

THE
CONDITIONS
FOR
CREATIVE
COMMUNITIES



KETTLE'S YARD

Foreword

I am frequently astounded at what art can do and the role it can play in our lives. It can ignite a spark of imagination, open a door to a world of new possibilities, bring people together for a common purpose and help us to question and try to make sense of the world around us.

Cambridge is an internationally renowned city with a reputation for learning and research. Kettle's Yard's *Open House* programme goes some way to try and bring together the 'town and gown', celebrating a breadth of knowledge and diversity of experiences in creating new, collaborative artworks. Now, with Kettle's Yard open again and with new spaces, there is an opportunity to enable the expertise and creativity of our communities to be further engaged through new projects interacting with wider audiences.

Kettle's Yard is part of a number of different communities. We are one of the University of Cambridge Museums and appreciate their collective support in enabling this project. We are a house and gallery within a vibrant neighbourhood. Our thanks to the many people and places in North Cambridge who have opened their doors to us. We also thank the artists for their inspirational approaches to making art with people, at that heart of all that *Open House* has achieved so far.

Andrew Nairne
Director, Kettle's Yard

Introduction

After an ambitious building project, Kettle's Yard is open, marking a significant moment in the gallery's history. Open House will continue to enrich our relationships with local communities as we develop new projects and programmes. We are always learning and we have loved every moment of working with artists and our community.

Open House is a long-term creative collaboration between Kettle's Yard, an art gallery that is part of the University of Cambridge, and its neighbouring communities in North Cambridge. Each year Kettle's Yard and the community welcome an artist in residence with a socially engaged practice to respond to the collection and the local community in order to create a new collaborative artwork.

Open House held its first Community Panel meeting in December 2014 and welcomed its first artist in 2015. We have hosted three artists in residence, engaged over 10,000 participants in creative activities, achieved 48 Arts Awards with young people, hosted 27 events and exhibitions and taken 63 objects from the Kettle's Yard collection to display in North Cambridge.

Whilst developing Open House we have had the opportunity to learn from others in the sector that have embarked on community projects with contemporary artists. As Open House concludes its third artist residency, we want to share

not only our learning in Cambridge, but also the experience and knowledge of our colleagues from other galleries, artists, community partners and social enterprises.

The *Conditions for Creative Communities* is an overview of factors to consider when embarking on your own creative collaboration in your community. The 'conditions' were captured at a one-day symposium held at Tate Exchange, Tate Modern, hosted by Kettle's Yard in April 2017. The day involved sharing practice, research and experiences before creative sessions pulled together our thoughts and ideas for these *Conditions*. Thank you to all those who attended and contributed.

We believe that the *Conditions* will be useful for anyone who is considering embarking upon creative collaborations with their own community. Every project will be different as every community is unique, but as you navigate your own project these *Conditions* will prove to be a helpful reference point.

You can keep up to date with all the latest from Open House on our social media streams.

*Karen Thomas and Liz Ballard
Kettle's Yard Community Team*



KETTLE'S YARD

(OFF NORTHAMPTON ST)

PAINTINGS, SCULPTURE and DRAWINGS

Undergraduates are welcome
to call any day, including Sundays,
between 2 PM and 4 PM

Jim Ede.

Poster for Kettle's Yard created by Jim Ede in the late 1960s. (Kettle's Yard Archive)

BE GOOD
NEIGHBOURS

1. Kettle's Yard is part of a neighbourhood and a wider community. Being a good neighbour is about being open, listening to others, supporting and empowering others, being part of something bigger and being there when needed. It is easy to lock the doors, pull down the blinds and shut out the world, but it is also isolating, lonely and dull. Being a good neighbour isn't always easy but it is almost always sociable, creative and fun.



Make Your Map

Photo: Catarina Rodrigues 2016

**PRACTICE
INTEGRITY,
OPENNESS
AND KINDNESS
THROUGH
COLLABORATION**

2. Kettle's Yard was home to Jim and Helen Ede. The Ede's opened their home every day and invited others to share a unique experience. This generosity of spirit inspires the Open House programme. We aspire to sustain the values of integrity, openness and kindness as pathways to truly collaborative and amazing experiences.



***Young people support the installation of
Variations on a Weekend Theme with artist
Emma Smith 2015***

VALUE
EVERYONE

3. Every community plays host to a wealth of skills and knowledge that can support the richness of creative collaborations. Everyone brings something to the programme whether they are artists, art organisations, or participants: celebrate the importance of this diversity.

Day 2

Had lots of thoughts over the next few days, and really analysed what I had thought of as Art and how I felt now

I guess I had always considered Art to be painting, drawing, ~~sculpture~~ sculpture etc now it is more than that
actions / feelings / combinations

- common denominator is
- feelings good!!

Extract from journal kept by Alan Soer, Open House Community Panel member. Shared by Dr Sarah Plumb

THE JOURNEY
IS AS
IMPORTANT
AS THE
DESTINATION

4. It can sometimes be difficult to see how creating an artwork can bring people together, increase skills, support young people, etc. Over the three years of Open House, perceptions of what art can do have changed. Each year participants are excited to hear about different artists' practices and they have equally valued the processes of creation through events and workshops along the way, as they have the 'final destination' – or 'final artwork'.



***September Tea Parties hosted by artist
Isabella Martin. Photo: Catarina Rodrigues 2016***

SHARE
OWNERSHIP,
SHARE
GUARDIANSHIP

5. Open House is an open forum. Our community panel is always open to new members and the project is continually adapting to ensure it is a ‘best fit’ for all involved – community, artist and gallery, all of whom share ownership of the project. The principle of shared guardianship was introduced to Open House by Dr Sarah Plumb, and is an approach used by some anthropological museums in the care and display of indigenous community treasures. In a creative collaboration the gallery and artist act as ‘guardians’ of a collaboratively-made artwork, respecting and acknowledging the contribution and rights of the community where it was created. An ongoing relationship of care, trust and negotiation with the community must be nurtured and access to the artwork respected.



***The Open House Gathering and Feast, hosted
by artist Harold Offeh. Photo: Josh Murfitt 2017***

LET GO
AND TAKE
A LEAP

6. It is important to let go of any preconceptions you may have of artists, the community or galleries; take a leap with the artist and community, as much can be gained from ending up in a place you might never have imagined.



***Variations on a Weekend Theme with artist
Emma Smith. Photo: Josh Murfitt 2015***

ALLOW TIME

7. Having the opportunity to work long term in North Cambridge has enabled Open House to build and develop relationships and to appreciate the nuances of our partners, community and artists. If you can, allow time to forge your collaboration to enable the process to be equal and inclusive throughout its development.

When Jim Ede created Kettle's Yard the chairs of his house were placed 'in conversation' with artworks, objects, and vitally, each other. This provided the opportunity for visitors to pause, contemplate and established opportunities for discussion. Creativity is an opportunity for a social conversation – speaking and listening.

Slow down, leave the jargon at the door and allow time for a conversation.



The Open House Gathering and Feast, hosted by Harold Offeh. Photo: Josh Murfitt 2017

ENABLE
CREATIVITY
TO BRING
PEOPLE
TOGETHER

8. For Open House community partners, bringing people together is a key element of the programme. North Cambridge consists of four political wards and is home to over 32,000 people with few civic spaces for people to come together. Through creative projects Open House has brought together different generations through storytelling, diverse cultures through dance and animation, and isolated members of the community through ceramic making and food-related workshops and events.



***Anna Brownsted sharing local cultural bread recipes at The Open House Gathering and Feast.
Photo: Josh Murfitt 2017***

**BE CLEAR
AND
TRANSPARENT**

9. A true collaboration must equate to being open and transparent. Open House shares information about budgets, resources, fees and evaluation with its collaborators – as well as the creative process. Being open increases everybody’s understanding of the capacity and ambitions for the project. Everyone’s shared knowledge also means that potential gaps or pitfalls can be spotted and prevented as soon as possible – whether it is a venue for an event, knowing who can fire 50 bowls in a kiln at short notice or who can wallpaper a shop in two days!



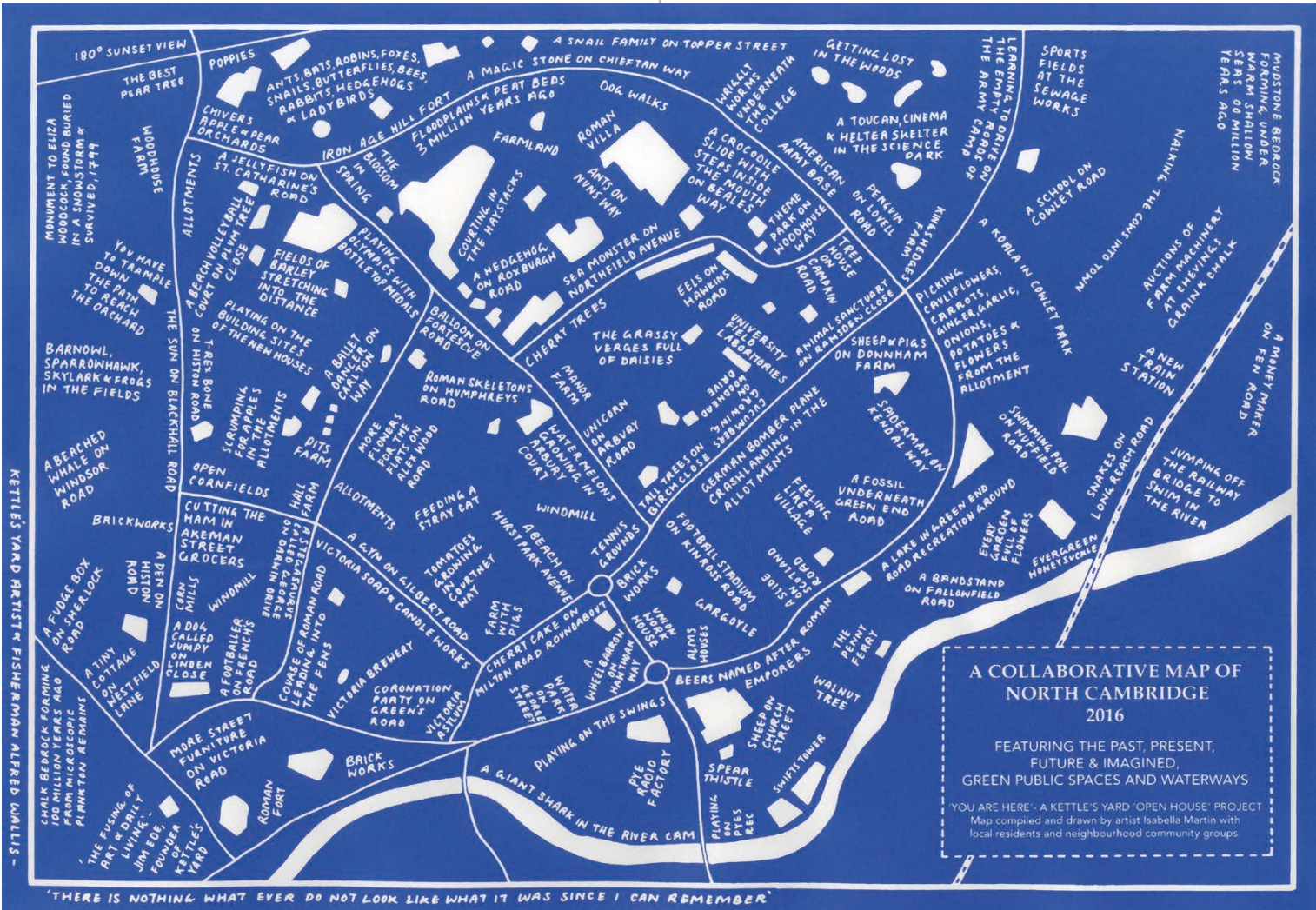
www.creativepeopleplaces.org.uk/our-learning/taking-bearings

Variations on a Weekend Theme installation and performance by Emma Smith. Photo: Paul Allitt 2015

NAVIGATE AMBITIONS AND BROADEN HORIZONS

10. The most frequently offered piece of advice from socially engaged creative projects was ‘be sure to manage expectations’, however our experience has been slightly different. The collaboration of Open House between community, artist and gallery has led to each collaborator navigating each other’s ambitions as well as having the opportunity of broadening each other’s horizons.

This has been achieved by enabling and nurturing opportunities for critical discussion which is essential for a project to properly reflect everyone involved in shaping it. Open House has utilised the ‘Taking Bearings’ toolkit which was commissioned by Creative People and Places to develop individual voices and ensure that all are heard equally.



'THERE IS NOTHING WHAT EVER DO NOT LOOK LIKE WHAT IT WAS SINCE I CAN REMEMBER'

Afterword

Local Map

Let's all get together to create this local map.
From the young and the old I am sure we can bridge this gap.
From where you live and the places you love to go.
Stories from the past and people and places you used to know.
As years go by we can tell our children's children.
I am glad we played a part in that.
In creating this local Arbury map.

By James Lees

Open House Community Panel member

Alan Soer, Open House Community Panel member

Like many people who live in North Cambridge I have always been aware of “The town and gown” phrase which serves to alienate certain communities from the academic and prosperous city of which it is supposed to be part of. While being aware of many museums in the city and iconic buildings such as King's College I wasn't aware of Kettle's Yard.

As a community activist my mission was to do as much as I could to help my community to meet the challenges of low income, unemployment and lack of self-belief. In fairness, the Community Development of Cambridge City Council was very supportive of our community but I wanted more. If we couldn't naturally share in the general economic and cultural richness of the city then we would have to develop our own and take it from there. An independent community centre open 7 days a week, financially self-supporting was part of that vision as was a vibrant annual carnival to celebrate our community cohesion and diversity.

Kettle's Yard first came to my notice through a project called “I come from a place” which was a photographic project with a small group of local girls, photographer Katherine Green and a local community worker. They came to interview and photograph me. An exhibition of their work at Kettle's Yard to which I was invited was my first visit there, and I was

hooked. If Kettle's Yard could expose our community to art in all its forms and the benefits that it would bring, then bring it on. When I was later approached by Kettle's Yard to join the Open House panel I did not hesitate, here was a chance to bring the gown to the town!

I thought it would be a bit of a talking shop with some arty people telling us how they could deliver projects that would tick various boxes and we would just be part of the exercise to prove community participation and we would end up with a bit of public art before Kettle's Yard retreated back to their redeveloped base on Castle Hill.

In reality, it proved me completely wrong and the last few years have been a most amazing time for the whole community, selecting resident artists, outreach work in schools and with community groups and events across the whole community bringing the world of Kettle's Yard to us. Recreating Kettle's Yard in one of our community houses, running an old apothecary shop over a whole weekend and setting up a printing studio in the local church are just some of the activities that have been created by the partnership of Kettle's Yard, the community and artists.

So what has been the impact on the community? It has brought colour and vibrancy to a community that has some of the most deprived wards in east of England, it has made

people laugh and cry, it has given people self-belief and broken down the barriers that used to exist between town and gown and helped to improve community cohesion. I don't have any top tips because what worked for us might not work for you because all communities are different, and therein lies the strength of Open House – the community is very much in the driving seat, it just needs some TLC.

The Conditions for Creative Communities

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*In memory of Mohammed Djazmi, artist, teacher, Open House
Community Panel member who wanted his local community to
discover what art can be.*

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KETTLE'S YARD

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