bologna is part of an even narrower circle: the one that arouses the interest of educated people. (p.88)

It is difficult to reconcile such an ideological position with the progressive themes and arguments of the rest of the work. For example, we are told at the close of the book: 'World views and value systems can be created through art and culture, thereby assisting the overall development of the human race' (p.234).

The over-riding impression of this work is a kind of muddled utopianism, which begins with basic tenets of policy management – well thought-out strategies, clear objectives, solid research, planned implementation, ongoing evaluation – and combines them with a loose rhetoric of globalisation, multiculturalism and diversity, adds a dash of tech-evangelism, and is sprinkled liberally with demands for 'innovation'. We are told, for example, that 'It is SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-based) to think in different ways, outside the box, within your own generation' (p.226). This most famous of management school mnemonic acronyms is, in essence, a tool for simplicity and transparency in the articulation and implementation of organisational objectives. The attempt to transpose its meaning is misguided. The purpose of arts management should surely not be the mangling of management theory with the rhetoric of innovation, but rather the liberation of creativity from bureaucracy.

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Narrative analysis of cultural policy offers definite potential in understanding the values policies transmit to audiences, as well as the choices made by the narrator of such policies as he / she unfolds the story for that audience (or indeed multiple audiences).

REVIEW:

Narrative, Identity, and the Map of Cultural Policy: Once Upon a Time in a Globalised World (Constance DeVereaux and Martin Griffin: Ashgate, 2013)

PARAIC MC QU Aid

Narrative, Identity, and the Map of Cultural Policy: Once Upon a Time in a Globalised World (Ashgate, 2013) is written by Constance DeVereaux of Colorado State University and Martin Griffin of University of Tennessee. In the book the authors propose a new academic approach to cultural policy, which they suggest has the potential to offer new ways of thinking and understanding the subject. The main focus of this new research approach is an exploration of narrative as a conceptualisation within cultural policy discourse. The authors view cultural policy as sitting within a framework of different narratives that are, at best, difficult to navigate.

Traditionally, much cultural policy discourse has emanated from within a framework of government policy and has often had a predisposition towards a positivist evidence-based thinking. To the same extent the cultural studies approach to cultural policy texts has been dominated by a critical analytic approach that has rarely resulted in constructive policy formation. Within this frame, this book offers some new hope for the use of a particular cultural studies approach that may constructively inform concrete policy outcomes.

The book is a collaborative project between two authors from different disciplines, one from philosophy, political economy/arts management and cultural policy studies, the other from historical and literary studies. This trans-disciplinary approach has definite potential to offer new insights into a problematic field that has struggled to deal at an integrated policy level with issues of cultural rights and expressions of culture outside of core areas of arts activities. Policy research requires such new and novel approaches to researching policy text in order to add fresh options for policy discourse. As the authors rightly suggest in the preface, the reader is required to have openness to this transdisciplinary approach to policy research. This transdisciplinary 'journey' is one that jumps from one academic field such as cultural studies, to another such as anthropology or sociology, without apology. This demands a lot of the reader and may frustrate some. However, it is through this transdisciplinary approach that the authors believe new ways of thinking about cultural policy will emerge. Those readers who manage to keep pace with the shape-shifting approach adopted in this book will be rewarded with refreshing new ways of looking at and thinking about cultural policy.

Narrative analysis of cultural policy offers definite potential in understanding the values policies transmit to audiences, as well as the choices made by the narrator of such policies as he / she unfolds the story for that audience (or indeed multiple audiences). While reading this book, a text with which most Irish policy readers will be familiar – Brian P. Kennedy's *Dreams and Responsibilities* (Dublin: Arts Council of Ireland, 1990) – was brought to mind. Within Kennedy's book, the narrative is used both to explain the motivations behind certain historical policy decisions with very clear 'good guys' and 'bad guys', while simultaneously used to interlink eras into a clear linear narrative.

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As DeVereaux and Griffin suggest, we (as readers of narrative) look for causal structures and expect to find them whether or not causal linkages between events actually exist (p.93). Here we see that an understanding of narrative is important to the writing of policy and its interpretation. Narrative can be used by policy makers to join disparate policies into suggested causal relationships through structural placement. We have seen this approach used in recent years in Irish cultural policy where causal linkages have been suggested between the policy goals of tourism and the arts. These narrative structures suggest numerous implicit causal linkages and there is potential for the study of cultural policy through narrative as formal system, narrative as ideological instrument, and narrative as rhetoric (p.91). This narrative approach progresses out of discourse analysis and narrative analysis that fit within the discipline of cultural studies. It is a very useful analytical tool in critical analysis, but this approach would appear to offer more potential in the interpretation of policies as narratives that unfold historically, rather than to interpretation of present policies. There are many individual highlights in the book, for example, the wide variety of case studies from post World War II Berlin (p.54-59), to the foundation of the National Endowment for the Arts in the United States (p.59-72), to the rights related to UNESCO monuments in Afghanistan (p.72-78), to the Culture Wars in the US (p.88-89), and these are sure to intrigue and engage the reader.

One of the book's main assertions is that narratives of various kinds determine culture, and that stories are building blocks of our identity as individuals or as groups. The authors are particularly concerned with the stories formulated around a discourse on national boundaries and identities, alongside developing processes that open up such boundaries. They focus on the narrative effects of the terms 'globalisation' and 'transnationalism', particularly the impact of the varying and often conflicting narratives surrounding these terms on cultural policy (p.13-36). The authors focus mainly on the negative implications of these terms, interpreting the narrative of globalisation as a 'network of hostile and exploitative forces covering the globe with nothing to hinder its movement' (p.24). The ideals of globalisation – such as exchange of ideas, increased participation in cultural activities, and increased mobility – are presented by the authors as largely unachievable. Yet many cultural policies are conceived within this ideal view of 'globalisation' and 'transnationalism'. For example the EU 'Creative Europe' fund for the cultural sector and creative industries places very strong emphasis on transnational cooperation and exchange. From one perspective, the narrative approach offers opportunity for greater understanding of the narrative frame within which the policy is constructed. The authors present 'globalisation' as the more malleable term above 'transnationalism', which they view as a more fixed term in contemporary interpretations. However, they see the use of both as being within an inconclusive narrative that offers opportunity for future reinvention of interpretation.

The arguments presented in chapters one and two around 'globalisation' and 'transnationalism' offer strong justification for the narrative approach to the study of cultural policy. Through this study of the multiple narratives behind policy discourse we may arrive at a better level of critical analysis of policy. This could be especially useful in informing cultural diversity policy and national cultural identity policy through a better understanding of the complex narratives surrounding such policies.

The tricky problem of subjectivity related to 'narrative analysis' as a tool is not fully resolved by the authors within this book. Their approach relies on subjective judgments by the researcher in order to find the causal linkages between texts. The failings of narrative approaches lie in the ever-present temptation to fill gaps in knowledge with linear narrative structural logic. Narrative has the ability to brush over important issues by creating logical order in the flow of the story. Also, the strong emotive force of narrative could be seen as the natural antithesis of

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rational empirical evidence gathering.

There will be obvious concerns about allowing the full powers of this level of subjectivity to diffuse the empirical approaches often used in framing policy discourse. The authors do attempt to deal with this problem by referencing existing experts with accepted academic approaches in the area of structural analysis such as Frank Fisher (p.37), Vladimir Propp (p.43), Elizabeth Shanahan, M.K. McBeth, and Michael Jones (p.96). It is clear, however, that further work is needed to elevate the value of narrative analysis as a tool for policy analysis. Throughout the book, the authors often drift away from strict cultural policy analysis into their obvious love of fictional narrative such as Alice in Wonderland (p.99-103) and the fictional Duchy of Grand Fenwick (p.86-9, p.162-4). Here the usefulness of the examples became tenuous, however endearing. The use of such wide-ranging case studies in narrative from fictional to varying cultural policy examples is possibly too wide in scope to arrive at constructive findings. For much of the book, the authors are more focused towards an exploration of uses of 'narrative' than on the potentially constructive outcomes of the approach on 'policy'. There is a dense use of vocabulary from a wide range of academic disciplines within the first two chapters, which is, at times, a barrier to the main structured argument of the book. This dense vocabulary eventually gives way to a shift towards a structure around case study examples in chapter three. There are evident shifts in tone and flow throughout the book, as the authors appear to have written many chapters separately, which has an effect on the over-arching flow. Additionally, the very useful description of narrative in chapter four may have been better placed in the first chapter.

One of the key strengths of the book lies in the study of narratives around cultural identity in chapter five. Cultural identity, within the processes of policy, is increasingly a site for skirmishes along the boundaries of interpretation, where past assumptions have potential to collide with present policies. In these very grey policy areas of identity and citizenship, an understanding of the narrative framework of identity and therefore citizenship formation is essential to policy formation and policy communication with awareness of cultural sensitivities. The problems of cultural identity policy alone justify the authors' new narrative approach.

Ultimately, on reading the book we must arrive at a conclusion on narrative analysis. Some readers may find difficulty accepting narrative analysis as a potentially useful tool within the field of cultural policy study. However, the current over-reliance on empirical evidence gathering is not working for the cultural sector in building justification for government expenditure on culture and garnering public support. Narrative analysis does allow for a fresh approach to the policy discourse problems that exist. This book strongly affirms the authors' proposition that firstly, narrative is real and has a significant effect on real life, rather than being interpreted solely as background colour used in the writing of the history. As such, the authors make a strong argument that within narrative there are structures or patterns that can be analysed, and that by using a narrative approach to interpret historical policy creation, new interpretations and alternative perspectives may be revealed.

Notwithstanding the above criticisms, the book does offer fresh perspectives and interesting reading for all scholars working in cultural policy and cultural studies. It represents a challenge to the mainstream approaches of political science thinking about public policy that have thus far led to dominant positivist approaches.

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