

OPEN HOUSE: THE DIFFERENCE MADE THROUGH WORKING TOGETHER (2014-2021)

EVALUATIVE RESEARCH

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Front cover image: *Campaign for Empathy: A Message*, Enni-Kukka Tuomala, 2020, *Kettle's Yard*, photograph by My Linh Le

Contents page image: *Make Your Map* event, *Open House* artist in residence, Isabella Martin, 2016, photograph by Catarina Rodrigues



KETTLE'S YARD



About the partners

Kettle's Yard

Kettle's Yard is the University of Cambridge's modern and contemporary art gallery. Kettle's Yard is a beautiful House with a remarkable collection of modern art and a gallery that hosts modern and contemporary art exhibitions. Between 1957 and 1973 Kettle's Yard was the home of Jim and Helen Ede. It houses their collection of early twentieth-century British and European art displayed alongside ceramics, glass, textiles and furniture, and found natural objects including pebbles, shells, plants, flowers, and fruit. Whilst living at Kettle's Yard they hosted concerts and kept 'open house' every afternoon inviting visitors to discover both the artworks and objects on display. In 1966, the Edes gifted the House and its contents to the University of Cambridge.

Research Centre for Museums and Galleries (RCMG)

As part of the School of Museum Studies at the University of Leicester, RCMG carries out research that stimulates new thinking and creative practice, enabling cultural organisations to become more ambitious and impactful in nurturing more equitable and inclusive societies. Our research combines academic rigour and a commitment to socially-engaged thinking and practice. Collaboration with cultural partners is central to our research practice – we build teams that comprise diverse skills, experiences and perspectives to meet the specific needs and requirements of each project. Our research creates spaces within which different forms of expertise come together. We seek to generate insights – for collaborating partners and the wider sector – that open up new possibilities for museums and their role in society.



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Introduction

A moment in time

In a year like no other when the Covid-19 pandemic has rocked the world; when businesses, and the public and third sectors have faced immense challenges; when museums and galleries have had to remain closed for most of the past year; when, for the first time, all Turner Prize nominees are artist collectives working in socially engaged ways; when, similarly, all five museums shortlisted for the Art Fund's Museum of the Year Award are deeply embedded in their locales; and at a time when community has become more important than ever – we could ask what roles do galleries and museums have to play to be relevant and meaningful in the world, and how can they be truly useful? In this undoubtedly challenging year, with pockets of joy and moments of profound connection, *Open House*—a long-term socially engaged community programme initiated and administered by Kettle's Yard, University of Cambridge—has remained steadfast, supporting and enabling communities of North Cambridge to not just survive, but thrive.

This research study shares the significance of *Open House* over the last seven years (2014-2021); it explores the difference the programme has made to the communities of North Cambridge, to the organisation Kettle's Yard, and to artistic practice and the broader cultural sector. It acknowledges the importance of an ongoing and sustained relationship between a gallery and its locale, and a hyperlocal approach to artistic

collaboration, and considers how the values and methodologies of *Open House* might inform and shape future practice across Kettle's Yard. Beyond this, the report will use *Open House* as a springboard from which to explore and attend to larger questions in the museum and gallery sector.



Figure 1 *Campaign for Empathy: A Message*, Enni-Kukka Tuomala, 2020, photograph by My Linh Le

Executive summary

This research study—a collaboration between the Research Centre for Museums and Galleries (RCMG), University of Leicester and the House and gallery Kettle’s Yard, University of Cambridge—shares the significance of the socially engaged community programme *Open House* at Kettle’s Yard. It looks back at the entirety of the programme, in order to understand its impact, value and significance; the difference it has made to all stakeholders involved. With this in mind, the research considers the future trajectory of *Open House*. Moreover, the research asks – what roles can galleries and museums play to be relevant and meaningful in the world, and how can they be truly useful?

Taking place between 2014 and 2021, *Open House* has established a number of distinctive characteristics in the form of ambitious and innovative engagement models that have developed and evolved through working collaboratively with artists and communities. But perhaps, what makes *Open House* so significant and different to many community engagement programmes, is the ongoing and sustained relationships at a hyperlocal level. *Open House* isn’t a ‘flash in the pan’, the team have been working with communities on the doorstep for more than seven years. Deep reciprocal relationships with individuals and community partners have been formed in that time.

RCMG’s highly qualitative approach to the research, demonstrated through the in-depth case study of *Open House* which sits at the heart of this report, generated rich and nuanced understandings of the research participants’ experiences and perceptions of the programme, and verifies how collaborating in the arts can contribute to a community’s journey to self-empowerment; result in a cultural organisation that is

more useful, and more used by its neighbours; and support and enhance artists’ professional development.

Although this report is primarily aimed at enhancing the knowledge and understanding of those directly involved in *Open House*—Kettle’s Yard, the communities and community organisations of North Cambridge, the numerous participating artists, and the supporters and funders of the programme—the co-leads of the research hope that it sparks critical interest, offers guidance, and informs and supports others working in the fields of museum and gallery practice and research.

Key findings

Difference to communities

Open House has touched the lives of many, many people, 21,637 to be precise, the majority of which come from North Cambridge. Some of these individuals are repeat participants, joining in activities year after year. 12,293 of those people have directly participated in 412 artist-led workshops, and Kettle’s Yard has mounted 20 community exhibitions, hosted 149 community events, and exhibited 908 community artworks through the *Open House* programme.

A major catalyst for instigating *Open House* was the markedly low number of local residents engaging with the gallery – in 2010 less than 0.3% of Kettle’s Yard’s 75,000 visitors came from local neighbourhoods (Wafer Hadley). After substantial and sustained engagement with the communities of North Cambridge through *Open House*, there has been a staggering increase in gallery visitors coming from neighbourhoods on

the gallery's doorstep – between 2018-2021 on average 8.5% of visitors asked came from postcodes CB4 (North Cambridge); a significant achievement with modest funding and resources, and in 10 years, no less.

Furthermore, the research reveals that many community participants found the programme: to be an engaging and affirming experience that enhanced their wellbeing through participating in new cultural opportunities and by connecting with art and people; challenged their preconceived ideas of art and cultural institutions and, as a result, expanded their horizons and aspirations; and developed new skills, knowledge and understanding. But perhaps, most strikingly, and in contrast to early findings captured in 2015, an increase in confidence was the most pervasive response. Research participants spoke of a personal growth in confidence through participating in *Open House*, in some cases, acting as a stepping stone to other opportunities. There were also examples of an enhanced sense of community ownership of *Open House* through participants shaping activity and gaining more control of the creative process, alongside a newfound confidence in critiquing the processes and practices of the programme. Community partners also saw Kettle's Yard as a valuable community asset, approaching the gallery with ideas for creative projects and community events, now certain in their understanding of how a cultural organisation can support them and the communities they work with and serve. The findings also point towards a shift in the relationships between the communities of North Cambridge and Kettle's Yard; one that is moving towards a more equitable process of exchange, where communities are supported in their self-determination and self-empowerment.

Difference to Kettle's Yard

Museums and galleries are increasingly recognising that seeing yourself represented matters; not just in collections, exhibitions or through interpretative projects, but in the staff and volunteer body, and in leadership and governance. Diversifying the people that work in, and represent, museums and galleries is key in building more socially engaged and community driven practice, as well as being a fundamental characteristic in a useful museum.

The research found a noticeable change in the number of Kettle's Yard volunteers and staff coming from the local area. As of March 2021, 12 members of staff, of a total of 53, lived in North Cambridge. The programme has directly influenced this shift, with two *Open House* community panel members now working, and representing the community, at Kettle's Yard. In 2019, the gallery welcomed two new Visitor Assistants, one started as a community participant, moved on to be a volunteer, and is now a permanent member of staff. There has also been a growth in the number of volunteers coming from postcodes in CB4 and, additionally, the gallery's Management Committee has diversified and is now more reflective of the cultural makeup of North Cambridge.

The research shares insights around how leading-edge and innovative models of community engagement work, instigated and mediated through a gallery in collaboration with communities, have evolved and matured. These unique and attentive models, emerging through *Open House*, include: working with a community panel of local experts to direct and shape the programme; working with communities to select and commission a socially engaged artist to work directly with and within the communities; fostering more genuine collaborative practices between communities, contemporary artists and a cultural

organisation, that value all expertise; finding new ways of valuing participatory labour and community input in collaboratively-made artworks and exhibitions; and matching locally-based emerging artists with more established ones to support artistic professional development and the local and national arts ecology.

Additionally, the report highlights the ways in which *Open House*, and the values of community engagement more broadly, have started to be embedded and change Kettle's Yard's day-to-day work and strategic goals, in both highly visible and subtle ways. Staff and volunteers reflected on learning new skills and developing new knowledge, including become more flexible, adaptable, and reflexive in their practice. Research participants' described Kettle's Yard as a more outward-looking organisation and offered up examples of collaborative and integrated working practices across departments. However, the research also found that *Open House*, in some respects, has become a victim of its own success. Although, in the first three years of the programme there was clear organisation-wide support, some staff felt that, since the gallery re-opened in 2018, there has been a shift in focus with attention directed towards onsite activity. Nevertheless, there is clear evidence that there has been significant organisational change at Kettle's Yard over the last seven years. This shift, in many respects, presents a cultural organisation that has become more useful and relevant to local communities. Of course, there have been other influences that have helped Kettle's Yard move towards being a more valuable asset to the community, but I argue in the report that the sustained practices and processes of *Open House* have played the biggest role in this transformation.

This organisational shift, or what we might describe as a journey of change, has inspired the development of an 'ethical framework' that

exemplifies the archetypal characteristics of The Traditional Museum versus those of The Useful Museum. The framework offers guidance for how other museums and galleries might embark on their own journey of change to become more useful.

Difference to artists and the cultural sector

Between 2015 and 2021, Kettle's Yard collaborated with seven artists in residence, in six residencies, and a further 108 regionally-based artist facilitators, as part of the *Open House* programme. They commissioned 20 new artworks, mounted 20 community exhibitions, and displayed more than 60 objects from its collection offsite. The gallery has worked directly with 19 cultural organisations, including supporting a number of the other University of Cambridge Museums in developing their practice with contemporary artists. Beyond these figures, that only show part of the picture, the report outlines the difference *Open House* has made to both individual artists' practice and the broader impacts on the cultural sector through widespread dissemination.

The report describes a pioneering model of artist professional development advanced through *Open House*, that, although not defined as such, offers a form of mentoring for artists; building new connections between local emerging and more established artists, and supporting the development of new artistic practice. Artists in residence and artist facilitators alike expressed the significant value of *Open House* in enhancing and extending their collaborative practice with communities. They saw the programme as a supportive structure that afforded opportunities and possibilities in taking creative risks. Several of the artists in residence worked with a community panel for the first time, seeing the panel's role as invaluable in a generative process where the reverberations from previous artistic projects could be felt in their own, and all were new to a community-led commissioning process, which

was described as an incredibly validating and informative experience. The process shaped original thinking and practice, both in the residency projects and beyond, and new practical skills were learnt in project management and in balancing the needs, desires and potentially conflicting agendas of a range of stakeholders. For several artists, *Open House* led to other opportunities, including the commissioning of new works of art for Kettle's Yard and at other cultural organisations.

Furthermore, the practices, processes, methodologies and impact of *Open House* at Kettle's Yard, have been shared widely in the cultural field in the UK and internationally through conferences, workshops and seminars, alongside a number of sector-facing and academic publications. The report illustrates the ways in which the learning from *Open House* has begun to inspire and inform other museum and gallery practitioners' work and will, undoubtedly, continue to do so.

The following report, vividly goes on to illustrate the profound significance that *Open House* has had on the personal and professional lives of community members of North Cambridge, staff and volunteers at Kettle's Yard, and a number of artists and cultural practitioners, over the last seven years.

1. The project

Background and context

Open House was inspired by Jim and Helen Ede, whose home was Kettle's Yard between 1957-1973, before they gifted the House and its contents to the University of Cambridge. During the fifteen years they lived there they opened their doors each day, warmly inviting visitors to view their extensive collection of early twentieth-century British and European art, alongside beautifully displayed ceramics, glass, textiles and furniture, and found natural objects (figure 2). Former curator at Tate, Jim Ede aimed to fuse art with everyday life; this philosophy became the catalyst and starting point for *Open House*.

When Andrew Nairne became Director in 2011, he was keen to share the trajectory of Kettle's Yard widely, and tell the remarkable story of Jim Ede himself (as described in an interview with Simon Stephens in the *Museums Journal* in 2012). Beyond this, Andrew had ambitions to meaningfully connect with the local communities on the gallery's doorstep, enable Kettle's Yard to be a more open and outward-looking organisation, and to significantly increase audiences visiting the gallery from the four wards of North Cambridge (postcodes CB4) (ibid). A piece of audience research conducted in 2010 by Wafer Hadley found that only 0.3% of visitors to Kettle's Yard came from these neighbouring wards (Arbury, Kings Hedges and East and West Chesterton), which is home to 32,000 people. Their research indicated that Kettle's Yard was '*not a place for them*', that prior knowledge was needed, and their association with the University with its implied intellectual, physical and social barriers was frequently cited as an obstacle to accessing the offer (ibid). When cultural institutions had previously worked with these

communities, there was a perception of community engagement projects being 'parachuted in', with little long-term community benefit. One of Andrew's main priorities was to develop long-term and more genuine relationships, acknowledging that:

'there are relationships for Kettle's Yard to build that perhaps we have not put enough emphasis on in the past. It is about people's experiences and how art, culture and museums and galleries and what happens in them can connect with people and what happens in their lives' (cited in Stephens 2012).

In 2015 Kettle's Yard shut for two and a half years for major building work and redevelopment, presenting a key opportunity to reimagine how the gallery could engage with its audiences and local communities through visual arts. During this period, the gallery embarked on an ambitious offsite programme of activity with and within the communities of North Cambridge, which came to be known as *Open House*. Each year since 2015, *Open House* has welcomed an artist in residence with a socially engaged practice to work collaboratively with the community to respond to Kettle's Yard's collection and the locale to create a new artwork. Prior to this there was a period of research, development and community consultation in 2013, and in late 2014 *Open House* officially launched with major funding from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation. At later stages, Kettle's Yard successfully applied for grants from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and Cambridge City Council to enable the programme to continue, as well as receiving

ongoing support and funding from Arts Council England and the University of Cambridge Museums.



Figure 2 Scan of Jim Ede's *Open House* invitation from the archive, paper deposited by Jacob Simon (first undergraduate representative on Kettle's Yard Committee) covering the period 1968-1970 © Kettle's Yard

Community panel

Open House is shaped in consultation with a community panel of North Cambridge residents, who are all active members of the community and have expert local knowledge of the area. They commit to a terms of reference, volunteer their time and meet at regular intervals at a range of venues across North Cambridge, including a number of community centres, and in more recent times online via Zoom. Between 2014 and 2021 there have been 43 community panel meetings (Kettle's Yard 2021a). The approach is continually adapting to ensure it works best for everyone involved and for each iteration of the programme, however an open and transparent approach remains consistent.

The community panel is always open to new members, and is currently comprised of: Christine Cowling-Jones, a local resident and parent, and Receptionist at Kettle's Yard; Alan Soer, Manager of Arbury Community Centre, a very active, well-used and vibrant centre in North Cambridge; Jonathan Stanley, Head of Art at local secondary school North Cambridge Academy; Helen Harwood, Teacher at the Grove Primary School and in recent years member of the Management Committee at Kettle's Yard; Golzar Zandi, Project Development Coordinator at North Cambridge Community Partnership (NCCP); Martin Smart, Labour Councillor for Kings Hedges in North Cambridge; Maria David, Family Worker at the Red Hen Project, a local charity supporting children and families to overcome barriers to learning; Shahida Rahman a local resident, also representing Cambridge Mosque and the Karim Foundation; and Laura Bramley, Safeguarding and Family Liaison Officer at the Grove Primary School. There is also an open invitation to students from North Cambridge Academy and other Kettle's Yard staff to attend meetings. Christine, Alan and Jonathan have all been members since the launch meeting in October 2014.

Aims and objectives

In collaboration with the community panel, Kettle's Yard established a number of aims and objectives for *Open House* that developed and evolved over time, they are broadly as follows:

1. **To provide an inspiring context for an artist to co-produce new work** in collaboration with local communities and celebrate the creativity of North Cambridge
2. **To support local communities to have a confident voice in shaping the cultural life of their city**
3. **To develop an exciting, positive and inclusive creative programme** to connect and engage people from diverse backgrounds, bringing people together, supporting integration and multi-generational activity
4. **To support Kettle's Yard to explore new ways of working more collaboratively with our neighbouring communities** and sharing decision-making processes through co-producing and co-curating displays and events in our new gallery and learning spaces
5. **To creatively engage with Kettle's Yard's collections, exhibitions and archives.**

Local issues, needs and concerns, in part, informed these aspirations with Cambridge cited as the most unequal city in the UK in terms of income, and North Cambridge featuring significantly in the 2019 English Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). A significant proportion of residents are working in low paid, low skilled work with limited opportunities for progression, because the majority of employment available in Cambridge is in high skilled occupations (Kettle's Yard 2021b). Cambridge is the fifteenth poorest local authority for social mobility in young people and 23% of children living in Kings Hedges,

25% of children in East Chesterton and 20% of children in Arbury are from low-income families (IMD 2019). There are poorer health outcomes for those with low incomes in the city, with life expectancy for women 10 years lower in the most deprived area of Cambridge than the least deprived, and 9.6 years lower for men (ibid). Kings Hedges and Arbury has a diverse community and a significant Asian population, the Arbury Community Centre regularly hosts activities from over 20 culturally diverse groups, while 90% of the 2013-14 intake at Kings Hedges Nursery has English as an additional language (Kettle's Yard 2014). A significant proportion of older people in the city live on low incomes, and older residents more likely to experience social isolation (Kettle's Yard 2021b). And the digital divide in Cambridge is a significant challenge, with limited access to digital media and technology for residents on low incomes (ibid).

With this in mind, Kettle's Yard and the community panel, identified four target resident groups within North Cambridge that it wished to work with through *Open House*, these included:

- isolated older people
- people with no or limited English-speaking language skills
- long-term unemployed people
- identified 'at risk' children and young people and their families, primarily from low-income areas.

Kettle's Yard, like many museums and galleries, is frequently expected to categorise and label the 'types' of individuals and groups they plan to work with, however this approach runs the risk of unwittingly 'Othering' marginalised individuals and communities, an issue symptomatic of many community engagement programmes and often reflective of conditions attached to grants by major funders (Peaty 2016; 2017).

Although this approach can help to identify inequalities in participation, the restrictive and reductive categorisations that are commonly used do little to express the complex, dynamic and sometimes intangible nature of communities.

Kettle's Yard appreciates that no community is 'black and white', and despite the number of social issues described above, North Cambridge is an active community with many social groups, neighbourhood centres, festivals and social events; all the primary schools have been rated good or outstanding by Ofsted; and there is a proud tradition of community activism and campaigning in the area (Plumb 2017). The first estates of Arbury were built in the late 1950s and had been planned on paper with open spaces for recreation and cul-de-sacs to discourage cut-through traffic, but with no public consultation in planning at the time it quickly became apparent that there was a lack of community facilities (Kettle's Yard 2015). As a result, in the 1960s and 1970s the community came together forming groups like the 'Grovebury Ladies', these groups alongside the church played a central role in mounting campaigns for better amenities, such as building a playground and a community centre, and planting more trees (ibid).

Many of the aims and objectives of *Open House* echo those of the recent Arts Council England 2020-2030 strategy – *Let's Create*, and the core principles of participatory practice in the Museums Association's framework – *Power to the People* (2018). *Let's Create's* ambitious Outcomes for the cultural sector in England points out that everyone can develop and express creativity throughout their lives; identifies that a collaborative approach to shaping culture can nurture communities, enabling them to thrive; and values innovation, collaboration and internationalism in order to support a healthy cultural sector (2020: 28). Similarly, *Power to the People*, proposes that community participation

should be core to a museum's work, guides museums to create opportunities to share decision-making with communities to enable a sense of ownership of the museum, and credits work that is mutually beneficial, where everyone involved changes, including the museum (Museums Association 2018).

Almost ten years on from his interview in the *Museums Journal*, Andrew Nairne's fundamental aspirations for developing a welcoming gallery, where art and everyday life merge, and where culture enables people to thrive, although more advanced and nuanced, in many respects remain the same. Andrew (2021) describes this when reflecting on the possibilities that have been opened up through the programme:

'...calling our community programme *Open House* makes a lot of sense. Both with the reality of the heart of Kettle's Yard being this collection in this beautiful house, but also as a concept that people are welcome, the doors are all open, please come in. What is it that we want people to come into apart from literally the Kettle's Yard House? I think we want them to come in to a world that some of us are very relaxed and feel part of through our cultural, educational and social background, and others will not have naturally come into that... I think if you're engaged in culture particularly, in various ways – whether that's reading books, playing a musical instrument, going to the gallery, going to the theatre or actively being a participant – somehow it sharpens your sense and your place and your negotiation with the everyday, with the world you're in, with all your relationships and in doing that you make better choices in life'.

He clearly places great value on the potential of culture to inspire, whilst acknowledging the role cultural capital (or a lack of it) has to play

in (limiting) access to arts and culture. What was, perhaps, conceived essentially as an audience development activity, evolved into something much more complex, innovative, exciting, meaningful, and ultimately enriching – enriching not only for the individuals living in North Cambridge, but also the gallery and the wider cultural sector. I will go on to examine the ways in which *Open House* has made a positive difference in considerable depth later in the report.

Six years, seven artists in residence, more than twenty-thousand participants

As Figure 3 vividly demonstrates *Open House* has touched the lives of many, many people, 21,637 to be precise, the majority of which come from North Cambridge. This top-level quantitative data, tracked yearly by Kettle’s Yard and described below, shows a dramatic increase in local communities members engaging with the gallery through the *Open House* programme.

At the end of year one of the programme, *Open House* had reached just over 3,000 participants through drop-in activities and more sustained workshops – a sizeable amount, increasing year on year with a total of 12,293 people directly participating in activities, and 9,344 engaging through social media, over a six year period. In 2015, there were 59 artist-run workshops, increasing to 412 in total between 2015-2021, and there was more than 1,000 hours of public engagement in creative activity. A further 36,000 people listened in via radio as part of the 2018/2019 residency, though they have not been counted as active participants in this data set. In 2015, 70% (of those asked) lived in CB4 postcodes, today 80% are from these postcodes.



Figure 3 Kettle’s Yard Infographic that captures quantitative data on *Open House* participation between 2015-2021

Throughout the duration of *Open House* over 6,000 children and their families participated in public workshops at weekends and in the holidays (both stand-alone and as additional activities already taking place in the community, such as free lunches provided to families in school holidays). More than 1,500 young people engaged with the programme through youth clubs; 81 children and young people also achieved an Arts Award, a nationally recognised qualification; 1,188 adults participated in weekly social clubs and a further 839 older people took part. 644 individuals new to English or with English as an additional language engaged in creative activities through *Open House* and just under 2,000 school students from across the area were involved (Kettle's Yard 2021a). Although not captured in this data collected and collated by Kettle's Yard, some of these individuals will inevitably be repeat participants, joining in activities year after year, which, I argue, indicates a degree of success in terms of developing and maintaining relationships with local residents.

Over this time, Kettle's Yard has mounted 20 community exhibitions, hosted 149 community events, displayed more than 60 objects from its collection offsite, collaborated with seven artists in six residencies, and a further 108 regionally-based artist facilitators (that support the programme and maximise participation). Kettle's Yard has also commissioned 20 new artworks and exhibited 908 community artworks through the *Open House* programme.

This part of the report will briefly describe the six artistic residencies. Each year, Kettle's Yard works with community members and the panel to select and commission an artist in residence to collaborate with local residents, explore the local area and create a new artwork. *Open House* has established an innovative model of collaboration and selection process, which has shifted and changed over time with community

members becoming more and more involved in the decision making process, this evolution will be discussed further later on in the report.

Emma Smith, *Variations on a Weekend Theme*, 2015

Emma Smith was the first *Open House* artist in residence in 2015, as part of her collaboration she worked with residents to explore the ways in which people relax and unwind. She gathered local remedies and developed a new performative artwork of people's restorative pastimes called *Variations on a Weekend Theme*. This work was performed over three days in an 'art apothecary' on Akeman Street, North Cambridge, that had been transformed by Smith from a disused bakery.

Isabella Martin, *You Are Here*, 2016

In 2016, Isabella Martin collaborated with communities to create a new and alternative map of North Cambridge in a project entitled *You Are Here*. Inspired by Kettle's Yard, the project celebrated the uniqueness of the area and what makes a place special. At the end of the residency a temporary print studio and exhibition was mounted in the Church of the Good Shepherd, where visitors were invited to print their own map using a silk screen. Martin also printed and gifted the map to community hubs in the area and other places involved in the creation of the map.

Harold Offeh, *Open House Gathering and Feast*, 2017

Harold Offeh worked collaboratively with residents to explore the local area with a focus on the value we place on domestic objects in our homes. The project culminated in a celebration of food and design at a gathering hosted by North Cambridge Academy, and later a large feast and dancing for participants who had contributed to the project. The events featured displays with creations made by groups in North

Cambridge, opportunities for food tasting and tips for growing food, alongside a range of activities for all ages.

Hannah Kemp-Welch, *Hyperlocal Radio*, 2018/19

During 2018 and 2019 sound artist, Hannah Kemp-Welch worked with the community to create a series of new sound works which featured in *Hyperlocal Radio*. Inspired by Jim Ede's experiences of public broadcasting and a Cambridge based company who pioneered telecommunications, Kemp-Welch collected stories, songs and sounds that celebrated the diversity of North Cambridge. The work was shared in a special broadcast through a community radio station and later exhibited in the newly reopened Kettle's Yard and at various community centres across North Cambridge.

Wright & Vandame, *Meeting Ground*, 2019/20

Artists Josh Wright and Guillaume Vandame, a collective known as Wright & Vandame, explored the ways in which people take care of their mental, physical and social wellbeing and the impact of architecture on this. Working with a vast range of community groups and school students in the neighbourhood, they created a range of artworks that were displayed at Nuns Way Pavilion, a community centre and recreational grounds. The Pavilion was transformed into *Meeting Ground*, where visitors could also try out activities to support their wellbeing over 14 days.

Enni-Kukka Tuomala, *Campaign for Empathy: North Cambridge*, 2020/21

The most recent residency, beginning in 2020, was *Campaign for Empathy: North Cambridge*, with artist Enni-Kukka Tuomala. As an empathy artist and designer, Tuomala brought her ongoing live project, *Campaign for Empathy*, to the community – bringing people together through workshops and creative activities online, over the phone, and through letters and activity packs, as a way to foster a sense of community and connection during a time of physical distancing and social isolation. 'Empathy Objects' were later displayed in the Kettle's Yard House and around North Cambridge.

More detailed information on each residency can be found by visiting the Kettle's Yard website.¹

The wider significance of Open House

Kettle's Yard has been influenced by an increasing trend in museums towards embedding community engagement in to their core working practices, institutional structures and mission (Paul Hamlyn Foundation 2016). However, museums have achieved and sustained an embedded approach to collaborating with marginalised people with varying degrees of success, as notably critiqued in Bernadette Lynch's germinal report *Whose Cake is it Anyway?* (2011a), and more recently her introduction to *Museums and Social Change: Challenging the Unhelpful Museum* (Chynoweth et. al 2021).

¹ For detailed information about the [Open House artistic residencies](#) visit the Kettle's Yard website.

In the last decade, art galleries have also changed their staffing structures in favour of integrated programming to reflect a socially engaged and educational turn in artistic practice (Plumb 2017). Kettle's Yard is uniquely positioned as it is a museum, a gallery for contemporary art exhibitions and a House. Through *Open House*, Kettle's Yard has established a new innovative model that brings about a three-way dialogue and partnership between a cultural institution, contemporary artists and community members. This inventive model is multifaceted, drawing together and sharing expertise from all involved – through working collaboratively with a community panel to shape a programme of artistic activity that is inspired by Kettle's Yard and rooted in community need, interests and aspirations; by involving communities directly in decision-making processes of selecting and commissioning socially engaged artists; through supporting an arts ecology by matching emerging and locally-based artists (the artist facilitators) with more established artists (the artists in residence); through creating a community role to sit on the institution's management committee; and by finding new ways of valuing participatory labour and community input in collaboratively-made artworks and exhibitions. These innovative approaches will be explored in more depth throughout the report.

But perhaps, what makes *Open House* so significant and different to most community engagement programmes, is the ongoing and sustained relationships at a hyperlocal level. *Open House* isn't a 'flash in the pan', the team have been working with communities on the doorstep for more than seven years. Deep reciprocal relationships with individuals and community partners have been formed in that time.

As its current funding stream draws to a close, and after a year like no other, *Open House* has reached a crucial point in its journey; an

opportunity to reflect back and a chance to consider the future. This has been a challenging year for Kettle's Yard, it is facing a major drop in income of 30% (£500,000) due to the pandemic, and like many other museums and galleries, has undertaken an organisational review. A recent report from the Museums Association revealed that approximately 8% of the UK museum workforce has been made redundant since the pandemic; the hardest hit being learning and engagement teams, and front of house and visitor operations (2021). This has been an immensely difficult time for museums and galleries, but nonetheless we have seen examples of cultural organisations transcending their usual roles, centering people, and supporting communities in new, bold and useful ways.

What is next for *Open House*? This report looks back at the entirety of this socially engaged community programme in order to understand its impact, value and significance; the difference it has made to all stakeholders involved. From there, the report generates questions that ask how the learning from *Open House* might enrich and shape future practice at Kettle's Yard. Although this report is primarily aimed at enhancing the knowledge and understanding of those directly involved in *Open House*—Kettle's Yard, the communities and community organisations of North Cambridge, the numerous participating artists, and the supporters and funders of the programme—the co-leads of the research hope that it sparks critical interest, offers guidance, and informs and supports others working in the fields of museum and gallery practice and research.

2. Evaluation methodology

In Spring 2021, Dr Sarah Plumb of RCMG undertook an in-depth evaluation of *Open House*, conducting desk-based research and online fieldwork (due to restrictions of the Covid-19 pandemic), gathering responses to the community engagement programme from a number of perspectives, including: individual community participants, representatives from community partners and organisations, members of the *Open House* community panel, artists involved in the programme, and staff and volunteers from Kettle's Yard. Findings shared throughout the report also emerged through an in-depth and critical dialogue with Manager of *Open House* and research project co-lead Karen Thomas, which was essential for gaining further meaningful insights.

This part of the report describes the evaluation methodology used in the research study.

Research question

The evaluative research sets out to explore the effects of the programme to date on a range of stakeholders and considers what the future of *Open House* might look like. The research question was collaboratively conceived as:

What difference has working collaboratively through Open House made to the communities of North Cambridge, the staff and volunteers of Kettle's Yard, University of Cambridge, and the Open House artists? What does this mean for the future trajectory of Open House?

Although 'the difference made' or 'change' is a central component of the research puzzle, there is a history of social practice and research in

arts and culture, framed as 'impact change', that implies community participants are in need of changing, as Matarasso (2015) points out:

'... the social art project is conceived as an experience whose "impact" changes those who take part. And in this context, "change" means "improve", in terms of the problem-solving mission identified, more or less cooperatively, by the artist and the commissioner'.

This patronising and disrespectful stance, or what Lynch (2021) would describe as a 'therapeutic model', where the museum (and in this case the artist as well), take on the task of 'improving' the implicitly flawed subject, is the very opposite of what the research sets out to achieve. The research is interested in exploring transformation more holistically, as one way of understanding the value of *Open House* to community participants, but more fundamentally, as way of understanding how collaborating with communities through a community engagement programme might bring about organisational and practice-based change.

Research methods

In this research study, a mixed methods research design, combining qualitative and quantitative research methods, was devised and employed to generate data from diverse sources and multiple perspectives. However, the study became a highly qualitative piece of research, with qualitative data forming the bulk of material collected, whilst quantitative data usefully supplemented and extended the data

set. This approach generated a rich and nuanced understanding of the research participants' experiences and perceptions of *Open House*.

Research Methods included:

1. Semi-structured and in-depth interviews
2. Focus group meetings
3. Self-completion online surveys – staff and volunteers & community participants
4. Self-completion feedback card²

Alongside the new data set collected as part of this study, existing material from Kettle's Yard in the form of reports, evaluations, feedback and reflection documents (dating from 2014 onwards), as well as Plumb's (2017) PhD Thesis – *Hearing community voice: The ethics of socially engaged arts practice mediated through the gallery* (in which *Open House* formed the main case study), were employed to enrich and add depth to the research, as well as highlight the progression of the programme.

Semi-structured interviews

The majority of data was collected through semi-structured interviews that were approached in an open and conversational manner. This method created opportunities for participants to reflect on their experiences and enabled them to work through emerging thoughts and ideas. The interview process elicited fertile, nuanced and considered responses. Between March and June 2021, 16 in-depth interviews, with 18 research participants, were carried out online via Teams or Zoom, or over the telephone. All but one of the interviews were conducted with

² See appendices for samples of the interview protocols, focus group questions, survey questions, and feedback cards.

individuals; the group interview included three participants. Incredibly, each interview lasted for at least one hour, with a few continuing for almost two hours, indicating that many of the research participants have deeply meaningful and multifaceted relations with the programme *Open House*.

Focus group meetings

Sarah Plumb attended, and facilitated conversations in, two *Open House* meetings – a community panel meeting via Zoom, and a face-to-face workshop with Kettle's Yard staff at the gallery, both in July 2021. Attendees of the community panel meeting were asked to respond to a number of questions, firstly, by individually considering and writing their responses using the chat function, and then by coming together as a group to discuss their reflections on the whole of the *Open House* programme. Similarly, at the workshop at Kettle's Yard, staff from a number of departments, were asked to consider the future of *Open House*. In both meetings, questions from the Creative People and Places (2015) *Taking Bearings* toolkit were utilised and adapted to start the conversations. The questions were open and abstract, and based on the analogy of going on a journey and arriving at a destination. They included:

North: Is this where you expected to be?

East: What got lost on the way?

South: What will you leave behind and what will you take away?

West: Where are you headed and how would you define what the ultimate destination looks like?

Both meetings were recorded, with the dialogue later transcribed and analysed in a similar way to the interviews. The participants' chat responses were also captured and evaluated.

Online surveys – staff and volunteers

For this study, staff and volunteers from Kettle's Yard were invited to complete an online survey, which included a series of open and closed questions. The questions set out to capture both a broad comprehension of whether the programme had been a beneficial experience and had positively impacted upon them (from an individual and organisational perspective), as well as develop a more in-depth and complex understanding of experience, including exploring challenges faced in participating and future aspirations for the programme. The survey was sent to the whole team, regardless of whether they had been directly involved in *Open House*. 11 members of staff and volunteers completed the survey; with this limited number of respondents, the data set was principally utilised as qualitative data and to inform and expand upon findings garnered through the interview process.

Online surveys – community participants

In a similar way to the organisational survey, community members participating in *Open House* were invited to complete an online survey. The survey aimed to reach anyone who had participated in the programme over the last seven years. It was shared through a number of community organisations and gatekeepers, however, unfortunately, the uptake of this was very poor, with only five people completing the survey, raising questions about the appropriateness of this method in gathering community feedback. That being said, those that did respond offered full and thoughtful insights into their experiences of *Open House*.

Feedback card

A feedback card was designed for Year 4 school students from the Grove Primary School who had participated in *Open House* over the school year. The card asked students to think about: 'what amazed me most about *Open House*', and what they wanted: '*Open House* to be in the future'. Responses were facilitated and collected by their class teacher, 10 in total were collected (a low number, perhaps, due to the shifting number of students attending school during the Covid-19 pandemic).

All of the data collected was analysed and interrogated in a highly qualitative manner, without a prior framework or structure to allow for ideas and themes to emerge.

Who took part in the study?

Staff and volunteers

All staff and volunteers were invited to reflect on and share their views surrounding the community engagement programme *Open House*; in total 20 participated in the study. 11 completed the online survey, working in a variety of settings from front of house and visitor-facing roles to collections and exhibitions, they included: a number of Visitor Assistants and the Visitor Services Manager – Lilja Kupua Addeman, Kettle's Yard's Receptionist Christine Cowling-Jones, and the Programme Technician – Tom Noblett. Beyond this, RCMG worked closely with co-lead Karen Thomas to identify and invite a further five key members of staff to participate in an interview. We were keen to include staff who had a broader strategic organisational view, as well as those directly engaged in, or working as part of the *Open House* team. Interviewees included: Director Andrew Nairne; Assistant Director Susie Biller; Karen Thomas, who started working at Kettle's Yard in 2013 in a

new role that managed *Open House* and the broader community programme; Liz Ballard who had worked in the externally funded role (through *Open House*) of Assistant Curator Community Programme since 2014; and Dr Jenny Powell, Head of Collection, Programme and Research, who managed an integrated programming team including Karen and Liz. Additionally seven members of staff also participated in a facilitated workshop at the gallery, they included: Karen; Andrew; Susie; Imogen Alexander, Learning and Volunteer Coordinator; Helen Dickman, Communications Assistant; Eliza Spindel, Curatorial Assistant; and Alison Newbery, who recently joined as the new Operations Manager.



Figure 4 Harold Offeh, *Open House Gathering and Feast*, 2017, photograph by Josh Murfitt

Artists

Throughout the programme, Kettle's Yard conducted considerable evaluation of each artist residency, inviting artists to respond to a series

of questions and provocation to elicit in-depth reflections on their experiences during their time as *Open House* artist in residence. These evaluative documents have been fully utilised to inform the research study. That being said, it was felt that further insights could be generated through revisiting and interviewing two artists who were involved in the programme from the start. The first *Open House* artist in residence Emma Smith was interviewed (originally in 2015 and again in this study), as well as artist facilitator Hilary Cox-Condron. Both were uniquely situated in being able to comment and reflect on the programme since their involvement in the first year, and the difference it has made to their practice in this time.

Community participants

The research focused on hearing from adult community members and some children from local schools; 28 community participants took part in the study. Self-selecting participants who completed the online survey included: Maria David, Family Worker at the Red Hen Project and community panel member; David Maher, Vicar of the Church of the Good Shepherd; Bryan Johnson a community participant who created work for the project; Jelena Shinhmar, a community participant who took part in an *Open House* event with family members at Nuns Way Pavilion community centre and recreational grounds; and Stephen Peter Oldham a member of Cambridge Community Arts (who support adults with mental health challenges), who got involved as a carer for his son who has mental health issues. A further three participants from Cambridge Community Arts—Gill Drake, Lauren Van Zwanenberg and Clare Hall—were interviewed, alongside Rosalind (Ros) Rawlinson, Valerie (Val) Cutting and Barbara Watts from the social group the Grovebury Ladies. Anastasia Sanders, Community Chaplain at the Church of the Good Shepherd also participated in an interview and 10

Year 4 students from the Grove Primary School completed feedback cards. Five members of *Open House*'s community panel contributed to the research study through the interview process, these included: Alan, Helen, Golzar, Christine, and Shahida. In addition, the following participants attended the final community panel meeting: Karen, Liz, Alan, Helen, Golzar, and Martin.

The co-leads of the research have decided to refer to all research participants by their first name throughout the report to ensure a parity in approach.

Significance of research

As previously stated, the unique innovations and long-term nature of *Open House* have major significance in the field and practice of museums and galleries. What's more, there are very few research studies that interrogate experiences of change over an extended period of time, and even less from multiple perspectives. This research sets out to address this gap, providing a fine-grained analysis of one institution over a seven-year timeframe and, although context specific, the report aims to shed new light on the subject matter, providing a significant contribution to museum and gallery research.

Whilst many recent texts and research projects acknowledge the importance of, and increasing interest in, the difference arts and culture (and museums and galleries more specifically), can make in enriching people's lives, the long-term effects remain largely unmapped. Notably, there are a handful of longitudinal studies that explore the impact of visiting museums on audiences, though these have tended to focus on learning experiences (Anderson et. al 2007) and visitors' prior

knowledge and agendas (Falk and Dierking 1997; Falk et. al 2012). A more recent example of a longitudinal impact study (Bergevin 2018) valuably considers the role of the activist museum in visitor transformation. However, these studies all centre on the museum *visit*, rather than experiences of change resulting from participating or collaborating in museum activity or programme. This research aims to build on one of the only longitudinal research projects that does focus on community engagement – another RCMG study, *A Catalyst for Change*³ with Glasgow Museum Service. *A Catalyst for Change* (2002) was a retrospective evaluation of the *Open Museum*, a pioneering model for museums' engagement with communities. The research traced the roots of the project—a leading-edge approach of exhibiting the museum service's collections in community settings over a decade—and explored the impact on individuals who engaged with it.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, there are even fewer examples where long-term organisational change have been researched and mapped in any great depth. Internationally, only two longitudinal case studies of change within institutions have been disseminated. The Paul Hamlyn Foundation's *Our Museum* programme in the UK is one; taking place over six years (2012-18), the programme set out to interrogate engagement and embed participatory practice in nine museums and galleries. The second is the Glenbow Museum in Canada, described in impressive detail in Robert Janes' book – *Museums and the Paradox of Change* (2013).

This report aims to offer a nuanced and detailed understanding of experiences of change from multiple perspectives through the lens of one case study – *Open House* at Kettle's Yard, University of Cambridge.

³ For more information about [A Catalyst for Change](#) visit the RCMG website.

The co-leads of this research offer remarkable insights and unique (insider and outsider) perspectives, both having been directly involved in the programme over the entirety of the activity (2013-2021) – Karen Thomas as the programme manager and Sarah Plumb as an external researcher and critical friend.

Structure

The following sections of the report capture the key themes and learning to emerge from the evaluation, firstly in relation to the effects on the communities of North Cambridge, second in relation to organisational change, and third the influence *Open House* has had on artistic practice and the cultural sector more broadly.

Finally, the report concludes with a series of provocations and questions that consider the future of community engagement at Kettle's Yard and how the learning from *Open House* might inform and shape future processes and practices institutionally. Furthermore, throughout the report offers guidance for how other museums and galleries might adopt the values and principles of community and socially engaged work to become more useful, meaningful and relevant in society today.

3. The difference to the communities of North Cambridge

Sarah Plumb (2017) traced the experiences of individual community participants in significant depth throughout the first stages of *Open House* (from October 2014 – February 2016), as part of her PhD research. This was, in part, due to a concern over the absence of community participant voice in the analysis and critique of socially engaged art, mediated through the gallery (ibid). Through the research, she amplified the voices of individual community members involved in the collaborative processes of *Open House*, and developed a more nuanced understanding of the intrinsic and extrinsic value of socially engaged art practice to community participants (ibid). The research revealed that many community participants found the programme to be an engaging and affirming experience that enhanced their wellbeing; challenged their preconceived ideas of art and, as a result, expanded their horizons; developed new skills, knowledge and understanding; and, in some instances, engendered feelings of empowerment (ibid).

Seven years on, we have witnessed a major increase in the reach of *Open House*; Kettle's Yard has engaged with 21,637 people; 12,293 of those directly participating in artistic workshops. Kettle's Yard has developed ongoing partnerships with 32 new community partners, and have worked with 17 schools and a further 18 other community organisations in the area through *Open House*. Beyond this, understanding around the difference the programme has made to individual community members, and community organisations and partners in North Cambridge has expanded.

An open-ended, qualitative and emergent analysis of the semi-structured interviews, survey responses and feedback cards revealed

complex and nuanced reflections on the programme. We have seen further examples of an increase in wellbeing and new knowledge and skills learnt, participants continue to have their horizons broadened through involvement in *Open House*, but perhaps, most strikingly and in contrast to previous findings, an increase in confidence was the most pervasive response. Individual community members spoke of personal growth in self-esteem and confidence, and there were numerous examples of community organisations approaching Kettle's Yard with confidence in how the gallery can support their goals and local community need.

The research set out to capture a holistic range of perspectives and to listen to and understand all views and opinions; in particular, we were interested in understanding the experiences of change brought about by *Open House*. The report now considers the key themes emerging from the study, and shares the evaluative findings, describing how the journey of being involved in a collaborative process of working with artists and one gallery over a significant period of time has effected and enriched the lives of people living and working in CB4 postcodes.

Enhanced wellbeing through accessing culture, and acquiring new skills and knowledge

Learning new skills, developing new knowledge

Several individual community participants spoke about relishing opportunities to learn new skills and develop new knowledge. For example, the majority of Year 4 students from the Grove Primary School (who had participated in Enni-Kukka Tuomala's *Campaign for Empathy: North Cambridge*), when asked what amazed them most about *Open House*, spoke about learning more about the concept of emotions and working with an artist to create stop motion animations through an online app, as well as sharing a desire to learn more. As one student reveals in their delightfully drawn feedback card, found below:

What amazed me most about Open House with Kettle's Yard...



Figure 5 Feedback card collected from a Year 4 student at the Grove Primary School, 2021 - 'What amazed me in Kettle's Yard was everything. I loved wear we did amotions then stop motias app [sic]'.

Whilst another student, Nico, reflected on their experiences during the pandemic and enjoying doing something 'challenging' at a time of isolation:

What amazed me most about Open House with Kettle's Yard...

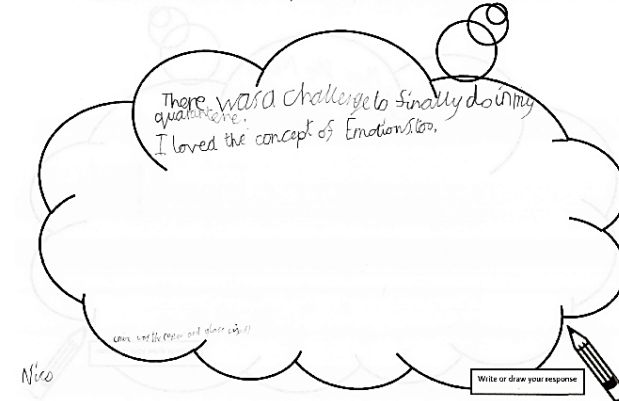


Figure 6 Feedback card collected from a Year 4 student, Nico, at the Grove Primary School, 2021 - 'There was a challenge to finally do in my quarantene. I loved the concept of Emotions too [sic.] (mine was the paper and glass ones)'.

In a similar way to Nico, Maria (Family Worker at the Red Hen Project), shared through the online survey that *Open House* activities proved invaluable for families, offering something enjoyable and constructive to focus on during this difficult year: 'The resources and the activity ideas have provided families positive memories in such a challenging time – during lockdown'. Several participants described how participating in *Open House* supported their wellbeing in a period of uncertainty and social isolation brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic, this will be explored in more depth later in the report.

Anastasia, Community Chaplain at the Church of the Good Shepherd, who has a remit to support vulnerable children and families in the area,

described the incredible range of activities that *Open House* workshops provided through their partnership with Kettle's Yard. She recognised the opportunity for not only the children, but also their parents and carers, to develop new skills in a welcoming environment, as she states:

'I can't even describe to you the variety that we've had, like making badges is quite simple, on the one hand, and then making pancake hats where you flip it up and catch it on your head, with Playdoh. It's just a game that you'd never ever think of and then bits of clay and making paper boats and kites and chalk drawing on the floor... They're [the *Open House* team] just so encouraging. Like with the blanket project, like I said just the fact that families found skills that they didn't know that they could do and they found it relaxing. A big thing as well was sitting down with their child and doing something positive rather than the TV being on. There'll be no judgement, but they were doing something together and producing something together. That helps with their parentings skills and yes, all those different things'.

Adults and children alike savoured the opportunity to learn something new. Barbara, Ros and Val, all part of the Grovebury Ladies, described this as their 'best experiences' of *Open House* in a group interview, with Ros stating that learning a new pottery technique was her favourite aspect of the programme:

'I think the best thing that I did was the... and I really enjoyed was when we did it with Paula Armstrong at the Rowan Foundation in Montague Road. I had never done coiled pottery. I'd been on the wheel and I'd made lots of things on the wheel years ago and this time we couldn't go on the wheel so she said

that we could do coiled pottery and I made a coiled pottery jug and I'm really, really pleased with the jug that I made. I made this lovely jug, which is still here somewhere and I'm really pleased with that. And all the pottery which Paula did with us went on show at the Manor Community School [recently renamed North Cambridge Academy] and the Mayor was there and it was lovely. All our stuff was all on show. We made plates... really beautiful plates and as it was coming up towards Christmas time, some of them made some sort of Christmas trees and honestly they were absolutely lovely, the stuff that people made. So, that was one of the best sessions I think that we actually had and I really enjoyed doing the coiled pottery which I'd never done before'.

Later in the interview, Ros also reflected on the importance of learning new knowledge at any age, (the experience of learning for Ros was not just confined to skills development), which she experienced with each *Open House* artistic residency that focused on a different theme or subject:

'I really like doing it actually. I don't know what my expectations are. I mean, you seem to be learning things the whole time. Every time we get a subject to do you feel as if you learn a little bit more about something that you didn't know about. I'm quite happy to carry on and to keep learning really and keep going as long as I'm physically able to do it'.

Val equally described the importance of being mentally challenged and stimulated, regardless of age, stating that:

'Just to stretch us. You know, even when you're younger you don't stretch yourself very much. You just keep in your own

little... what you know. I think all through your ages you need your mind to be stretched and your attitudes to be stretched as well. And so, you just keep throwing it at us and we'll keep doing it'.

Access to culture through new opportunities

For many participants, and those representing organisations working with members of the community, access to opportunities they would not usually have proved incredibly significant, as Gill a participant from Cambridge Community Arts shares: *'I think I've been quite excited by the whole opportunity of doing things I wouldn't normally get the opportunity to do'*. Barbara from the Grovebury Ladies, also noted that without access to transport, provided through *Open House*, many of the group would be unable to visit Kettle's Yard due to a lack of parking and, in some cases participant mobility issues. Helen, a Teacher at the Grove Primary School (who is involved in *Open House* in a number of capacities), also spoke of the effects on her teaching practice and the students' experiences through gaining access to specialist equipment and by working with specialists, such as artists. Here, she describes the experiences of students who worked with *Open House* artist facilitators and artist in residence Harold Offeh:

'Also their pride in what they achieved, working with professionals, bringing in all sorts of items we had, some enormous screen printing equipment brought in by *Open House*. We had all sorts of other recording equipment, things that we don't have in school, we don't have the funding for. The children were gaining experience with so many different interesting equipment and objects that they otherwise wouldn't work with. Learning skills that we, as teachers we don't have, we can teach art, we can teach science and teach these things but from a

specialist there's nothing like it, having specialists coming into the school, working hands on with the children'.

David, Vicar of the Church of the Good Shepherd, relatedly shared, in the online survey, the importance of broadening opportunities through the arts:

'It [Open House] gave access to inspirational artists and art that our community would not have ordinarily got. The fact that they were willing to come to 'us', made a huge difference. Often our community can feel overlooked and not welcome'.

One of the key ways *Open House* offers access to culture, particularly for children and families, is through being a key partner of, and providing high quality arts activities for, Cambridge City Council's Holiday Lunches, since their inception in 2013 (Kettle's Yard 2021b). Kettle's Yard has a long-standing partnership with the Holiday Lunch programme at Church of the Good Shepherd and the success of these sessions has meant that they have also supported lunches at a number of other community centres across North Cambridge (ibid). In 2018, Kettle's Yard hosted their first Holiday Lunch onsite, providing transport for families, many of whom had never visited the gallery before (ibid).



[Open House] gave access to inspirational artists and art that our community would not have ordinarily got. The fact that they were willing to come to 'us', made a huge difference. Often our community can feel overlooked and not welcome.

David Maher

Anastasia, also from the Church, shares, from her perspective, the benefits of *Open House* for families in the area, by stating that:

‘I just think that the Holiday Lunch families consistently know that they can come to activities that are really well run, that aren’t too high brow for them, that they aren’t going to be judged for what they can or can’t do and that they can access them, and that there’s this complete variety. There’s just this huge variety and I think those children and those families coming and knowing that they can access that, and it’s not daunting, they’re never put on the spot, I think that has a huge impact... I know that everybody’s budgets are really tight at the moment and I know that Kettle’s Yard have been going through some reshuffling... give them [Open House] the money, they are such a good use of it and they are so generous and they’ve got such a good reputation in the community and they are so welcomed by the community that wouldn’t normally access or link in with agencies like that. I just can’t speak highly enough and I really hope things will continue after this awfulness [Covid-19 pandemic]’.

Historically there has been an inequality of wealth and opportunity in Cambridge, with communities in North Cambridge missing out on experiences and overshadowed by negative, often inaccurate, stereotypes. As Andrew Nairne touched on earlier, and Anastasia brings to light here, people living in postcodes CB4 have not had the same opportunities to access culture as others in the city; *Open House* has enabled this for many people through establishing long-term relationships built on trust and by providing creative activities in an open, warm and non-judgemental environment.

The importance of this welcome, and open-minded and friendly attitude is a key component of *Open House*. Lauren, a participant from Cambridge Community Arts (CCA), thoughtfully considered this in her interview and talked about some of her previous experiences of feeling judged and stigmatised due to being part of a mental health group, whereas meeting Wright & Vandame for the first time was a very different experience:

‘When they came in, initially they were really engaging and really interesting to talk to. They weren’t afraid of mixing with the group. Sometimes not all the artists come in and meet us at CCA. I was quite impressed by the way they came into the room and they weren’t afraid of us. When you’re in a mental health group then you’re always aware that people from outside... This sounds really odd but that they’re going to come in and you’re aware of the stigmatising aspect of it in that they might come in and think, oh you’re a bit strange or whatever it is, or have preconceived notions about what we’re going to be like. What it’s going to be like and how we’re going to behave and how we’re going to act. Are we all going to be running around like howling at the moon or something? It’s not quite that extreme but you have that initial thing of you don’t know how people are going to react. I think that’s a good thing for the artists who come in to be aware of. I suppose they [Wright & Vandame] seemed more confident in coming straight into the room. The initial thing when they came in and mingled with the group was a really nice thing to do and they didn’t... It wasn’t that they were having a meeting and they were sitting us all down and telling us what was going to happen and we might not have that much input into it, maybe more of a tokenistic input. I was

talking to him [Vandame] about all sorts of things, comedy and Saturday Night Live and mental health and the beginning of ideas they were having for their project with us and stuff like that and his own experience of mental health in his family and stuff like that. They didn't seem awkward or afraid of talking about those sort of things and I guess sharing a little bit about themselves as well. I suppose it made it seem like they were on the same level as we were, rather than coming in and prescribing what was going to happen from a slightly heightened position or distanced position'.

Enhanced wellbeing through connections with art and people

Access to culture and opportunities for learning, offered up in an inclusive and respectful way, have boosted wellbeing in some of the participants. Stephen Peter Oldham articulately reflects on this when considering his own and others' experiences of *Open House* (including his son's), also accessed through Cambridge Community Arts and during the *Meeting Ground* residency with Wright & Vandame. Stephen wrote in the online survey that:

'I attended and performed poetry at an *Open House* meeting ground day at Arbury. There were exhibits of artwork and five of us performed poetry for the audience. It was an enjoyable and mentally rewarding experience and there was a good atmosphere and everybody seemed to enjoy the experience'.

He continues, by stating that:

'I am quite an experienced performer so it was another performance, but I will say it was a different environment where

I felt Poets and Artists can reach out to people who need help, rather than people who just want to be entertained'.

Arts and culture, in this case, was more than offering up entertainment, it was stimulating, enjoyable and supported people's mental wellbeing. David, also suggested that through inspiring and encouraging creativity, *Open House* enhanced people's wellbeing:

'What excited me was the level of creativity that they were able to instil in the community. Producing some brilliant artwork and improving wellbeing'.

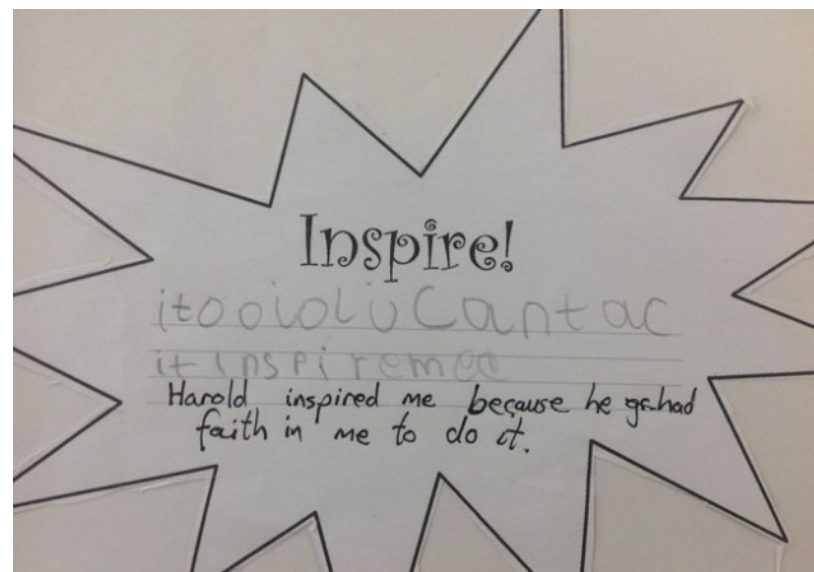


Figure 7 Response collected from a Year 3 student at the Grove Primary School, 2017 - 'Harold inspired me because he had faith in me to do art'.

Karen reflected on the experiences of one Year 3 student at the Grove Primary School, who worked with artist in residence Harold Offeh.

Figure 7 above, is the student's response when asked how the sessions with Harold had inspired him, and has been annotated by his teacher. Karen further considered this, sharing that:

'He struggled so much with behaviour in class, and evidently his reading and writing ability is very low. However, the energy and physicality of Harold's session and the friendship and faith Harold had in this young lad just gave him confidence and focus'.

As previously mentioned, *Open House* has been a lifeline for many during the pandemic, with activity moving online, over the telephone, or being provided through the post in the form of activity packs. For Val, of Grovebury Ladies: '*It's been something during the lockdown that's something to look forward to*'. When asked during the group interview in what ways *Open House* had effected their confidence, Val responded with:

'Well, I lost Rick just over a year ago. 'Cause he used to come with me, I was told about the *Open House* and we went along to that. But when he died I was obviously, "What do I do now?" and these two [Ros and Barbara] they say, "Do you want to come..?" and I say, "Yes." So, it's helped me through my grieving really. It made something to look forward to and I've had fun doing it. And thank you Barbara and Ros for... I won't say dragging me into it but inviting me to join you in all these things because I've thoroughly enjoyed it'.

The socialisation through *Open House*, and the support and camaraderie of the Grovebury Ladies is profoundly captured here, as Val describes how important it is to have something to look forward both during lockdown and at a time when she is grieving having lost her

husband in the last year. Similarly, *Open House* has provided Ros with a focus and structure to remain active and connected, as she candidly shares here:

'But I think *Open House* has... it's sort of given you lots of ideas really and meeting people, we met so many people through doing this. And when you're old like us, you need to do that. You need to go out and meet people and do all these things 'cause otherwise you vegetate don't you? You get home and put your old slippers on and the television on and you think, "Oh. Can't be bothered to change me clothes. Can't be bothered to do this." But because we're doing these things, it makes you do it. It makes you do something that you probably wouldn't. It's been brilliant really. Really brilliant. Thank you, Karen for helping us'.

Open House has provided the impetus for Ros to continue to be motivated in her day-to-day life. Connection with others is a key aspect of *Open House*, and for several participants the highlight of taking part, as Gill suggests here:

'Which was the highlight, you know, well it probably sounds a bit strange but meeting the people and sharing interests with them. Meeting people that I don't know or do know, and getting together really and enjoying fun times doing stuff'.

Similarly, community member Bryan Johnson writes in the survey in response to whether *Open House* had been a positive experience: '*Meeting different members of the community and enjoying the different events that brought us together*'. Lauren also spoke about the deep connection she felt when meeting artist Emma Smith at the art

apothecary in the first residency, and how she found her work engaging and surprising, stating that:

‘The way it’s affected me in a way that I didn’t expect but in a nice way. I suppose it made me feel connected to the work and... It was like a light bulb going off in my head I think when I got what she was doing, or at least it felt like it did. I felt that she understood what was needed to make people feel connected. It’s hard to describe. I felt she really understood that on quite a deep level. I really had that feeling quite dramatically I suppose when I was talking to her at the apothecary’.

Relatedly, Maria also recognised the potential of the arts, and specifically *Open House*, to bring people together and through that connection enhance people’s wellbeing : *‘It’s great to work with enthusiastic people that really care and want to improve the well-being and confidence of North Cambridge Community – through art we can connect so well with each other... Thank you for making this possible’*.

Broadened horizons, new connections, and shifting attitudes

At the end of the first artistic residency with Emma Smith, the most significant and prevalent finding in terms of benefits to community participants was that their horizons had been broadened, both in terms of their views of what art could be and their personal aspirations (Plumb 2017). In this section of the report, we interrogate the theme of ‘broadened horizons’ further and explore the ways in which *Open House* has brought about new connections to art, institutions and people, as well as how the programme has more broadly changed attitudes, at both a personal and communal level.

A shift in perceptions of what art can be

In the most recent study, there were numerous examples of participants describing a subtle, and in some cases profound, shift in their pre-conceived ideas of art, including Christine Cowling-Jones. Christine, who has been involved in *Open House* since its launch in late 2014 as a member of the community panel and as a participant with her family, shared in her interview how *Open House* had changed her perceptions of art:

‘I suppose traditionally you think of going into an art gallery looking around and it just being quite an experience. You go round by yourself and have a look around. It really did open my eyes that it can do so much for so many people and art could be so collaborative. I think that was the really exciting thing where the community artists and the ideas they have and everything. Events, performances and things like that really widened my horizons and expectations of what art can be. It’s been very good’.

Her understanding of how art can be experienced moved from something quite passive to a much more active involvement in collaborative practices. In a similar way, Anastasia also reflected on how working in partnership on *Open House* had altered her view of art, seeing it as *‘lots of different possibilities’* that *‘come outside the box’*, she expands by stating that:

‘I think it’s widened my view of what art is. I’ll be honest I went to look around Kettle’s Yard early on when I got this job because I had been there, but not for a long time. I went there and I didn’t really get a lot of the things. Even though I think I’m quite arty, but I think over time it’s made me understand it’s much

more, I don't know how to say this without sounding pretentious, but almost I see a lot of ideas, like their *Campaign for Empathy*, it's not just about this finished product but the emotional side that goes with creating and things like that. It's not just like... I know art isn't just looking at something and then painting something but it's very much more to do with how people get involved and their emotional state when they get involved and collaborations and things like that. Art is a much wider thing'.

Her understanding had moved to a more conceptual level, whilst also now appreciating the collaborative processes of creating art, not just the final artwork. Golzar, Project Development Coordinator at North Cambridge Community Partnership, also shared that *Open House*: *'really changed my point of view and the community's point of view that you can use art as a means to deliver different activities and to enjoy life and to come together'* and that by breaking down barriers to accessing arts *'you can learn to bring art to our day-to-day lives and we can enjoy it'*. It is clear that Golzar sees the potential and instrumental benefits of participating in the arts, including bringing people together and living a more enjoyable life.

Similarly, Manager of Arbury Community Centre and community panel member, Alan Soer could also see a change within himself, as well as the potential of the arts beyond its intrinsic value, he shared:

'That's been very inspirational. I feel it's benefitted me, I've changed, not physically, but internally in my head I see things completely differently. That's a change in my perception of art, certainly how it can be used as a tool for people to grow themselves and to do things they wouldn't normally do, it's also

a useful way of investigating things in a non-confrontational way. In effect what *Open House* has done is it's stolen art from the arty farty people, and it's put it in the domain of the masses in a way that's very, very exciting'.

Artist facilitator Hilary Cox-Condron also reflected on the difference *Open House* had made in terms of shifting perceptions and advocating that art is for everyone:

'I think that working collaboratively on projects and having different artists come in and the outcomes being out in the community and being developed by the community as well. I just think that really opens up conversation and scope to think about what creativity means, what galleries are for. What art is, and how communities can get involved in art. We're so used to being told that art isn't for us, creativity isn't for us, galleries aren't for us, but actually I think that this [*Open House*] really sparks those ideas and conversations that actually art is for us and art can happen at the outside of Arbury Library for instance and it can happen at the community centre. It can be really impactful and inclusive art that has an important message and has a lot of people involved in it and looking at it and responding to it, and considering it as really good piece of art'.

Kettle's Yard – a place for us

Not only has *Open House* expanded community participants' understanding and perception of art, it has transformed the ways in which some members of the community feel connected to cultural organisations, such as Kettle's Yard. As previously described in the report, one of the main driving forces behind *Open House* was a lack of meaningful connection between Kettle's Yard and the communities of

North Cambridge. Communities felt that the gallery was ‘*not a place for them*’ (Wafer Hadley 2010). Incredibly, at a North Cambridge Community Partnership networking lunch in July 2018, the Community Development Team from Cambridge City Council shared with Karen that the communities’ view had dramatically changed – in a feature entitled ‘What’s good about North Cambridge?’ Kettle’s Yard was voted in second place by the community, with Arbury Carnival voted number one (the longstanding Carnival is also supported by Kettle’s Yard through the *Open House* programme).



I was very pleasantly surprised that they [Kettle’s Yard] have projects that bring Art to the communities, and was blown away by their generosity. Refurbishment of Nuns Way Pavilion is an incredible gift to the community and I believe will bring returns to people's quality of life.

Jelena Shinhmar

Maria shared that: ‘*in the past, I would associate this place [Kettle’s Yard] to the middle high classes and it is not the case at all – Art is open to all – Thank you for making this possible with your support*’. Maria’s initial thoughts on Kettle’s Yard as a place for the middle classes, echoes Kettle’s Yard’s findings (2014) that communities believed that prior knowledge was needed and that the gallery’s association with the University acted as a barrier to access. Artist in residence Harold Offeh

considered how working collaboratively through programmes like *Open House* have the potential to challenge the exclusivity of the art world:

‘I think for people who hadn’t experienced or heard of Kettle’s Yard they were able to think about the possibility of working with an artist and making art. I think it allowed them to think and experience a gallery as not an aloof or remote thing. But as something accessible and perhaps a resource they can use. More generally I think the project and *Open House* is about changing perceptions of elitist culture’ (cited in Kettle’s Yard 2017).

Community participant Jelena Shinhmar’s understanding and opinion of Kettle’s Yard has also been expanded after participating in workshops at Nuns Way Pavilion with her, and her friend’s, children; in the survey she wrote:

‘I was not aware that Kettle's Yard was more than a museum. I was very pleasantly surprised that they have projects that bring Art to the communities, and was blown away by their generosity. Refurbishment of Nuns Way Pavilion is an incredible gift to the community and I believe will bring returns to people's quality of life’.

Building bridges and challenging negative stereotypes

For some participants, *Open House* supported a wider drive to challenge misconceptions and negative stereotypes surrounding North Cambridge. Although there are multiple issues of deprivation in the four wards of North Cambridge, the ways in which the area is presented are often simplistic, reducing the communities to a series of ‘damaging headlines’. Even as early as 1967, an article on Arbury and Kings Hedges

(Symons 1967: 4), used the headline ‘The problem of litter and loneliness’, more recently an internet search of North Cambridge⁴ unearthed a damning meme, and it appears that the *Cambridge News* regularly presents a negative picture of the area, with the headlines – ‘Is this Cambridge Christmas tree the saddest in Britain’ (Care 2017) and ‘Drugs, nasty dogs and speeding cars – life in two notorious Cambridge streets’ (Pengelly 2019). Christine reflects on this ‘bad press’ alongside her perception of North Cambridge before living there, how her views have changed, as well as recognising the potential of the programme to bring together people from all over Cambridge:

‘Well before I lived in North Cambridge it had bad press but since I’ve lived here I haven’t had any feeling myself like that. I grew up in London and I’m used to multi-cultural environments and living in North Cambridge fed that need in me to know all sorts of different people. *Open House*, that’s exactly what’s happened there’s all different groups of people that can come together. That’s really a very positive feeling. People really do get on and communicate with each other over ages, different ages, different races. I think it’s been really important’.

In many cases, it also appears that, it is people living in other parts of the city that stigmatise North Cambridge. Golzar from NCCP discusses the ‘reputation’ of the area and explores the potential of cultural organisations, like Kettle’s Yard, to challenge these labels:

‘I always see that there are a lot of reputations about North Cambridge but when you work here and live here you find out

that people are amazing here and so maybe a lot of people from the other side of the town they didn’t really know how wonderful North Cambridge residents are and even having a look at the statistics I could see the number of crimes, the number of Covid, the people who have infections are quite low compared to other parts of the city. The reputation is always the same, though... I think Kettle’s Yard has a great role and they are in the city centre and they have a lot of visitors. They can definitely change this reputation’.

North Cambridge Community Partnership (NCCP) also approached Kettle’s Yard in 2020 to engage local schools in creating decorations for a Christmas tree erected in the centre of Arbury Court, the local shopping parade (Kettle’s Yard 2021c). NCCP specifically wanted to work with 2021 *Open House* artist in residence – Enni-Kukka Tuomala and the *Campaign for Empathy*, as it seemed a timely and positive way to bring people together emotionally, if not physically (ibid). The artist worked with children and young people from local primary and secondary schools to generate empathic statements and these were shared in text format on a yellow ribbon decorating the tree (ibid). Feedback was very positive, with community members describing the tree, formally described by the *Cambridge News* as the ‘*saddest Christmas Tree in Britain*’, as ‘*uplifting*’ (ibid).

Alan believed that *Open House* had brought people together from different parts of Cambridge and that through the programme North Cambridge had been ‘*put on the map in a positive way*’. He continues:

⁴ A recent [internet meme of North Cambridge](#) includes stills from the animated Lion King film, with text replaced to read: ‘*Look Simba... Everything the light touched is good Cambridge... That’s Arbury, you must never go there*’.

‘Yes, I think it’s done the wider community really good, and it’s brought the wider community to other parts of the city, so to speak and shining a different light to what people’s perception of King’s Hedges. I suppose it’s changed people’s lives in all sorts of ways, it’s the power of people, it’s given people more confidence, it’s shown that you don’t have to have a big house and lots of money to be part of something quite special’.

Relatedly, Anastasia discusses the perceived ‘town and gown’ divide in Cambridge and how *Open House* has already, in very practical ways, started to break down that division through building understanding between different community groups:

‘I’ve lived in Cambridge for a long time. I’ve taught at schools that are in quite deprived areas and we do a little local history project and children genuinely wouldn’t know about the Colleges and that side of Cambridge at all. The “town and gown” split is massive and it really annoys me that it’s that big and it’s really unfair that people and families are interested in the Colleges and don’t even know about The Backs [an area along the river at the back of the Colleges] and that they can go there and enjoy that. I think Kettle’s Yard are really good at starting to bridge that gap. There was a time when we all went to Kettle’s Yard, I think it was an Easter Holiday Lunch. We don’t normally do it because Easter’s quite packed for the Church but they mini-bused everybody over there and then they could do things there. I think that’s such a good way of starting to blur those edges’.



Figure 8 Wright & Vandame commissioned a Jazzercise session at Arbury Carnival 2019, photograph by Karen Thomas

Long-term and sustained involvement in the arts has the potential to bring about a primal change in individuals, one which alters their perceptions of the wider world around them (Plumb 2017). This, in turn, might enable individuals to question the status quo and generate more empathetic and receptive attitudes towards the unfamiliar, be that people, places, experiences or attitudes (ibid). Several community participants, reflected on their engagement with *Open House* over a long period of time, for Ros she described engaging in the programme as a catalyst for shifting her perception and attitudes more broadly: ‘*I think that it has opened up my vision to lots of other ideas and things*’. A change in perception may not only lead to looking at and understanding the wider world with fresh eyes, but set in motion an altered awareness of what can be achieved. This can help people raise

their vision beyond the immediate and raise their expectations of what is possible and desirable (Matarasso 1997: 58).

Community aspirations increased

Artist Hilary Cox-Condron reflected on the transformative power of *Open House*, literally and metaphorically. In her interview, she recalled the renovation of an empty shop unit into an art apothecary as part of Emma Smith's residency project, and the potential of this very visible makeover:

'... the shop that was converted on Akeman Street, the shop that Emma was working in. That actually was really lovely and I think in a way that was even better to have that in that baker's that was disused and to see people excited about their street there, and how that had been transformed. Actually, that is bloody amazing isn't it? To be able to see things be transformed on your doorstep. That is amazing because that opens up our own imaginations to think that we can make differences on our doorsteps which is what we probably will need to be doing. Oh, it's revolutionary actually, yes'.

Alan also saw the possibilities *Open House* afforded in inspiring people and offering opportunities for individuals to develop their capacity and believe in themselves, he shared that:

'There was this pool of lots of potential, not just in art, but people have got lots of potential and they've created a vehicle where people could exercise that potential and show that potential. Even more important in some cases, believe in their potential'.

Alan continues, exploring some of the issues families face in the area and the ways in which programmes and opportunities like *Open House* might be used to broaden horizons and as a vehicle to address the root causes, rather than masking over difficulties:

'If you live in an area like this, a lot of people lead a very grey life. It's dull, they're living on minimum wage or benefits, their exposure to experience is very limited. I'm not saying they're all doing that, but it's very narrow. If you can expose children, or anybody to other stuff... Some of these kids have never been to the seaside. We used to do an annual seaside trip with the King's Hedges Partnership, and take kids and young families who couldn't afford to go to the seaside. They used to love it. For them it was colour, it was a bit different, getting your toes wet, never paddled in the sea. That type of thing... The governments are very good at doing stuff for poor people, for disadvantaged people and it tends to be very sort of you need some more money so here's a food bank, here's some more benefit. I'm not saying it shouldn't happen but it's not a solution, it's a sticking plaster... I'm not being judgemental I'm just telling it how it is. I think something like *Open House* would be a really good vehicle to be used much more widely in lots of areas'.

For Karen this broadening of horizons and an increase in aspirations is palpable and a critical outcome of the programme, she shares that:

'I've seen a change in the community in the way that they're more confident and they can see the possibilities of arts and artists and culture and how that can positively impact on the social concerns they might have in their community. It's been transformative really. Social concerns, like a lack of self-

confidence, because Arbury and North Cambridge has a particular stigma attached to it and people don't have a huge amount of aspiration. It's like participants are saying "we're worth bothering about" and "I can achieve this. I've never done this before but if I can achieve this then maybe I can try something and achieve that. I don't have to stick within a silo, a pre-determined life", which is pretty amazing'.

Golzar, who works closely with North Cambridge residents echoes this sentiment, sharing a specific example of witnessing a change in attitude, behaviour and ambition in a group of young people, who initially did not want to be involved in *Open House* activities, as part of the *Meeting Ground* residency at Nuns Way Pavilion. She shares that:

'We had a couple of youngsters in this area, from less privileged backgrounds and they weren't very keen on engaging, when they saw something was happening in the area they really didn't want to take part. At the same time, they didn't want that activity to happen. There was a bit of a struggle sometimes, when they came around and they wanted to stop things happening. We spent a bit of time with them, before Meeting Ground, in that for around six months I was inviting them to all our activities. They were coming around and helping us and I could see that the behaviour changed and by the time that we were running Meeting Ground, the two youngest were volunteers, they were helping us almost every day and sorting out everything. Karen bought them two little presents at the end to say thank to them and for me it was such a great moment because I could remember how they were behaving in the first days and how, by helping NCCP and just helping out with the activities and other things they felt like they'd been included'.

Kettle's Yard's and NCCP's continued investment over a six month period with the young people clearly paid off and supported the young people in feeling a worthwhile part of the community and *Open House*. Jelena Shinmar, community participant, reflects on the power of art to inspire and to show what is possible, as well as a belief in and care for communities. She recognises the importance of using high quality materials, and a thoughtfulness in approach in order to show communities that they are valued and valuable:

'It was incredibly uplifting to see the impact of art on families and children from adverse backgrounds. Kettle's Yard brought beauty in many forms, every material was elegant and of superior quality compared to what is usually accessible to families I know. Sometimes this communicates human value better than words. And I think it may inspire children and families to strive to overcome their difficulties. I remember a reflection of a friend of mine, a young black teenager who was offered support and mentoring. Sometimes he was taken to MacDonalds for a chat and he felt cared for. But when he was invited to an upmarket coffee shop he felt a connection with beauty, he felt that he was not all that he could be and that his mentors believed in him. I think Kettle's Yard projects do just that. The genuine care, gravitas and lack of even a hint of judgement from Kettle's Yard staff was a key element of *Open House* events'.

She later goes on to describe the impact of the programme in pushing her to excel in her own life personally and professionally:

'I was challenged to take up Kettle's Yard example and invest in top quality materials in my own work in community. I also try

and do a mental check if I am offering my very best in other areas in my work’.



... the benefits don’t necessarily hit you straight away ... little seeds have been sown, and from ‘little acorns mighty oaks do grow’. And I think we might not even see the legacy now and how that branches out and for the wider community.

Alan Soer

The following long narrative, shares reflections and a conversation between community panel members Helen Harwood and Alan Soer at the last panel meeting in July 2021, after Karen shared the quantitative data of *Open House* participation between 2015-2021. They were asked to think about – ‘what they will take away from *Open House*’, which generated the following discussion around the ongoing and potentially long-lasting effects of the programme:

‘Helen: Everyone has been touched by *Open House* and that is an incredible power. When you put the figures on a piece of paper to say it’s over 21,000 people that’s phenomenal... And I think the children who have gone through the Grove and are now way up in NCA, or wherever they are, will never forget those opportunities and that will shape their choices to come, I hope. And mean that when they’re bringing up their own children they

will be more open-minded to think more broadly, more creatively, more inclusively, and that’s a gem.

Alan: It’s gone so quickly hasn’t it. Sharing those lovely statistics, they’re fantastic... Looking at those statistics really brought it home for me what Kettle’s Yard, *Open House* have achieved, and the community obviously, over those years. And the benefits don’t necessarily hit you straight away, as Helen said young children take part in activities through *Open House* and now they’ve moved onto further education. Little gems, little seeds have been sown, and from “little acorns mighty oaks do grow”. And I think we might not even see the legacy now and how that branches out and for the wider community. If we come back in about 200 years’ time and if we listen to people and you know “my great-great grandad did x, y, and z”. And I think marvellous and I shall miss it and the community will miss it’.

Increased confidence and self-esteem

The positive effect of participating in *Open House* on the wellbeing of members of the community, and in learning new skills and broadening horizons was strongly apparent in the early stages of the programme, and has remained to this day. But, in this most recent study, a remarkable finding is the significant increase in the number of participants who spoke of personal growth, an increase in confidence and a sense of empowerment through participating and collaborating in *Open House*. Furthermore, the ways in which these personal experiences were articulated were varied and wide reaching. A number of community partners also shared examples of actively approaching Kettle’s Yard with ideas for creative projects and community events. Having built a strong relationship they are now confident in

understanding how a cultural organisation can support them and the communities they work with and serve. These findings will be spotlighted, in this part of the report, through a series of vignettes in order to share the richness of the research participants' stories and experiences of *Open House* in some depth, and emphasise their significance.

Supporting individual confidence and self-esteem

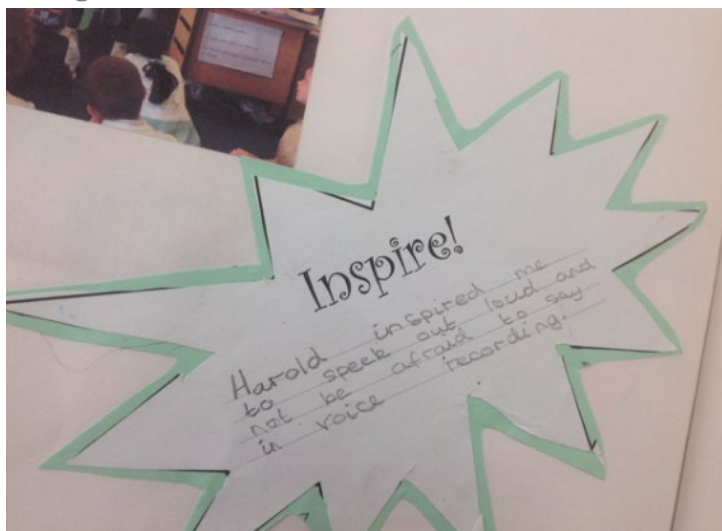


Figure 9 Response collected from a Year 3 student at the Grove Primary School, 2017 - 'Harold inspired me to speak out loud and not be afraid to say in voice recording'.

Several participants spoke about an increase in confidence directly relating to their involvement in *Open House*. Gill when reflecting on performing as part of *Meeting Ground* shared: 'Oh, I think the confidence to get up and perform in front of other people but also to find my voice again'. Similarly, a Year 3 student from the Grove Primary School also

felt inspired to '*speak out loud*', after a number of sessions working with artist in residence Harold Offeh, as figures 9 and 10 share.



Figure 10 Harold Offeh working with Year 3 students at the Grove Primary School 2017, photograph by Liz Ballard

Helen also felt that working with artists greatly improved her students' confidence in multiple ways. Here she further considers when this particular group of students worked with artist Harold:

'One particular time that I remember was with one of the artists in residence, Harold and I had, at the time a Year 3 class. His remit was quite small in terms of what he was going to do with the children. We were going to come and do some clay work. He ended up doing recordings of the children, they were desperate for him to come in and I would say the children's vocabulary improved, their confidence in speaking with strangers

improved, their ability to collaborate certainly improved and that was just one’.

Helen also believes that her involvement as a member of the community panel, and opportunities to collaborate and shape the programme, has enhanced her own confidence: *‘Actually it’s boosted everyone’s confidence, to feel that you are valued is huge and if that is reciprocated then actually that’s very good for everyone’s self-esteem’.*

Grovebury Ladies, Barbara describes, in considerable detail, one experience from this year, where she was initially filled with self-doubt, but through sticking with the process, and with encouragement from artist facilitator Kaitlin Ferguson and the other Grovebury Ladies, has developed a degree of self-believe in creating art. She says:

‘We had Kaitlin and Karen came round to all our houses and give us a box and in the box there was a mixture of all sorts of things. Once a fortnight, Kaitlin would be on [Zoom] with Karen and they’d tell us what they wanted us to do. It was quite interesting really. She had us making a framework with some wire. I thought mine looked quite good one time and then she said you’ve got to put it inside these tights. Well, then when I put it inside the tight well, it just took a completely different shape altogether. But it worked out alright. I mean, I pulled it and pushed it and squeezed it and in the end I had some kind of model. And then I tried painting it with the paint she give me and I had black tights so I used a whole tube of white acrylic paint on this model of mine but it all soaked into the tights and in the end instead of being black tights it then turned grey and then I didn’t know what to do with it so I just splashed a bit of red on it to brighten it up a bit. But I’ve actually done it. I weren’t

that brilliant at it but I’ve done it. I was worried about, “I can’t do it.” You know, it was a case of, “I can’t do it.” But then when they was all saying, “Oh. Come on Barbara,” and I thought, “Oh yeah. Alright then.” And by the time... give me half an hour and I was into it again. But that was my worst time, I think. I just couldn’t do anything, I think I thought of it as the fact that Kaitlin wanted me to do something artistic and I’m not really artistic. And when you’re on your own I was confused and sort of worried that, “I can’t do this,” and making myself look an idiot, you know. Yeah. So, I did have a little bit of a meltdown but I carried on and I think that’s what we need to do. It doesn’t matter what it looks like. It’s the fact that we’re trying our best and we’re actually doing something. We’re not just sitting there, it’s making us think about what we can do’.

Participants also felt more confident in critiquing and challenging the practices and processes of *Open House*. In one of the residencies, the Grovebury Ladies noticed that their contribution to the programme had not been properly credited in the resulting exhibition and accompanying newsletter, the following exchange expresses their disappointment in this:

Val: That was in the newsletter wasn't it? When they'd got the 'Over The Hill Club' mentioned but not us mentioned wasn't it? It was just 'Over The Hill Club' which got... I won't say got all the credit, but they were credited for it and then our group, The Kettlers or the Grovebury Ladies wasn't credited for any of it. We did feel a bit hurt about that, didn't we?

Ros: It was really unfortunate I suppose, really. I don't think our names appeared anywhere on anything and yet we'd put great effort into going down to Kettle's Yard and discussing the boats and discussing Bryan Pearce's pictures and whatnot and we didn't get anything at all. It was probably an oversight but you know, you thought well, "Why did we bother?". It's a shame really because they should have thought about us because we did all what they wanted us to do.

Barbara: We did feel that we ought to tell Karen what we felt about it.

Ros: Well, she said she was sorry that our names hadn't gone up and that, but I mean, what else could she have done? She couldn't really have done anything about it other than say she was sorry about the names not being put up and the effort that we'd put into it all. You know. I mean to be perfectly honest, I wasn't particularly worried but I was a little bit annoyed'.

Liz Ballard, Assistant Curator Community Programme, reflects on this encounter further, stating that: '*Ros was quite honest and vocal about it and because they know us quite well, felt confident to be able to say, hang on a minute*'. Karen also shared that: '*When our collaborators rightly raised their concerns around crediting and authorship for their work displayed at 'Meeting Ground', within 24 hours we had printed and installed labels for each piece and amended and reprinted the handout for the project with the group name amended*'. This event, although upsetting for the Grovebury Ladies, and for Karen and Liz, is perhaps a testament to the relationships of trust that has been developed over time. Through *Open House* demonstrating a willingness to listen to critique, acknowledging when they get things wrong, and by taking action, the Grovebury Ladies were still incredibly positive about their experiences of *Open House* and shared that they were keen to continue participating in the future.

Clare Hall, a participant of Cambridge Community Arts who participated in the *Hyperlocal Radio* residency, amongst others, also felt frustrated and let-down by one of the final exhibitions of *Open House*, though for different reasons. Clare wrote a letter to Kettle's Yard Director, Andrew, to voice her concerns. She felt that the *Hyperlocal Radio* project and resulting artwork, made collaboratively with the community, had been '*belittled*' and '*undermined*' by the lack of space given over in the exhibition at Kettle's Yard and that this was a '*missed opportunity*'. Like the Grovebury Ladies, Clare also noted in her letter that community members: '*invested a great deal of time and emotional risk in opening up in such a commendable and educative way*' and that '*this was a lot of collective energy to have been spent only to be squeezed into such a small out of the way space for such a short length of time*'.

The fact that Clare took the time to write a letter appears, to the author, to suggest that she highly valued the potential of *Open House* and opportunities for communities to collaborate in creative

processes. In an interview with Clare, she shared her reasons for writing the letter, stating that:

‘On that point I’d like to stress that the reason I criticise something is because that thing is important, that thing is valuable. I always stress to people I am taking a critical stance to this, because this is an important thing and it’s important, really important that we get it right. Who has got it wrong, or why? It’s not about shooting people down at all. It’s about getting to realise the importance and how it could be even better. If I thought for one minute that *Open House* or anything to do with it was a dead loss, I wouldn’t waste my time. It’s only because I think it’s absolutely perfectly bloody marvellous and yet was undermined that I really want to express my opinion on it. If it’s critical it’s because I know this could be so much better and so important’.

Clare’s thoughtful and constructive critique was clearly motivated by a desire to meaningfully improve *Open House* and because it deeply matters to her and she believes the programme is of great value more broadly.

These two examples, it could also be argued, demonstrate an increasing sense of community ownership of *Open House*. It might also be worth asking – What more could Kettle’s Yard have done to address these concerns, or even prevent these issues from arising in the first place? How could Kettle’s Yard ensure that a space is created where all types of experiences can be expressed? And beyond that, a space that enables all involved to critique and challenge collaborative processes? These questions will be considered in more depth in the following sections of the report.

‘Stepping stone’ to other activities

Alongside an increase in confidence, *Open House*, for some participants, has triggered interest in new and diverse topics, setting them off on a journey to seek out new opportunities. Perhaps, connected to this boost in self-esteem, and a broadening of horizons and aspirations, a small number of community participants and two panel members have started new hobbies or gained arts-related employment or volunteering opportunities. Of course, it would be naive to suggest that *Open House* is the only contributing factor to these positive changes in circumstances, but as we shall shortly see, these research participants directly cited *Open House* as playing a part.



It can give you a taste of what you like and what you're capable of doing.

Gill Drake

In the past, Christine sat on a number of committees, including as a Trustee of Red Hen and as a Parent Governor at the Grove Primary School. As her life circumstances changed she needed to give up some of her committees roles, but she described *Open House* as the ‘one I wanted to keep’. In 2018, Christine became the Receptionist at Kettle’s Yard. Christine had previously described herself as lacking in confidence, for example, in speaking up at some *Open House* panel meetings (Plumb 2017). However, in her interview with Plumb in 2021 she reflected on how being part of the community panel has built her

confidence, whilst recognising the suitable skills she already had for the Receptionist role. She shared that:

‘Well *Open House*, went with the job I’ve got, because the experience I wanted, the Receptionist experience and that, but in the interview I could talk about *Open House* and that I was on the panel. I felt like it had given me an edge to get the job. Whether that was or wasn’t, that interview I had for Kettle’s Yard I felt very confident in. I knew what I was talking about so I could rabbit on about it’.

Helen has also become more involved in Kettle’s Yard since initially being involved as a community partner and later as an *Open House* panel member; this is not necessarily due to an increase in confidence, rather a heightened awareness of Kettle’s Yard and further opportunities through the programme. Since 2018 Helen has represented the community of Cambridge as a Committee Member at Kettle’s Yard, their equivalent to a board of trustees. Helen suggests that:

‘I’m quite sure I wouldn’t have thought about it if I hadn’t become so involved through *Open House* and through the contacts that I’ve had with Karen. She and I worked initially on a different project before I knew anything about *Open House*. I worked on a project first, then heard about *Open House* and then went onto the board. I think as the board member, the committee member for the community, I do fit quite well into that category. I’m quite sure I wouldn’t have done if I hadn’t been working with Karen and the team on *Open House*’.

Gill Drake has participated in *Open House* since its inception, accessing opportunities and participating in artistic workshops through Cambridge Community Arts (CCA). CCA is a charity that offers courses to help to create healthy creative communities through improving mental health and reducing social isolation, and has worked with Kettle's Yard as a community partner throughout the duration of *Open House*.

Sarah interviewed Gill in 2015 after her 'consultation' with artist Emma Smith as part of the *Variations on a Weekend Theme* installation and exhibition. Gill found the experience '*fun, and a bit of a laugh and also had a serious side... it was interesting*' (cited in Plumb 2017). She later described the performative artwork as:

'It's like homespun advice isn't it really? It's about advice, yeah. I didn't find it particularly enshrouding or unpleasant. Sometimes you go to the doctor's and you think, God, I can't change all these things about my life, you know' (ibid).

Gill's sensitive reflections revealed the experience to be a positive one, and her comparison with previous experiences of visiting the doctor's is particularly noteworthy, suggesting that her interactions with medical professionals have not always been pleasant.

After interviewing Gill again in 2021, and as previously discussed in the report, she shared how she has relished the opportunity to meet new people and try out new activities. *Open House* has also supported her confidence in performing at Nuns Way Pavilion. But much more than that *Open House* has resonated and made a lasting impression on Gill. When asked whether the programme had fallen short of her expectations in any way, she goes on to say:

'I don't think they did in a way because I can remember them quite vividly, the things I did. I've not got the best memory so in a way they've been very satisfactory'.

Further to that, Gill brings up the envelope in which the 'prescription' she received from Emma is kept, and how engagement with *Open House* over

the long-term has encouraged her to continue to make artwork at home, make plans to stay social and meet with friend to perform, and to feel less anxious:

'I think it's part of the whole thing where I've been slowing down my life and sorting out my house and things like that and I think the *Open House* is part of the thing that kicked me into action to relax a bit and not worry. I do now do artwork from home and my envelope that I got said that I had to do performance and it would be good if I invite friends around and sing and that. I've looked into some of that but since the lockdown... in the summer I'm hoping to form a little group and do a bit of jamming maybe, if we can. That was kicked off by Kettle's Yard. I think if other people can do it and they're encouraging me to do it then'.

Later in the interview Gill spoke of her health issues, being a paranoid schizophrenic, and the frustration of not being able to '*do stuff, like drive a car or, I don't know, get a job*'. Nevertheless, Gill's determination and positive outlook, alongside being inspired by activities she participated in in *Open House*, have encouraged her to approach a local hospital radio station to volunteer. When asked what possibilities had been opened up, Gill herself describes *Open House* as a '*stepping stone to other things*':

'To be quite honest it's led to a lot of things. I think it's just opened up spaces that I wouldn't consider doing and things I wouldn't consider achieving really. The radio thing, [in] particular. I did try to get some sort of radio job at the hospital, what's the word for it, a voluntary job at the hospital but that's not happening at the moment apparently. I thought that that inspired me from the radio session thing [with Hannah Kemp-Welch]. I think if you're involved in something like the Kettle's Yard, alright it's serious and you've got to take it seriously, but it can be a stepping stone to other things. It can give you a taste of what you like and what you're capable of doing'.

Taking ownership and shaping a cultural life

One of the major ambitions of *Open House* is for the communities of North Cambridge to experience an increase in confidence in accessing arts and culture, take ‘ownership’ of Kettle’s Yard, and shape the cultural life of their locality. We have seen a number of examples in the report where community participants have accessed new cultural opportunities, where aspirations have increased, and where individuals have developed their esteem on a personal level as well as confidence in participating in the arts. The report will now turn its attention to the ways in which the programme has enabled the communities to take ownership, and begin to shape the cultural life of their city. As Arts Council England’s strategy *Let’s Create* (2020: 37) puts forward, there is:

‘... clear evidence that when communities are involved in shaping their local cultural provision, a wider range of people participate in publicly funded cultural activity. And when the cultural sector works closely with community partners, the activity itself is richer and more relevant, resources go further, and greater civic and social benefits are delivered’.

Kettle’s Yard works closely with a community panel of North Cambridge residents to collaboratively shape *Open House*, in order to enrich the lives of local residents. As active gatekeepers they share local knowledge, and act as delegates of the community and advocates for the programme. Within *Open House* the panel represents the wider community, however, it would be naïve to think that they embody all parts of the community. Rather they are committed, politicised and active members who bring a range of perspectives characteristic of the diversity found in the area. Although, gatekeeping positions and acts of delegation in many cases can be problematic, the community panel are better positioned than the gallery to speak on behalf of the community (Plumb 2017). The panel are

confident in engaging in a dialogue: challenging and questioning the processes of *Open House*, they act as politically coherent spokespeople, with the interests of the community as their main concern (ibid).

Plumb (2017) found that by the end of the first residency the panel felt more comfortable and confident in sharing decisions with Kettle’s Yard and the artists in residence; became more honest about their feelings, attitudes and concerns; and began to feel that there was parity with Kettle’s Yard’s staff. The participatory relationship at this stage in the *Open House* journey could be categorised as ‘Collaborative Making’ (Tiller 2014: 11-13). Tiller describes four types of participation that fall along a spectrum: ‘active engagement’, ‘collaborative making’, ‘co-creation’, and ‘participants’ initiative’ (ibid). In the ‘Collaborative Making’ dynamic participants are directly involved in the creation of the final artwork, there are opportunities to work together with the artist, authorship is shared, and although there is still a focus on the artist’s sense of creative outcomes, this practice is more inclusive and the participants’ input is central and equally valued (ibid). In considering its ambitious aspirations, we could ask whether *Open House*, now in 2021, has reached the far end of the spectrum – can the programme be considered ‘co-creation’ or ‘participants’ initiative’, where ownership is delegated to participants, and where participants instigate and realise their own creative ideas, respectively (ibid)?

An example where the balance of power has swung towards the community panel and started to shift further along the participatory spectrum towards community ownership is in the process of selecting the *Open House* artists in residence. The model of selection has gone through an iterative process, with the panel (alongside other community members), increasingly taking on more decision-making power.

The first selection evening was open to all North Cambridge residents, as requested by the community panel, in an attempt to ensure that the opinions and choices of the community were properly represented (though, of course those who attended were self-selecting, and therefore likely to be more confident members with an interest in the arts; consequently it is difficult to make claims that these individuals fully represented the whole community of North Cambridge). The meeting was advertised through posters, a community newsletter, email and word of mouth. Local residents were invited to meet two artists (who had been shortlisted by Kettle's Yard), who presented their work, and then select the first artist in residence through a secret ballot. This was followed by a facilitated group discussion to make the final decision. In the subsequent years, various approaches have been tested out, for instance, in more recent iterations there has been an 'open call' for artists and the panel have been involved in shortlisting the artists in partnership with Kettle's Yard. Artists, now not only present their work to members of the community, but are invited to deliver workshops with community groups, who also feed into the selection process. Specific target groups of *Open House* are asked to take part in the process, including children and young people (such as the Arts Ambassadors a group of secondary school students from North Cambridge Academy), older people, and the CCA group, which Karen describes as: '*a helpful addition to the selection process*'. Kettle's Yard also requests two references from institutions the artists have previously worked with, and has future plans to ask for references from collaborating community groups. In her interview, Jenny Powell (Head of Collection, Programme and Research at Kettle's Yard), shared that she had observed a shift in confidence and role in selecting the artists, she reflects:

'First we came up with the list of artists that the panel chose from. The panel always chose but we narrowed it down for them. I think what I noticed was from the first iteration of the selection process of the artist to the later ones is that very little needed to be said by me sitting there or anyone else [from Kettle's Yard] sitting there. The community panel had much more confidence in that and forming their own views and knowing what was best for their community, knowing what type of work they wanted. There were quite forceful views near the end about that they didn't want this type of outcome and they wanted some lasting physical legacy for example'.

Karen also recently shared that in this last year the community panel asked to assess all the applicants for the artist in residence and create the short list themselves. Kettle's Yard offered guidance in terms of fair recruitment processes, but the shortlisting was decided solely by the panel. Community workshops formed the second stage of the recruitment process with participants feeding back to the panel who they felt were strongest in delivery. The panel took this into consideration when the applicant artists then presented and were interviewed.

The community panel's experience, knowledge, confidence and capabilities in decision-making in an arts terrain has grown immensely over the six years of activity. It could be argued that the panel have taken on growing control and ownership throughout a creative process, which Tiller would classify as 'co-creation' (2014: 11-13). However, this is also an expected part of their role, what is perhaps more exciting and impressive are the examples where community members and partners (who are not part of the panel), have started to take ownership of *Open House* and shape the culture of their city.

The *Open House* team have been working with and within one neighbourhood over a substantial period of time, which has allowed for Kettle's Yard to become more visible, valued and embedded within the community. As a result close-knit relationships, and in many cases friendships, have emerged, with boundless community participants and partners consistently singing Karen and Liz's praises. A strong sense of trust and understanding about the roles that culture can play in the community has been cultivated. But more than this, and since the beginning of the first lockdown, the ways in which Kettle's Yard, and specifically *Open House*, has supported communities has been expanded.

Community partners and organisations actively approached Kettle's Yard to help them to care for their users and groups in new and creative ways, such as the Karim Foundation asking Kettle's Yard to support young people experiencing isolation. The young people participated in photography workshops, which encouraged them to share their experiences in lockdown and 'swap' and collage these with others, generating a shared experience and sense of empathy. Informal conversations between Karen and individuals from the Bangladeshi community in Cambridge revealed that many were '*struggling in the pandemic because there's a stigma about going to the food bank*', and that when they did the food was '*generally pasta and tomato sauces*'. *Open House* worked in partnership with the food banks to raise awareness of different cultural needs and profile the types of food that could be donated, as well as informing individuals that they could get food delivered directly to their homes. Karen explains their role further:

'I think because we had quite a long relationship with some of those groups they felt confident if we were there, and doing stuff [creative workshops] with their children and happened to have a conversation about how are you getting on and

what challenges have you been facing and did you know... it's about signposting, so again I think it's about building that, and having trust and having confidence in who we are as an organisation and that we're a trusted source'.

To be able to further support the communities in ways that matter to them, Kettle's Yard have left flexibility within their *Open House* programme and budget to directly respond to community partners', and their users', needs, enabling them to determine their own cultural and creative lives (Kettle's Yard 2021c). Anastasia, Community Chaplain at the Church of the Good Shepherd, also reflected on the Church's relationship with Kettle's Yard and how it had built up over time. She recognised the potential of the long-term partnership and valued the different expertise that Kettle's Yard staff brought. Anastasia described her knowledge, as a former teacher, of differentiating activities for a range of ages and abilities, as well as a deep understanding of the needs of the families she works with, and identified the creativity, range of artists and financial support offered through *Open House*. She explains the advantages of working with Kettle's Yard to her own practice, describing it '*as very much a collaboration*':

'I think for us, they [*Open House*] provide some really good, really well thought out activities which means that we [the Church] can more host and focus on those relationships and ensuring people feel welcome and supporting them while they're there. I know from experience when I'm trying to organise things where I'm doing all the craft or activity—much as I love doing that in some ways, but never to the same expertise—you've got so much to think about. You're worrying about whether you've got enough of this and that, and the relationship [with the families] suffers. My job is there to support people and individuals and to have good chats. I

think them [Open House] taking away that whole layer of worry means that we can do our job a lot better. That also has huge financial implications, first we're a little church that doesn't have much money to give out but we want to find ways to do that. I think also there have been so many different sorts of projects and ideas and experiences which the families have been able to be involved in, which they wouldn't normally. It has been just invaluable'.

Anastasia feels confident in approaching Kettle's Yard with ideas and knows that they will support the Church in making these a reality. She expresses in considerable depth the collaborative nature of this relationship and the significant benefits it brings to her in her role, and ultimately the families she works with:

'I guess from my point of view of my role, I feel like I can dream things that I would like to do because, not that they've [Kettle's Yard] got unlimited resources or anything like that and I can use them, but I know that if we've got a project that could fit, they will be so willing to collaborate and to work together and consistently as well. It's not just some agencies or groups of people who come and do a one-off thing and it ticks a box for them, but then you don't have that long-term relationship. Like I say it would be very specific and very narrow about what it is that you can do. Whereas, I can sit there and dream up this idea and then go to them and say, look is this something we could work together on. I do think it's so much better because then, what I want to do in my job is respond to the need of the families that I meet, rather than go chasing after funding that ticks boxes and then it forces me into something which isn't necessarily what families need. [It's] not that I always expect them [Kettle's Yard] to say yes or that they've got this magic pot of money or a way of doing it,

but yes, it's a longstanding relationship that we can go back to and they would suggest ideas to us and it's a mutually supportive relationship and I'd love to have more of those across the city'.

She goes on to passionately share the ways in which the partnership has inspired and reinvigorated her role, and that she sees Kettle's Yard as an integral partner in furthering the Church's remit of supporting vulnerable children and families in the area:

'I've got all sorts of things I would love to do in my job and I guess part of it would be thinking about who I would go to. I'd love to work with school age children that are really vulnerable and have real behavioural needs, either in school or outside of school. That's what I did a lot of in my last job. I'm sure that *Open House* would probably come up with something really good and a really good way of doing that. If I'm honest I just feel like my whole job is a bit of a blank slate. I would naturally go to Kettle's Yard in lots of ways to ask if they would join'.

“

I guess from my point of view of my role, I feel like I can dream things that I would like to do because ... I know that if we've got a project that could fit, they [Kettle's Yard] will be so willing to collaborate and to work together and consistently as well.

Anastasia Sanders

As we have witnessed over the last year community has never mattered more. In order for museums and galleries to remain relevant and useful to their communities their practices need to transform, in some cases drastically. It can be argued that museums and galleries are most useful when they genuinely listen to the needs of communities and adapt their practice accordingly. This is not to suggest that the relationship should be one-sided and that cultural organisations should purely act as ‘service agents’ to a community and lose what makes them unique and special, rather, that a mutually beneficial relationship needs to be nurtured. But before this can happen, communities need to trust cultural organisations and understand the ways in which they can support them. As we’ve seen through *Open House*, this takes time and an authentic long-term investment. Jenny reflected on some of the challenges of supporting communities in developing their own agency and autonomy, and considered what the future of *Open House* might look like, sharing that:

‘The challenge of keeping these things going but also trying to embed that learning into the communities so that they can drive forward their own projects has been really interesting and again made me realise how difficult that is. While I think *Open House* has been amazing in the way it’s gone about things and its model, which I think is quite an innovative model... One of its aims was to enable these community groups and particular individuals within the community to take on this leadership role in culture, in this particular area of North Cambridge and shaping the culture and its activities. I think that it’s really, really difficult to enable that to happen and step away. To get to the stage where you can step back and actually some of these community group members can lead this activity themselves I’ve definitely seen the ongoing support in some form is still important and we haven’t got to that

stage, and *Open House* has been going in different iterations now, for six years. It’s quite a long period of time. Those relationships are really strong. They still haven’t reached that level where Kettle’s Yard can step back, not abandon, but step back and know that those communities are empowered to take these things forward’.

As Jenny recognises emboldening communities to shape their own cultural opportunities is not an easy task; a fine balance of support, shifting power dynamics, alongside an ongoing relationship, is required. However, it might also be argued that the communities in North Cambridge are already on this road to self-determination and self-empowerment. Although low in numbers, we have started to see some instances where community partners are beginning to shape the cultural offer in their locale or to ‘*instigate and realise their own creative ideas*’, moving towards a ‘*participants’ initiative*’ (Tiller 2014: 11-13). Community partners and organisations have not worked on their own to work towards achieving their ambitions of enabling the communities of North Cambridge to thrive, rather they have recognised the unique expertise that Kettle’s Yard brings to a partnership and the strength gained through participating in a collaborative process. These key concerns will be explored further in the later stages of the report.

Self-Empowerment

The preceding section of the report has pointed to a shift in the relationships between the communities of North Cambridge and Kettle’s Yard; one that is moving towards a more equitable stance and process of exchange. *Open House* is part of a movement in museums and galleries that acknowledges, and attempts to address, an unbalanced power dynamic with communities. It is argued here that part of this process includes supporting communities in their self-determination and self-

empowerment. Although there is baggage surrounding these terms, that might be interpreted in a way that assumes communities ‘need help’ or are in ‘need of fixing’—or a ‘deficit’ model—I choose to use them in a purposeful way. Inspired by Suzanne MacLeod’s recent book *Museums and Design for Creative Lives*, and her definition of a creative life: ‘Put simply, a creative life is a life where all of us are free to explore ideas, to imagine and express ideas of our own’ (2020: 6), the terms help us to consider how a community might thrive culturally and creatively. As MacLeod proposes a creative life draws on: ‘the idea that all citizens not only have the right but should also have the means and the opportunity to participate in the cultural life of their community’ and that ‘the social purpose of museums, galleries and heritage sites simply becomes one of enabling (or constraining) the equitable nurturing of these opportunities’ (ibid: 7).

Here, self-empowerment is used to illustrate a complex and multi-faceted series of possibilities experienced by individual community members and partner organisations and to show a process by which they control and have agency over their cultural life. In the context of *Open House*, the community is free to determine their own involvement in the programme, shape the processes and practices, and take ownership of the cultural life of their locality. Figure 11 endeavours to visualise the experiences of North Cambridge communities’ moving towards self-empowerment through participating in *Open House*, as captured throughout this section of the report. Their experiences are, of course, not in isolation – there is an interrelationship between the communities and the gallery, with the

gallery itself experiencing a journey of change. The report will now consider the gallery – Kettle’s Yard’s – journey of change.



Figure 11 Emergent framework – Communities' journey to self-empowerment

4. The difference to Kettle's Yard

A major catalyst for instigating *Open House* was the markedly low number of local residents engaging with the gallery – in 2010 less than 0.3% of Kettle's Yard's 75,000 visitors came from local neighbourhoods (Wafer Hadley). *Open House* was established as an offsite socially engaged community programme during a period when the gallery was closed, during this period the entirety of *Open House*'s artistic activity took place with and within these communities. The aim was to not only foster meaningful relationships between the gallery and communities, but to inspire community participants to visit Kettle's Yard once it re-opened in 2018. This has always been, and remains to be, the case, as Director Andrew Nairne shares when considering his future aspirations for the programme:

'Who we are—our House, Kettle's Yard and starting with that—how do we continue to make sure it is open to everybody, it is an Open House? It's not enough in my view to run some really great workshops in Arbury Community Centre with lots of people and they really enjoy it if none of them come to Kettle's Yard. That's my challenge back, in a way. Even if we take the works out there. It's not very far away. How do we make them really actually appreciate the galleries and the House, how do we make that the place that they can see as their own and we don't get into any kind of "they're never going to like it, they're never going to walk through the doors, let's not even try". When I look forward I do think *Open House* has got to start with the House. On one level the house is actually our physical building,

of course, as I said earlier, it's also a concept. We've got to start with this incredible collection, these amazing exhibitions and talented team and physical spaces where people can come together and ask ourselves how open that is. I think *Open House* needs to go back to its roots in a way, back to where it started'.

The report now considers how far *Open House* has been successful in regards to its audience development ambitions, but more than that, it asks: in what ways has the community engagement programme *Open House* fostered more wide-reaching organisational transformation, in terms of both day-to-day practices and larger strategic shifts?

An increase in audiences from North Cambridge

In the first two months of the gallery re-opening in 2018, the largest proportion of visitors (who shared their postcodes) were from postcodes CB4 (7.3%), the four wards of North Cambridge (Kettle's Yard 2019a). This is a staggering 2333% increase from Kettle's Yard audience development survey in 2010, which inspired Kettle's Yard to act and work long-term with local residents (ibid). Data captured by Kettle's Yard throughout 2019 (the last full year of physical gallery visits before the Covid-19 pandemic struck), found that 231,973 people visited Kettle's Yard, and they estimate that of visitors who shared their postcode, 6.4% of visitors came from North Cambridge (ibid). Although,

a decrease from their reopening year (2018), this is still an increase of 2033% from 2010 (ibid).

In the period of April 2020 – March 2021 the proportion of visitors from CB4 (North Cambridge) postcode areas made up 11.85% of Kettle’s Yard visitors. This is a percentage increase of 3850% from their baseline figure of 0.3% in their audience research in 2010 (Kettle’s Yard 2021c). However, it should be noted that Kettle’s Yard was closed to the public for six months during this period due to the pandemic. The challenges for people to travel might also explain the increase in a more local audience generally in their statistics (ibid).



Figure 12 Hannah Kemp-Welch at Arbury Carnival 2018, part of the *Hyperlocal Radio Open House* Residency, photograph by Karen Thomas

Nevertheless, these powerful statistics very clearly demonstrate that local communities *‘have walked through the doors’*. There has been a

vastly significant increase in visitors coming from neighbourhoods on the gallery’s doorstep, achieved in 10 years, no less. However, of course, this is only part of the picture; statistics tell us little of the quality of experiences. *Open House* is more than just an audience development exercise, as Assistant Director, Susie Biller rightly recognises: *‘having spent the day at the Meeting Ground, although maybe the actual total number weren’t massive, there were families who spent all day there for hours and hours... I think that to me is worth quite a lot more than ticking off more and more numbers’*. In part three of the report we have developed a sense of the ways in which communities are experiencing Kettle’s Yard through *Open House*, and the value of the programme to them. But how has the programme made a difference to Kettle’s Yard? What changes when a community engagement programme—that works concurrently offsite and onsite—is embedded institutionally?

New approaches to community engagement and working with community partners

‘How has Open House made me think differently about working with communities? Entirely, it’s entirely changed how I collaborate with communities, so before Open House the work that I’ve done with communities was either in an arts development sense, so it was more like local consultation, it was very much logistics. And then, in terms of arts projects themselves – they were much more traditional workshops, so learning a skill or trying new material or something. In terms of collaboration where you’re working with a community group and an artist and together you’re coming to a new creative

outcome, I mean it's been a new experience, entirely. It's really shaped my practice as a gallery educator' (Karen Thomas 2021).

The above quotation captured in an interview with Karen makes evident the transformative effect *Open House* has had on her approaches to working with communities and her practice more broadly. It helpfully introduces one of the key components of *Open House* – collaboration, and an institutional shift towards a more genuine model of collaborative practice.

A more genuine model of collaboration

The report has previously detailed two innovations in community engagement work at Kettle's Yard through *Open House*, these include – working with a community panel of local experts to direct and shape the programme; and working with communities to select and commission a socially engaged artist to work directly with and within the communities. But there is something more fundamental that lies at the heart of *Open House* – collaboration. Although, perhaps a seemingly obvious, and currently very fashionable, way of working with communities, all too often museums and galleries get it wrong. There are many instances of museums and galleries using the term 'collaboration' without any real sense of the level of engagement involved or the practicalities of making it happen. And in some more extreme cases, collaboration is purely tokenistic or a 'tick-box exercise'. Whereas a genuine collaboration produces a different type of power relation between a cultural organisation and a community; one that is based on the premise of reciprocity and mutual respect, values different expertise, and strives for equitable ways of working.

During *Open House* the relationship between Kettle's Yard and the communities of North Cambridge has become more and more

collaborative. Correspondingly, Kettle's Yard has relinquished more and more power. Through developing meaningful relationships over the long-term a sense of trust has been built. Karen shares how nurturing these authentic and personal relationships, in some cases friendships, has fed into, and enhanced, the outcomes of the programme:

'I think working long-term has been important, we've built up that trust. I think having a face – consistent faces – they've built a relationship with us. I've got a missed call from Alan, but he's probably just checking in. He feels confident enough to ask "how you getting on, love, you alright?" That's great and likewise I will just get messages from people. I think that's really important to have that relationship. These are people I will know for the rest of my life and that's really important. They are trusted colleagues. I think in any friendship or any working relationship you have to be open to criticism. I think because we're asking big questions in the residencies, and often very personal questions, such as about memories, emotions or wellbeing, or we're asking about challenges. Those can be really personal things and you can only ask those things if you have trust. Otherwise, you're going to get a very unreal and untruthful response. I think when you explore those very personal things together, you do have a stronger relationship and that trust, and I think that works both ways, it can't just work one way. That's really important'.

Similarly, Liz values these deep relationships, and recognises that communities are more open to experimenting and trying out new things when working with trusted partners:

'I think the things that people come up with in the sessions are always fascinating and brilliant and the way that the community welcome us in and let us do all these crazy things. There's a lot of trust involved in that. That is an amazing thing to receive. We don't always know exactly what the artist is going to do and sometimes it goes terribly wrong and that, but they [the communities] still welcome us back. That is an amazing privilege to have'.



Figure 13 Isabella Martin, *You Are Here*, 2016, at the Church of the Good Shepherd, photograph by Josh Murfitt

In his interview, Alan shared how he was initially wary of being involved in *Open House*, partly due to previous negative experiences of working with other cultural institutions in the city, but over the years of working together a mutually beneficial and trusted relationship developed:

'I must admit when I first got involved I had this idea that there would be lots of arty farty people, saying, oh we're going to do this today, and this is how you paint this, and you'll be rubber stamping it. These people from North city are working with us to do this, but it didn't do that, and I should have known better really, because I've been there before. From the start, I mean, the gang from Kettle's Yard were very upfront with us and very good and we got on very quickly, we became good friends and had some good laughs. There's a mutual respect. I don't even think there's a barrier, they've got skills. They never put it up to say we've got these skills, so we'll do these, it's they bring these skills to the table and they share these skills with us and they get our input and I've never ever felt that we were just the audience so to speak. We were part of the culture underneath it'.

Beyond this, in establishing trust the communities feel more able to take ownership of the programme through making fundamental decisions, and challenge and critique the gallery and its processes, as we have seen previously in the report. Christine also shares that during panel meetings there are: *'Definitely a lot of opinions and a lot of challenging questions really, some very challenging ones and a lot of enthusiasm and energy as well'* and that: *'we might not all agree, but it feels like we're all definitely doing it for the good of North Cambridge'*. Similarly, Alan shared that in the process of selecting artists that:

'They [the *Open House* team] were very good at picking up and listening if people had a slightly different view, or thought we were going in the wrong direction or how does that work. Yes, I think fair's fair, we had more than sufficient input, so there were times when we disagreed, but we agreed to disagree. It never

came to punch ups or handbags at dawn and things like that. I never felt left out, I always felt valued and part of it’.

Lynch theorises this process as ‘creative conflict’, understanding that in order for communities to become active agents *‘conflict must be allowed to be central to democratic participation’* (2011b: 160). Through building trust and enabling dissensus, *Open House* has created an environment in which organisational change can take place.

Kettle’s Yard shares information about budgets, resources, fees and evaluation with its collaborators – as well as the creative process (Kettle’s Yard 2018a). The gallery’s approach to transparency is perhaps most explicit and established in its relationship with the community panel.



Figure 14 ‘Open House Symposium: Taking Bearings Mapping Exercise and Workshop’, *Open House Symposium*, Tate Exchange, Tate Modern, London, 2017, photograph by Beth Moseley

Golzar shared in her interview: *‘I really like the way they [Karen and Liz] share information before you go to the panel so you know all about the artists and all the information so you can review everything beforehand’*. With each new artistic residency the panel, gallery, and artist/s come together to revisit priorities, collaboratively direct and shape the next stages of the programme, and reflect on previous years, using a mapping exercise (see figure 14) and the toolkit *Taking Bearings* (Creative People and Places 2015). At these meetings frank and honest discussions have taken place between all stakeholders. It could be argued that on these occasions *Open House* has moved towards ‘radical transparency’ that Marstine categorises as a practice: *‘in which equity is achieved as both parties see (and recognize) the expertise and experience of one another is founded on the ethics of reciprocity’* (2013: 37).

Through being transparent and establishing trust Kettle’s Yard also encourages communities to voice their opinions and concerns. Helen positively reflects on how *Open House* creates the conditions for open and candid discussions, she states that in the panel:

‘I’ve certainly come up with ideas and it’s probably one of the safest environments that I’ve ever felt I’ve been in with people I don’t know very well. It’s that atmosphere of acceptance of everyone, of willingness to listen, as well as willingness to speak, giving people enough time to listen and let people ramble on if they want to. I think it’s not an intimidating environment in any way, shape or form’.

Similarly, Golzar considers in great depth the ways in which Karen and Liz facilitate discussions and create a space where all voices can be heard:

'I think the discussion part [of the artist selection process] is really helpful and Karen and Liz are doing a great job, helping everybody to be heard. They even ask, if somebody's not saying anything – "would you like to add something"? There are some moments that everybody is thinking, oh it's really hard to choose between two people but I've never seen them [Karen and Liz] trying to lead the thoughts or just saying something that changes the direction of the conversation. They just stand aside and just let us think, and when they helped or facilitated, they never lead or change the conversation, which is great. Everybody's got the chance to talk, everybody's got the chance to add something else, or even say no, I disagree because I think the other things can be more beneficial and I think the most important thing is... All of us have the chance to talk and have our say in the panel. I think they have always been very open and flexible, I mean talking to Karen and Liz I can remember when we were doing the refurbishments in Nuns Way Pavilion [as part of the *Meeting Ground* residency] there were things that I thought well we can change it, it can happen in a different way and I will talk to them. I have one opinion and it's not possible but we always had a chance to talk about it and to come up to a solution that everybody feels I'm happy. I've been heard, my opinion has been heard. I know that it can't happen for these reasons but I've been heard'.

Golzar goes on to describe discussions between Karen and herself as '*tennis talk*', in that it is always a two-way dialogue, and that '*we have both been flexible and proactive*'. A willingness to listen, to take action or, in some cases, share the reasons why something might not be possible and come up with an alternative, is crucial in a collaborative

relationship. Genuinely listening to communities also goes some way in avoiding the risk of making assumptions about communities and their interests, needs, and aspirations. Though it must also be acknowledged here, that in many of the highlighted examples the community concerns are voiced by the panel, who as gatekeepers also have their own agendas. Nevertheless, the panel are better placed to reflect the community and their desires, than the gallery and artists involved. Karen reveals that this is one of the reasons why she values working with, and respects, the panel so much:

'I think we've got a really good relationship and they will challenge us on things and ask important questions and not necessarily just of us, but of artists and also the funders. It's like, yes, why are we doing that. They ensure that we're honestly reflecting that community and not making assumptions and not casting aspersions and not working on stereotypes. That's what makes it more equitable and more collaborative. Like I say, they will say, oh, that's not right, or you're doing that in the wrong place, nobody goes to that location who are part of our target groups... It's things that you think are easy, actually you've learned are a challenge and that's really helpful. I think for the artists too there's that immediate accountability. There's a face to the community from before day one, and they already have a relationship. They already know who the members of that community are and they feel responsible to them and accountable to them, which they are. I see it quite often in public art projects, if they don't know that community and they are just working on assumptions then it's not equitable, it's not collaborative, it's still top down. I think because that is from day one of the selection process, that is immediately in the artists'

mind, and it's immediately in our minds. What would Alan say if we did this? What would Helen say if we did this? What would Martin say? It is good to have that in the back of your mind'.



I think constantly trying to make sure what we do is important and it is real and it's not just a tokenistic tick box activity. It is sincere and collaborative and it is in it for the long run.

Liz Ballard

Although genuinely listening to communities supports collaborative practice, without action of some kind it is meaningless. Several community partners and organisations cited Kettle's Yard's readiness to be flexible and adaptable in response to community need. Both Helen and Anastasia highlighted this inclination, in particular during the pandemic. Helen described Kettle's Yard as *'bending over backwards and changing the plans... that was phenomenal'*. Similarly, Anastasia said: *'I think they're always willing to come up with something and adapt and, you know particularly this last year which has been crazy'*. Liz also thoughtfully considered the need for flexibility when collaborating with communities, when asked what challenged her about *Open House*, she responded with:

'Making sure that what we did was relevant to the people that we were working with. You're constantly observing and listening and reflecting and responding. So there's no rest in a way

because you're constantly adapting but also you're working on other people's time frames as well. You're having to get as flexible as you can. That means on Wednesdays we have six workshops because every group meets on a Wednesday, why is that? That can be challenging in terms of physically rushing around and getting all that and remembering where you're going next, and, oh shit, I forgot the milk. Yes, so those time pressures and things like that. I think constantly trying to make sure what we do is important and it is real and it's not just a tokenistic tick box activity. It is sincere and collaborative and it is in it for the long run'.

Even though a challenge, and from the sounds of it frankly exhausting, clearly Liz cares immensely about ensuring the programme is as meaningful and useful as possible for the communities of North Cambridge.

However, it would be naïve to think that all of the collaborations in *Open House* have been a success, and it would be insincere to only include the positive experiences. Of course, part of the learning process is about getting things wrong, but to truly learn from those mistakes, museums and galleries need to listen to the concerns raised by communities, they need to be reflexive and to take action to ensure that these issues are recognised and resolved, ideally in partnership with communities.

The following vignette shares an example from 2019; it shows what happens when aspects of a collaboration go wrong, and how the resulting experiences have the potential to be detrimental to participants and damaging to the gallery-community relationship. The author has decided to give over significant space to Lauren's thoughtful and considered reflections and present a lengthy passage in her own words in an attempt to do justice to her experience and point of view. Lauren, a community participant from Cambridge Community Arts, divulges that:

'I think in general the motives are really good and positive and they want to engage with people and help people, although I sometimes think helping people is a bit like patronising people. I don't think that's happened very much at Kettle's Yard. I suppose because there's a lot of groups as well that are involved in the whole project, it's like we're just another one of the community groups, which we are, but sometimes it seems like they might not necessarily be that bothered about the things that affect our particular group, as a community. Mental health... I don't know, I can also imagine it's a nightmare dealing with all the different groups and different communities that make up people that they're engaging with I suppose. Maybe nightmare's not the right word. That's a bit dramatic but it's a lot to take on and to

think about, especially when you've got a limited timeframe and you've got to include everybody and create something that's going to engage every community. Obviously it's massively diverse and they might all have different needs and wants from the project. It's quite difficult to integrate it all. I suppose that's part of what they're doing but, yeah. It's just little aspects of it, I suppose. It's nice if you do get that engagement, like the two artists who came in and he seemed genuinely interested. The nice thing about it was they seemed interested in the group and the people in it, even if they hadn't done the project. The group wasn't a means of completing the project. You've got to include this group, whether you might want to or not, whether it might interest you or not, just because it's part of it. They're all lumped in together somehow. It's difficult'.

Lauren was then asked whether *Open House* felt a bit tokenistic at points, she responded with:

'A little bit, yes, but I wouldn't say I have that experience of Kettle's Yard overall. I don't think that's what it is about and it hasn't felt like that really, in general'.

Lauren then expands with a specific example of working with an artist facilitator as part of *Open House*'s Tate Exchange partnership, where some participants felt used and not properly listened to:

'Although that was a really good opportunity and obviously it was amazing. I think everyone was just thrilled and astounded that we were allowed in there [Tate]. Yes, we got to go there and that was a really amazing opportunity. It was brilliant but the actual work was a little bit odd because I think the guy who was running it he had a set way of doing things. At the beginning I think some of us thought that it was

going to be stuff we could create and that it would be our own and it would go in there [exhibited as part of Tate Exchange]. Then it became apparent that basically we were being used, we were making work to fill up the space and as a filler for the project basically. I don't mean that the quality of what we did was just filler, but I felt they were not open about that at the beginning and I really think they should have been. It was a bit confusing because I think a lot of people thought that it wasn't the most transparent way of doing things.

They'd obviously had a set plan in mind and it felt like they were using the group to pad out the exhibition that they'd already planned and we weren't involved in the process very much, what was going into it and how we did it. The images and work that came out of it were really nice I thought at the end. But it felt like it had been planned beforehand, we were earmarked to be used to make work for it and we got a trip out of it and that was it. That's how it felt to me and I don't mean that in an ungrateful way because I'm really grateful for the opportunity, but I just felt like if they knew they were going to do that they should have made it really clear at the beginning. I thought that was not a good thing to do, and they needed to really make it clear what they were up to.

The guy who ran it, he was really nice, really friendly and lovely to work with, but it was obvious at the end that they all knew what was going to happen and how it was all going to go. I was a bit confused as to why they didn't just say that at the beginning unless they didn't want to pick a lot, so they decided not to. When we were doing work it was quite rushed as well. It felt a bit like we were just shipped in to do the stuff. The guy said you could do anything you wanted basically but it became apparent that you couldn't do that in the end.

[Another member of CCA] had made this big sheet thing where she'd cut out on the sheet and it was black. It looked really good especially with the light coming through. There was a point at which I think she bought it in to Kettle's Yard when we were making stuff and he was planning not to put it in, as I remember. I remember thinking that's not good, he's told everyone you can do what you want and create great stuff and be experimental. I think that was the word he kept using, that you could experiment. Then when you actually do that you decide you don't want it because it's not part of your ordained thing. I think it was Karen, or someone else from Kettle's Yard, that managed to step in and say no, you need to put that in. If they hadn't been there or if they hadn't noticed it might not have gone in. I thought that was a bit dodgy. It might have just been a misunderstanding'.

Lauren raises several important issues for consideration when practicing collaboration – (lack of) transparency, (assertions of) power, instrumentalisation, and patronising practice disguised by well-meaning intentions. Her experiences also highlight the fact that even 'good practice' can go wrong, and that striving for an ethical and equitable practice is a continuous process that will never be complete.

Of course, there are several models of community engagement and museums and galleries do not always need to be collaborative, activities that offer up participatory experiences can be just as rich, but when it does become an issue is when it is misrepresented as such. Although presenting a different example, Karen also reflects on some of the issues that have emerged from collaborative practice in *Open House* in her view, alongside a few of her own disappointments. She shares that:

‘Obviously it’s slightly different for each artist in terms of their practice, so I think if you were to go to Harold Offeh’s outcome, you’d almost wonder where the hand of the artist was because the community’s contribution was so present and so at the forefront and so recognised and celebrated. In other residences, we still continue to have feedback from the participants about why aren’t our names up. Why have you not acknowledged, or named us correctly? You’re just thinking hang on, why are we back there again. How did that happen? Quite often, it is the emerging artist, but that also lies with me and Liz not recognising it, that there are planning stages for the outcomes. It was so disappointing when the feedback came, it was heart breaking’.

Karen acknowledges that it is partly her and the *Open House* team’s responsibility to intervene when necessary to ensure that ethical practice takes place in collaborating with communities. She later considers whether a lack of experience in understanding differing contexts of communities and what a genuine collaboration might look like, could also be part of the problem:

‘I think it’s been the case with some of the earlier career artists, and that lack of experience, when you’re full of ideas and you

know what it could be, but not understanding the audience and where they are. I think that’s been quite a difficult negotiation. Some of it is that the ideas are quite challenging, or there’s a miscommunication of what the artists envision the outcome being and what the community group or the participants see the outcome being. It’s just ensuring that everybody is on that journey together.

An artist might have worked in one particular location or with one particular audience before and then they’re not adapting their thinking to the context that we’re working in, which is quite often people who’ve had no experience of contemporary art. Their lived experience is different... An artist that works collaboratively would be more flexible and taking time to understand that group. They might have an outcome that is more reflective of the local area and the communities have more ownership of it, as opposed to having a very fixed idea of what the outcome might be and just chasing down that one person who could achieve that’.

In challenging situations like these, museums and galleries can play a key role in negotiating and mediating issues and conflicts; ensuring that communities are listened to and valued. Clearly, at times, Kettle’s Yard has ‘stepped in’, as Lauren suggests, to work through genuine misunderstandings and more troubling examples of tokenistic practice. But what more could be done to ensure that ‘*everybody is on that journey together*’? How can *Open House* better support communities in creating opportunities for their voices to be heard? And how can *Open House* more fully support artists in their practices with communities? How might the gallery help artists better understand the context of North Cambridge? And how might a longer timeframe for the artistic

residency support a more genuine model of collaboration? These concerns will be explored further in the concluding section of the report.

Kettle's Yard – a community asset

As *Open House* has progressed, Kettle's Yard has challenged itself with the ambition of being 'useful' to their local communities (2019a). In 2021, we have seen several museums and galleries transcend their traditional roles, with some – becoming vaccination centres (Thackray Museum of Medicine); creating a taskforce to provide emergency support, including getting food, hot drinks and essentials to people experiencing homelessness (Museum of Homelessness); or using their café to provide children and families with free lunches in school holidays (Firstsite).

How has the long-term nature and shifting power dynamics of the relationship between the residents of North Cambridge and Kettle's Yard, and more recently the Covid-19 pandemic, changed the ways communities value and choose to make use of Kettle's Yard? For a number of years Kettle's Yard offered free venue hire for communities, though up until 2019 this offer had largely been taken up by arts groups based in the city for the display of work created by their own community partners or for celebratory events (Kettle's Yard 2019a). Yet in 2021, Karen shared that *'a lot more community partners are confident to come to us and be like "this is our challenge how can you help us"'*? She believes that the long-term investment in one area has enabled this to happen, stating that:

'The more time you spend there, the more different groups will engage with you because they know you're not going anywhere, you're not a 'flash in the pan' partner. I think we're seen as an

asset of the local community as opposed to that weird place in town'.

Karen expands by recalling that:

'Through the pandemic we were asked to respond to Black Lives Matter and we were asked to support groups in challenging some of the food bank responses and making them more inclusive to different cultural needs. Why would you go to an art gallery for that? That's amazing that they would think that we've got the skills to support that. That's quite transformational, I think, understanding the value and what we can both bring together. It's not just going they've [Kettle's Yard] got more power and more voice, it's more they're a resource and they can support our voice, or enable our voice. I think that's interesting'.

Kettle's Yard is not just supporting the communities in ways which would be deemed traditionally an art gallery's educational role or remit, for example through providing them with art making activities (though, of course this still happens), they are backing communities in ways that are genuinely relevant, useful and meaningful to them.

Perceptively Karen also considers the potential negative fallout from adopting a more radical, and perhaps more 'human', approach to supporting communities, she reveals that:

'Yes, and I can almost hear some future criticism from people saying that's not the role of a gallery, you shouldn't be doing that. You don't have that knowledge. Actually I think working long-term we do have that knowledge and it's part of our ethics and our values in that we want to be helpful and useful.

Actually, if you're going to be useful you can't be only useful if you're painting something, or if you're being creative. It's about building connections, it's about having a conversation. It's about Kettle's Yard, it's more about giving people space to reflect and talk, share and be inspired and actually you can do that, not just on art subjects but you can do that as humans'.

A concern over the shifting role of the gallery is possibly rooted in similar criticisms surrounding the instrumentalisation of the arts or culture being used as a tool for bringing about positive societal change. Her observations are perhaps not unfounded, as in the staff and volunteer survey, a couple of anonymous respondents answered 'no' to the question 'Has *Open House* impacted positively on your working practices and processes'? Later in the survey narrative boxes, one of the respondents expanded that '*I believe the house is always the main attraction for visitors*' when asked what the benefits of *Open House* are. The second anonymous respondent wrote that '*Wishing all the collection and how it is displayed will be well protected*', in response to 'what are your future aspirations for *Open House*'? Although it is difficult to precisely discern from their responses what their actual concerns in relation to *Open House* might be, or whether they actually fully understand what *Open House* is, what is apparent is that they value the more traditional role of the gallery and for them the priority of Kettle's Yard will always be the House and its collections. However, it is argued here, that just because a museum or gallery is moving towards working in ways that are truly valuable to communities, does not negate their more traditional roles, and as Karen rightly points out, surely, if museums and galleries are able to support communities in ways that are useful they have an ethical responsibility to do so?

Going back to a fascinating point made earlier by Karen – *Open House* has generated an understanding of what both the gallery and communities can achieve through coming together and the value of that interrelationship; Kettle's Yard is now seen, by some, as a community resource or asset and that *Open House* has supported and enabled the communities' voice. Parallels can be drawn with Bernadette Lynch's most recent work, which examines how an '*ethics of solidarity*' can be applied '*in radically new and practical ways in our collaboration with marginalised people in museums*' (2021: 2). Moving away from being '*helpful*' by '*doing for*' or '*on behalf of*' people, Lynch, instead, suggests that museums should strive to be '*useful*', and '*help create the circumstances by which people can help themselves, building their own capabilities*' (2021: 3). Lynch expands:

'The shift for museums advocated here is about promoting people's freedom to choose, fostering their resilience and capability – not 'aid', but self-help, self-empowerment, the empowerment of group solidarity and action towards bringing about change. This is the useful museum in action' (ibid).

The author believes that few would disagree with Lynch's proposition in principle, but how might an '*ethics of solidarity*' be put into practice? What balance is required? Lynch assertions understand that relationships between museums and communities are interdependent, and that this radical new way of working can be put '*into practice through consciously acting in full collaboration and solidarity*' (ibid).

This 'interdependence' might be key in considering Kettle's Yard and its role in the community as a useful asset. Andrew shares that he is '*not entirely convinced*' by some conversations taking place in the sector today, whereby all practice needs to '*start with the issues in the*

community and everything works out from there'. He expands by affirming that:

'I think, well we all agree that it's about the idea of co-curation, the idea of dialogue is absolutely critical, and agency. It's quite a subtle balance. I'm not criticising anybody but I think at times it can be that the language or the way this is spoken about more recently almost asks to forget that you're from a cultural institution, you've got expertise and you've got this wonderful collection. You don't start there, you start with the needs and worries and concerns of the community. When you've really understood all of that then you might be allowed to mention that you're running this beautiful space with this incredible collection and you're interested in the visual arts. I think that's not quite right to be honest. I think it's got to be both from the beginning. I think denying who you are, and what we [Kettle's Yard] can give, and the particular context we're in, or at least not bringing it in until a much later stage, because it's all got to be focused on the needs of the community is a muddle in my opinion. I think we really need to share what we have and we need to always start from the idea that we're trying to share something that we think is of value. How do we do that in a very sensitive way that gives people an agency around how that happens, and how they connect to it and make it their own'.

Andrew's concerns stem from a shift in practice, that seemingly sets out to 'empower' communities, but actually ventures so far along the spectrum of collaborative practice that it becomes disingenuous and one-sided. In this part of the report and in part three, we witnessed community organisations and partners actively approaching Kettle's Yard for support to help with community need, aspirations, and issues.

In some cases, the partners initiated ideas and drove forward practice, but never at any point did the relationship become one-sided, nor did Kettle's Yard become a passive 'service agent' for the community.

Perhaps as Andrew suggests '*it's got to be both from the beginning*'. Or possibly, as I argue here and Lynch proposes, it is about 'interdependence', an equality of relationship, acknowledging the expertise that everyone brings to the proverbial table (including the gallery's). This might mean that sometimes work will be initiated by the community or even driven by community need, but equally and importantly, sometimes the gallery, the House and its collections will be the starting point.

Community engagement embedded within the organisation

One of the initial ambitions of *Open House* was to shift away from practices such as 'outreach' being seen as on the periphery, or the 'welfare model' (O'Neill 2002) where education and outreach activities are 'bolted on', towards community engagement as embedded in the core functions and mission of the gallery. The Paul Hamlyn Foundation's 'Our Museum: Communities and Museums as Active Partners' programme, also influenced Kettle's Yard's thinking and ignited action, with its focus on facilitating organisational change and encouraging museums and galleries to be rooted in local need; generating community agency and capability-building; and developing reflective practice (2016). This part of the report now turns its attention towards the ways in which the values, processes and practices of community engagement have started to change Kettle's Yard's day-to-day work and strategic goals in both highly visible and subtle ways.

A more outward looking organisation

'I often think that one of the best things that happened to Kettle's Yard was that it closed, in that the work that Karen was doing out in the community was incredible. The work that not just Karen, but the team and other artists were doing whilst the museum was shut was incredible and really inclusive. I think that's one of the biggest things that I've got out of it [*Open House*]. That a cultural venue isn't about the venue so much' (Hilary Cox-Condron 2021).

Open House artist facilitator Hilary Cox-Condron's shrewd observation reveals that museums and galleries are, of course, far more than their physical sites; through offsite working and collaborating with communities in new ways a more inclusive practice can ensue. For many staff and volunteers, including those not directly involved in *Open House*, a more nuanced understanding of the communities of North Cambridge has developed, alongside a shift in perception of the area. The majority of staff and volunteers do not live locally (in CB4), with some admitting that they previously had limited knowledge of the area and a narrow sense of the people who live there. Lilja Kupua Addeman, Visitor Services Manager, shared in the survey that:

'Not being from Cambridge myself, *Open House* has been very useful for me personally to get to know the community I served and worked in. This informed my staff training, volunteer and paid staff recruitment and understanding of local values'.

Lilja, who had responsibility for front of house staff and volunteers, believes that gaining experience of the area and its values through *Open House* has greatly impacted her practice, which in turn has led to a

change in approach to training front of house staff, potentially having further reach.

In an anonymous staff survey conducted in 2018, one member of staff recognised that the gallery had developed a better understanding of the issues in the area; they stated that through *Open House* there was now an:

'Appreciation of the value of real partnership work and how that works in practice. Greater understanding of the challenges that North Cambridge communities face. A real desire by all staff to welcome more people from North Cambridge to Kettle's Yard' (Kettle's Yard 2018b).

While another member of staff in the same survey insightfully shared that: '*I think Open House has shifted the perspective of the organisation as a whole – in terms of how we view our place in our wider community, in terms of what we think is possible and the risks we are prepared to take, and in terms of our ambition for what we can achieve collectively*' (ibid). Similarly, a staff member noted how communities were now taken into consideration in numerous strands of the gallery's programming, in a way that they had not been previously:

'It has put the neighbourhood firmly on the radar and they are considered in major programming strands. How can they be more embedded? How are they connected to music programming? Volunteering? Circuit? The Friends?' (ibid).

Some staff and volunteers responding in the 2021 survey looked outwards to consider the perspectives of the communities and how art and *Open House* might have enriched their lives, Dawn wrote that:

'I believe *Open House* works well linking in a practical way curiosity about art in our lives to a diverse community. Being based in North Cambridge takes the threshold into a community that might well be unexposed to Kettles Yard treasures'.

Programme Technician Tom Noblett, similarly saw the value in *Open House*, both in his role and for the community, he said that he: '*Enjoy[s] working offsite, and [it's] rewarding to bring Kettle's Yard activity to a wider audience*'. Rebecca L Greene, also responding through the survey, believes in the potential of art to positively support wellbeing and that *Open House* further emphasised this value for her, she shared that:

'It reinforced my belief that art is for everyone and I went in to work with people in the criminal justice system, informed by my own experience of engaging with arts for improved self esteem and positivity'.

Although Karen believes that Kettle's Yard are '*very much still the outsiders*', she does '*think we're much more embedded now*'. Liz describes the way *Open House*, with its outwards focus and offsite working, has supported her professional development, but also over the long-term has made her feel part of the community:

'Me personally, in my role, I think it's given me so much experience of working with lots of different kinds of people with lots of different backgrounds and experiences and interests and skills and knowledge. That's been really an amazing opportunity to work with so many different kinds of people and spend so much time with them. You really feel that you're part of the community. I remember at the beginning Andrew saying his ambition was that we would know every street, everyone from every street or something like that. I was thinking actually I

don't know every street but I know a lot of people. I know a lot of the landmarks. It's like when you live somewhere you don't know every street name but you know where it's really good to get a cup of tea at 8 o'clock in the morning or what time to pop into Budgens to miss the crowds or get a bargain. What time all the school kids are going to come out so if you want to catch them before they go off somewhere or something, you feel like I know things about the areas that you only get to know if you hang out there. I definitely feel like I'm part of a member of the community there'.

Strategically, the learning from *Open House* has influenced the development of a community strategy and a set of 'design principles' for Learning & Community, that echo the language used in *Open House*, and places its values front and centre. Notably, alongside this, in the recent organisational review 'access and inclusion' now features in all staff's job descriptions. Building on the strong partnerships and relationships between the gallery and North Cambridge forged through *Open House*, Kettle's Yard also has plans to develop a new strand of programming entitled *Your Kettle's Yard*. This participant-led programme aims to fully represent the local communities within the gallery's building, programme and operations and to increase the local communities' sense of ownership of, and pride in, Kettle's Yard (Kettle's Yard 2021b). Part of the programme will include a new Community Advisory Group—or *Your Kettle's Yard – Your Voice*—which, similarly, plans to build on the successful model of the community panel developed through *Open House*, and expand this to inform and shape all aspects of Kettle's Yard (ibid). How might the current *Open House* community panel interact with the new advisory group, and is there an

opportunity for panel members, as experienced and knowledgeable partners, to fill these new positions?

New skills, knowledge and expertise

Several staff members shared how working collaboratively through *Open House*—with artists, members of the community, and internally with colleagues across departments—had developed their practice and enhanced, and in some cases enabled them to gain new, expertise. For example, Liz, already an experienced curator, artist and educator before joining Kettle’s Yard, described a progression in her practice and a new level of confidence in working outside of the gallery context: *‘I think it’s so second nature now to be offsite and to go into a community centre or a library or a school or a youth group or a swimming pool or a park.’*

Many of Jenny’s reflections in her interview related to her learning new skills and knowledge, and her professional development. Here she shares how new curatorial approaches have developed her confidence, citing her experiences of working with collections offsite and exhibiting artworks and artefacts directly in community spaces:

‘I suppose it’s definitely helped to give a push again to thinking about using collections in offsite spaces. I think when we were doing our capital project we’d already begun *Open House* and I do remember feeling much more confident about thinking how our collection could be used across other spaces in Cambridge when we were closed. I think that came through, starting to work on *Open House* and doing things like bringing a Gabo into a disused bakery and going through those processes and knowing that it can happen. It’s also worth that risk, it’s risk versus reward for audiences isn’t it. I think that’s something that definitely changes my attitude to working with collections

offsite and other than this project we haven’t really had that much opportunity to do that. That’s been really positive’.

Likewise, Programme Technician, Tom Noblett felt that *Open House*: *‘Helped me to improve thinking outside the box and being adaptive, responsive to the installs’.*

Beyond having the conviction and self-assurance in installing works outside of the gallery context, Jenny’s confidence in engaging communities and working with learning and engagement teams has been boosted. She shares that:

‘My confidence, yes, huge, huge impact I would say. I haven’t worked in this way before. Before I came to Kettle’s Yard my role was at Tate and I had very little engagement with learning and community teams there when making exhibitions. It’s probably changed now but at that time it was very separate. When I arrived at Kettle’s Yard I had this overarching role which included learning in the community but I had very little experience of learning in community. This is definitely a project that I always talk about as well. In my own lectures and also interviews for things, as an example of models of working that can be successful. Just having observed that, but also being involved in the interview process of the artists and being in those meetings of the community panel and seeing how sometimes they work brilliantly and everybody feels very engaged and, sometimes, they don’t work so brilliantly. It’s really difficult to get people into the conversation and actually encourage people to come. I think that’s all really helped me and I do feel now that if I was going somewhere else and thinking about learning in the community I would always really

start with this type of model. I would always think about long-term projects, co-production and thinking about offsite work in the community and coming back into the gallery space. Then thinking about the relationships with the community groups, almost before recruiting the artist in whatever way that would happen. I think it's had a big impact on me actually'.



[It's] helped me to improve thinking outside the box and being adaptive, responsive to the installs.

Tom Noblett

Clearly, *Open House* has significantly and fundamentally effected Jenny's practice and will do in the future. Although learning and community work was new to her (and learning new skills and knowledge in these areas, in theory, would be expected), working with artists was an established practice for Jenny, *Open House* has gone on to influence her thinking around how to recruit artists next time. Later in her interview Jenny also talks about how *Open House* has given her a more complex understanding of how to appeal to communities, reflecting on her assumptions around how and why people might engage:

'I think that as more of a curator I suppose I think I had a myth perception that I would be able to facilitate this dialogue between the artists and the community partners. Actually what I learned was that you have to put those relationships with the community groups and partners first. Now I would think about

doing things the other way around, so thinking about how I could form relationships with those groups and then, as we have for *Open House* involved them in the process of selecting the artist. Yes, but not just so that they feel valued but also confident in coming into those situations. I think another misperception was that it would be easy to get people to turn up to these things. You can just open it up to the community and lots of people would come and be really excited that these outstanding international artists were there. Actually that's not necessarily the case, it might be for some people but it's certainly not for the majority of people and, yes, again that's made me think a bit more carefully about the process rather than just thinking first about the artist and the project and maybe there's a group that we're particularly trying to target and that's enough. I think it isn't enough now. That's one thing that's been really important'.

Susie in her interview reflected on the learning from *Open House*, in particular making reference to her former role as Head of Communications at Kettle's Yard. She has always been conscious to '*never make assumptions about what the community might want*', but after the first artistic residency felt it important to be '*firmer*' with the artists in asserting her expertise and significant knowledge in how to effectively communicate and market *Open House* to communities, recognising that she is also a partner in this collaborative process.

'I think with the first one we let the artist probably take a little bit too much control. That very much changed my approach to how we would sit down with the artists. The marketing material had a very particular aesthetic and we hadn't set the ground rules that this is also part of the *Open House* programme and we

know, or we're starting to know how to communicate with those audiences. This is a collaborative process for us to develop a way of speaking about this artwork and this project, this residency in a way that will communicate with communities. Particularly with that one [residency] we felt like we didn't have the agency to write about it and present it in a way that we thought would be engaging for the community. When it came to the next residency we were much more competent from the start in saying that "this language is quite difficult" and "this is another way that we can approach this".

Alongside upholding the expertise of the gallery, Susie acted as an advocate for local audiences and included the perspectives of the panel (via the *Open House* team) in decisions around marketing materials, to enable the process to become more collaborative. Beyond considering how marketing and promotional material is worded and framed, creating a shared and accessible language that does not rely too heavily on specific knowledge and expertise, for example in the arts, is key in a collaborative process.

Lilja also developed a better understanding of the community and their needs through *Open House* and came to see the relationship between the gallery and community as mutually beneficial, she wrote in the survey:

'Open House has been really important for connecting Kettle's Yard to the local community through local projects. This has been beneficial to my staff and I think our visitors for many reasons. Specifically for reinforcing links to local communities through and reaching new audiences. These new audiences enrich the organization and make us think about how we can

serve those who exist beyond the traditional arts/heritage visitor demographics'.

More adaptive, flexible, reflexive

As we have seen in the report, a number of community participants described the *Open House* team as adaptive and flexible. Tom Noblett, Programme Technician, similarly felt he had become more flexible through the programme, in responding to the question 'what challenged you about *Open House*?' in the survey, he wrote: *'It's sometimes challenging to work with fewer resources than we would have access to when working on-site. But overall it's good to adapt'*.

However, Liz ponders on the need to carve out more time for reflection throughout the process and not just at the end, she stated that:

'I think things that I regret or things that I think should be factored in more would be more time for reflection, more meetings with group and the artists that we're pairing them with would be really good as well. Yes, so a bit more time and a bit more... There's lots of little things going on so whether those little things could be longer, maybe not the number of sessions but just the leading up to the delivery and then afterwards as well'.

The importance of time for reflection and a reflexive practice should not be underestimated. Opportunities to undertake self-critique, confront one's own thinking and challenge assumptions made is critical in community engagement practices. Inviting community participants to reflect and critique in partnership with the gallery is an important part of the process too. Lynch describes this as opportunities to step back, reflect, discuss and analyse, she believes that: *'museums and galleries*

should build an ongoing reflective practice, which will be an integral part of the collaborative process of effective change' (Lynch 2011a: 22).

Reflective and reflexive practice can meaningfully enhance and improve community engagement work. In her interview, Karen shared a time when reflexive practice greatly helped one of *Open House*'s activities get 'back on track'. Intriguingly, the issue arose in the first year of the gallery re-opening, as she recounts:

'When we reopened I was asked to develop Community Days at Kettle's Yard and the first six months... I don't know why to be honest, but it was quite traditional in that we had invited some of our community partners in and we explored a theme in the House, and then we did a workshop together. And of course it was fine, but it wasn't ground breaking or super exciting. It was like – why are we doing this top down approach? It's crazy, we know that working collaboratively works better and so we scrapped that approach entirely and now for our Community Days we have an artist who works over a term, with a group of older people, and they explore a theme in the exhibition and then together they co-create the Community Days. There are surprises, they're not always workshops, they're not always activities but there's always a surprise when you come to Kettle's Yard on a Community Day that's been devised by the artist and by the community together. They're both there on equal terms and they're inviting you to a bit of bonkers creative world and creative experience and it's just so much more powerful, it's more equal and so it's like yes, of course that's going to work, it will work, so why did we go back, it's really silly. Yes, so it's become more embedded in my practice, in our practice at Kettle's Yard'.

It is interesting to note that even activity led by the Community Team quickly and easily slipped back into conventional and more traditional ways of working in the first few months of re-opening. It might have been all too easy to have been bound up, and too busy, in delivery work to undertake reflexive practice, meaning that the more traditionally participatory and top-down approach would have remained. But reflexive practice had, fortunately, become deeply embedded in *Open House*'s processes, in part through adopting and adapting the *Taking Bearings* toolkit. By stopping and taking a step back to re-assess what had worked offsite and how it could be applied in the context of the gallery, *Open House* could return to more stimulating and collaborative ways of working. However, as Liz considered earlier, perhaps even more time is needed for reflexive practice to prevent reverting to traditional ways of working. This issue will be unpacked further in the conclusion, particularly in relation to what happens to working practices that have taken place offsite for two and a half years when the gallery re-opens.

Integrated and collaborative

When Andrew joined as Director of Kettle's Yard he created new roles that would form part of an integrated programming team, including Karen's position as Community Officer and Jenny's role as Head of Collection, Programme and Research. External funding supported the creation of the Assistant Curator Community Programme role, filled by Liz, and between 2015 and 2018 further funding from the Artisa Foundation supported two curatorial fellows – Hannah Kershaw and Nicholas Osborne. The fellowships offered the opportunity to gain experience in both curating and community engagement work.

Prior to *Open House* the curatorial, and learning and community teams worked in quite distinct ways, whereas, collaborative working and shared decision-making became more commonplace, particularly, in

the first three years of the programme. Jenny reflects on how *Open House*, as a focused activity enabled the teams to come together and to share expertise, she states:

‘Because I manage the programme team essentially, making sure that the work of Karen and Liz and colleagues is recognised and used to its fullest within the gallery, but also within the team and I suppose what I’m getting is the sharing of that expertise and really valuing Karen and Liz’s expertise in that way, as well as trying to get other members of the team to think outside their siloes of work. Thinking about how assistant curators and curators within the team can engage with these projects more and, yes, I think that connectivity has really come a lot through *Open House* actually as a focussed project where we could all try and think about how we can support each other’s work in that way’.

“

I have to say the process and structures enacted are very rare and I think the model adopted by Kettle’s Yard should be an example to other galleries.

Harold Offeh

Jenny further reflects on how *Open House* has helped the broader team expand their understanding of what community engagement can be: *‘Also I suppose in the wider staff team, thinking a bit more creatively about what audience engagement means and that that doesn’t always*

have to take place in the House at Kettle’s Yard with a school group, I think it’s [Open House] impacted that way’.

Another member of staff, responding in the anonymous 2018 survey shared that *Open House*’s:

‘... processes and systems have helped greatly with the internal ways of working. It’s made us consider our wider community, it’s helped us position ourselves in a stronger position in the education sector for exemplar practise [sic]. It has helped us look at artistic development for Cambridge’ (Kettle’s Yard 2018b).

In the same survey, one staff member reflected on the value of having the opportunity to expand their practices to work in new ways, alongside carving out the dedicated time and space to do so, they wrote:

‘My role was originally conceived with a fairly tight focus on collection management and the needs of academic researchers, so although in my broader professional capacity I was well aware of the need for meaningful and sustained community engagement, I would not have had the capacity or skills to pursue it. *Open House* has allowed me to offer the resources I look after and my own knowledge, with the guidance and support of skilled colleagues, to inform the artists’ projects and engagements – and shown just what can be achieved with well thought out and well supported structures in place’ (ibid).

For artist Harold Offeh, the third *Open House* artist in residence, this type of internal collaboration and process is unique, and reinforced that

he had the whole organisation's backing and they were invested in his residency:

'It was great to have a meeting and presentation to the wider Kettle's Yard team, this allowed a real sense that the whole organisation was invested in the project. I have to say the process and structures enacted are very rare and I think the model adopted by Kettle's Yard should be an example to other galleries' (ibid).

Similarly, *Open House's* first artist in residence – Emma Smith, spoke of the uniqueness of *Open House* and the full commitment and wide-reaching input from across the organisation in the first year. She shared this in her interview in 2021, asserting that:

'Obviously the learning team at Kettle's Yard were all totally brilliant and super hard working and completely committed to what they're doing in ways that means that you're always going to feel supported working with them. It also felt cross-institutional, in that Andrew took part in the exchange that I organised, working with people locally to share things that you did to relax within the home. I don't think I've worked with an organisation before where the director has taken part in the engagement programme in that way, where there's just that real levelling and openness to thinking about how people work together on a project. That was really fantastic. It just felt throughout that there was this complete institutional support across the organisation that meant that we could, and with the trust and curatorial support of bringing all the objects from Kettle's Yard, it just felt that everybody was on board and I worked with the curators, with the archivist, with the learning

team, with Andrew. It felt like I worked with everybody at the organisation and it just felt that the whole thing was very embedded and a very genuine connection of that institution with the communities that I was working with, rather than it being an offshoot of something that was part of their programme, somewhere'.



Figure 15 Emma Smith, *Variations on a Weekend Theme*, 2015, photograph by Josh Murfitt

However, for Liz, when reflecting on the whole-organisation commitment to *Open House* over the years, she observed a shift in investment from across the gallery, and now she doesn't '*think that it's [Open House] in people's day-to-day and I think there's a lot more work to be done internally*'. Susie also appears to suggest that some staff members do not value or take ownership of *Open House* in the same way they would other parts of the programme; she reflects that:

‘I don’t think any member of staff would ever not see an exhibition at Kettle’s Yard that was in the building, but I feel like sometimes with some colleagues, and thinking of the visitor assistants, they might not have seen the [*Open House*] project. It would be really nice to have that joint shared ownership and celebration about the [*Open House*] programme’.

Liz hopes that in the future *Open House* will be ‘*much more on the agenda*’ and that it ‘*needs to be something that is part of everybody’s responsibility and role*’. Liz opens up and shares that:

‘I would have hoped that more staff at Kettle’s Yard would have been more involved in lots of things that we do with *Open House*. On reflection, I think we should have had one of the curatorial team coming to the panel meetings. Jenny came to some, Andrew came I think to one at the beginning, maybe a second I’m not sure. I think having that constant presence, not to do anything, but just to listen. As I said I think the panel give us so much and I think Kettle’s Yard would benefit from having it not come from me and Karen but actually it’s much more widely part of the organisation. So with the panel meetings they should definitely come and just listen and have that in their heads when they’re programming other things. Hopefully perhaps also learning different ways of working with communities and the longer term way that we’re trying to insist upon and why that is so important. I think that connection would happen if it was stronger. I think that’s a shame that we haven’t pushed that more’.

Liz’s honest reflections reveal a perceived dwindling commitment to *Open House* and, perhaps, tests the notion that community engagement

work is fully embedded in Kettle’s Yard. Yet, reflections from the early artists in residence seem to suggest that it was ‘very embedded’ and that ‘the whole organisation was invested’ early on in the programme. What, then, might have happened in those intervening years?

During the capital build project the organisational focus was on building audiences, with all programme activities taking place offsite. With the opening of the new art galleries this dynamic changed and much staff attention was directed towards delivering an ambitious and dynamic exhibitions programme. But beyond this, there is evidence to suggest that when community engagement programmes achieve their aims, they can become victims of their own success. At the beginning of this section of the report, we found that the number of local residents visiting Kettle’s Yard increased significantly over a ten-year period, accomplishing one of *Open House*’s aims. Academic Nuala Morse, in her recent book – *The Museum as a Space of Social Care*, describes the increasing focus on numerical targets in museums since the social inclusion agenda in the late 1990s as an ‘*audit culture*’ and found that: ‘*while the rationale for audit culture is to promote organisational transparency and efficiency, the extent to which it transforms the workplace practices and relationships means that it often has the reverse effect*’ (2021: 103). Working with staff from Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums (TWAM), Morse observed that teams who had previously worked together collaboratively had returned to more traditional ways of working, due to the perception that community engagement had been fully integrated, she continues:

‘In this account (mostly from senior managers), the sharing of practice was so successful community engagement was now embedded in the work of the curatorial teams. And so, there was no longer a need for interdisciplinary team working, or

indeed, a need for the Outreach-led People's Gallery, so it was reverted to a curatorial-led temporary gallery. At this moment, the naming of practice as 'embedded' had for effect the dismantling of the structures that supported it. We are here returned to the feelings described to me by community engagement workers upon my arrival in the museum: they experience institutions as resistant to their work. The loss of this space in particular affected moral across the Outreach team because of its symbolic value, further cementing feelings that their work was neither understood nor valued' (ibid: 105).

Can parallels be drawn between *Open House* at Kettle's Yard and Morse's considered and perceptive reflections of community engagement work at TWAM? These concerns will be explored further in the conclusion, when we ask – what might be gained by further embedding the values and approaches of *Open House* institutionally?



I don't think any member of staff would ever not see an exhibition at Kettle's Yard that was in the building, but I feel like sometimes with some colleagues, and thinking of the visitor assistants, they might not have seen the [*Open House*] project.

Susie Biller

Kettle's Yard is more reflective of the diverse communities of North Cambridge

At the beginning of this part of the report, we observed that Kettle's Yard, in terms of its visitors, is considerably more reflective of the local community. In its re-opening year of 2018, the local community made up the largest proportion of its overall visitors (Kettle's Yard 2019a). We also heard that two *Open House* community panel members are more directly involved in the organisation – Christine gained employment as the gallery's Receptionist, and Helen became the Community Representative on Kettle's Yard's Management Committee (as part of the University of Cambridge Kettle's Yard does not have a Board of Trustees, rather a Management Committee to oversee governance).

Staff and volunteers are more reflective of local communities

This shift in being more reflective of the diverse communities of North Cambridge does not stop there. There has also been a noticeable change in the number of volunteers and staff coming from the area. As of March 2021, 12 members of staff, of a total of 53, live in the CB4 postcode area (North Cambridge) (Kettle's Yard 2021c). In 2019, Kettle's Yard welcomed two new Visitor Assistants, one of which started as a community participant, moved on to be a volunteer and is now a permanent Visitor Assistant (Kettle's Yard 2019a). Also in 2019, volunteers living in North Cambridge have increased, with 21% of a total of 142 volunteers, coming from CB4, a 3% growth from 2018 (ibid). Kettle's Yard's current database lists 209 people who have shared an expression of interest to volunteer at the gallery, of these 17% live in CB4 postcode areas (Kettle's Yard 2021c).

The Community Team at Kettle's Yard found that, for some individuals, the recruitment application process for volunteering acted as a barrier, instead they have devised bespoke opportunities to support people into volunteering – this includes working with a volunteer who experiences social anxiety to support office administration on a monthly basis; members of Cambridge Community Arts documenting gallery events and exhibitions through photography; and partnering with a local homelessness charity to provide volunteering opportunities in the installation team (Kettle's Yard 2019a). For Karen this feels like a 'change of pace' and that: 'there's more ownership of the gallery, which is amazing'.

Governance diversified

Additionally, the gallery's Management Committee has changed and is now more representative of the cultural makeup of North Cambridge. In 2018, Kettle's Yard underwent a recruitment drive with an emphasis on diversification (ibid). The Committee shifted from having 10 men and three women in 2014/15 (ibid), to nine women, two men, one individual who prefers not to say, and one not known in 2021 (Kettle's Yard 2021c). In 2021, the Committee consists of six white British, one white Irish, one white 'other', one Pakistani, one individual who prefers not to say, and one not known (ibid), in contrast to an exclusively white British Committee in 2014/15 (Kettle's Yard 2019a). Karen shares how *Open House* has, in part, supported this process of diversification:

'There have been changes in the organisation more generally, so Helen Harwood who is on the community panel is now also part of the committee at Kettle's Yard which is our equivalent of a board of Trustees. That was again, well it wouldn't have happened without *Open House*. Just understanding the confidence and the competency of the community and what

they can bring to the organisation is really, really helpful. I think she's a really valued voice in the room. She's a teacher as well as a local resident and so she brings a different perspective. Before that change to our committee it was very much members of the university. The balance is more equal now I would say between the community and the "town and gown" divide. That's really important'.

Museums and galleries are increasingly recognising that seeing yourself represented matters; not just in collections, exhibitions or through interpretative projects, but in the staff and volunteer body, and in leadership and governance. Diversifying the people that work in and represent museums and galleries is key in building more socially engaged and community driven practice, as well as being a fundamental characteristic in a useful museum. As we have seen Kettle's Yard has made a good start towards being more reflective of the diverse communities of North Cambridge, but this process, alongside embedding community engagement and working with communities in new ways, is ongoing and never complete. The work is never done. Instead, how might Kettle's Yard, as it ventures into its next phase, further infuse the values of inclusivity, openness and usefulness, permeating deeply throughout *Open House*?

The Useful Museum

There has been significant organisational change at Kettle's Yard over the last seven years, this shift, in many respects, presents a cultural organisation that has become more useful to, and more used by, local communities. Of course, there have been other influences that have helped Kettle's Yard move towards being a more valuable asset to the community, but I argue here that the sustained practices and processes

of *Open House* have played the biggest role in this transformation. The examples given throughout the report illustrate this organisation's route to change.

Using Kettle's Yard's journey over a seven-year period as inspiration, the report shares an ethical framework below that exemplifies the archetypal characteristics of The Traditional Museum versus those of The Useful Museum. The framework does not aim to suggest that Kettle's Yard falls neatly into either category (or has done in the past); rather it helps us to envision an imagined starting point and what an aspirational destination might look like. The framework uncovers and confronts deeply entrenched traditional practice, as well as offers guidance for how other museums and galleries might shift towards becoming more useful and relevant for communities. While not necessarily a linear path, these characterisations intend to show a form of progression, and enable us to visualise the direction of change over time, alongside the ways in which a socially engaged community programme, like *Open House*, can foster conditions for a Useful Museum.

THE TRADITIONAL MUSEUM

VS

THE USEFUL MUSEUM

PARTICIPATION AND OUTREACH



In the Traditional Museum, communities are invited to take part in a pre-defined activity, where lazy assumptions of empowerment through participation are made.

Communities are seen as separate or 'Other' from the museum. Assuming a position of superiority, the museum works **for** the community in order to 'save it' or 'fix it'.

Communities might be described as 'hard to reach' and tend to be categorised in reductive ways, for example by their socio-economic background, ethnicity, or health status.

PERFORMATIVE



The Traditional Museum establishes an 'invited space', which might have the appearance of being democratic, but the terms of engagement are often dictated. Participants are placed in a passive role and obliged to enact expected behaviours, ultimately leading to 'false consensus' (Lynch 2011a).

Inaccessible or specialist language might be used to control and steer conversations, leading to an unbalanced one-way dialogue. The Traditional Museum also acts as delegate, claiming the authority to speak on behalf of the community, under the guise of 'giving voice'.

The Traditional Museum 'talks the talk', but does little to 'walk the walk'. Their practice is often tokenistic and their actions are hollow or 'performative', and of greater value to the museum than communities.



COLLABORATION

In the Useful Museum, the practice of collaboration is central. Collaboration takes place with community partners, as well as internally across museum departments.

More than participation, collaboration brings people together to work **with** each other to make fundamental decisions throughout a process, where the needs and interests of all involved are paid attention to. The rights of communities are respected in the Useful Museum and authorship and ownership of collaboratively-made works are shared (Plumb 2016).

The Useful Museum celebrates difference and recognises that communities are complex, dynamic, and in a state of flux.



LISTENING AND TAKING ACTION

The Useful Museum creates a space for honest and open dialogue with community partners. It finds a way to level the playing field so that all involved develop a shared language that cuts across different knowledge and expertise (Dodd et al. 2017).

The museum supports the community's agency to express their own voice (Lynch 2021), and, importantly, listens to issues raised. It enables dissensus (without alienation), whilst also appreciating the pleasure that comes with agreement.

Responding to community need, rather than making assumptions about what the community may want, the Useful Museum takes relevant, practical and tangible action.

HIDDEN AGENDAS



Knowledge is power, and the Traditional Museum holds all of this through controlling access to fundamental information, shutting down decision-making processes, closing off open communication, and by making agendas ambiguous or hidden.

Even a well-intentioned act of ‘sheltering’ participants from difficult issues disempowers communities, where the museum controls what participants are entitled to know and what they can and can’t decide.

SHORT-TERM



The Traditional Museum often works on one-off, short-term projects, where little trust is built with communities. These activities feel ‘parachuted in’ (Lynch 2011a) and bring about minimal actual change.

ONE-SIDED



The communities are ‘passive beneficiaries’ (Lynch 2011a) in the Traditional Museum. The museum is not attentive to the interests of communities, taking a detached approach that makes many assumptions about what communities actually want. At the other end of the spectrum, the museum acts solely as an ‘agent’ for communities, completely obeying their decisions and gives up responsibility of creating a mutually beneficial dialogue (Helguera 2011). Denying their role in the partnership, the museum denies themselves the opportunity to express and assert their own position, contribute to the collaboration, and be deemed ‘equal’ partners in the process. However, this self-abdication is essentially a form of false renunciation, as the museum preordains this handing over of power, further re-enacting control (Plumb 2017).



TRANSPARENT

Transparency is key in the Useful Museum (Kettle’s Yard 2018a). This open approach holds the museum accountable both externally with partners and internally.

Budgets, meeting agendas, salaries and fees, processes and protocols are shared, alongside all stakeholders’ interests, motivations, and agendas. The Useful Museums aims for a ‘radical transparency’ that empowers participants to make informed choices (Marstine 2013).



LONG-TERM

The Useful Museum builds long-term, ongoing, and sustainable partnerships with communities based on mutual trust and respect. Allowing time to develop relationships enables a more nuanced understanding of communities and partners, and lets a more equitable process emerge (Kettle’s Yard 2018a). Partnerships are built over years, rather than months in the Useful Museum. Ongoing commitments aim to make meaningful, real world differences that matter to communities.



MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL

Relationships are built on reciprocity and mutual exchange in the Useful Museum. All forms of expertise are valued and celebrated in the Useful Museum (Kettle’s Yard 2018a).

All are active agents who share ownership and learn new skills, understanding and knowledge from each other. There is an ‘interdependence’ between the museum and community (Lynch 2021) and a genuine interest in the needs, aspirations and concerns of all stakeholders.

MAINTAINS THE STATUS QUO



The Traditional Museum is set in its ways and does not see the value of critical reflection, which maintains the status quo. Staff and volunteers might be fearful of change and defensive towards external critique.

This museum focuses on delivery above all else, little time is made for reflexive practice, and evaluation of its activities take place at the end of the journey, often in isolation. Insights from evaluation are unlikely to be used or put into action.

HIERARCHICAL



A top-down approach, where the museum's power is sometimes invisible, sometimes explicit, is utilised in the Traditional Museum. The museum's expert knowledge is privileged; they tightly control and manage the activities, offering only 'empowerment-lite' (Lynch 2011a) experiences.

Opportunities for communities to influence and realise decisions are minimal, and where choices *are* offered they are limited and predicated on the assumption that participants are self-directing and capable of articulating their desires in the language of the institution (Morse 2021).

In the worst-case scenario, communities are exploited and used as 'material', mirroring acts of exclusion and furthering marginalisation.

REFLEXIVE



The Useful Museum is flexible, nimble, adaptable, and reflexive. It is thoughtful, considered and willing to undertake self-critique in order to confront and challenge museum thinking and practice. Critique from partners is also encouraged and there is a willingness to accept when change is needed, a readiness to take risks, and an openness to reform.

Time and space is carved out for reflection, which takes place throughout the collaborative journey, not just at the end.

Critical friends (Lynch 2011a), who work outside of the museum, help to bring about positive change and are understood as paramount to a reflective museum practice.

DEMOCRATIC



Importantly, decisions are shared (before, during, and after), and activity is initiated and shaped in collaboration with local constituents, from the ground up, in the Useful Museum. All involved recognise and critique the power relations at play, museum practitioners who have traditionally held positions of power, relinquish control to work towards more democratic practice.

There is a value and respect for the differing expertise, knowledge, and skills that each agent brings. This includes acknowledging lived experience as an expertise in its own right.

The Useful Museum recognises that historically there has been a paucity of attention paid to the community participants' experiences and perceptions in museum collaborations; therefore, the Useful Museum sets out to amplify these voices through creating spaces where all voices can be heard (Plumb 2017).

WELFARE MODEL OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



In the Traditional Museum community engagement work is 'bolted on' and situated on the periphery. It reflects a 'welfare model of access', where 'add-on services' do little to bring about fundamental change, and are of most benefit to existing audiences who already have an abundance of cultural capital (O'Neill 2002).

It is the sole responsibility of community and engagement teams, departments work in siloes, and there is little collaborative work or joined-up thinking.

The activity is reliant on external, often short-term, project funding, making the practice unsustainable.

THERAPEUTIC MODEL



The Traditional Museum adopts a therapeutic or charitable model (Lynch 2011a; 2021), of community engagement work, where the museum 'helps' the community to change and improve, implying a deficit. In so doing, the museum assumes a hierarchical position and those in 'receipt of charity' are expected to be grateful.

The museum assumes it can 'empower' communities through its activity.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IS EMBEDDED

Community engagement is an embedded practice in the Useful Museum, it falls under the remit and responsibility of all staff and volunteers, forms part of their mission and values, and is highly valued and visible (Museums Association 2018). The governance and leadership teams are strategically invested in community engagement activity and a collaborative and an integrated approach takes place across departments to enable more effective work with communities that is rooted in local need.

The Useful Museum is an outward-looking organisation with a live community engagement strategy and where activity is funded through a significant core museum budget (Paul Hamlyn Foundation 2016).

The Useful Museum works collaboratively long-term with community advisors or panel members to conceptualise, initiate and shape activity that is urgent and relevant to communities. Beyond this, structurally, staff and volunteers of are reflective of their diverse communities, who are also represented at board level.



SOLIDARITY PHILOSOPHY

Drawing heavily on the recent work of Lynch (2021), the Useful Museum can be characterised by a philosophy of 'solidarity'.

The Useful Museum recognises and values the strength of communities, and the mutual support they can offer each other. It supports communities' capability building, which in turn leads to self-empowerment, self-determination, and reclamation of their representation. Communities develop and lead their own creativity, using the museum as a community asset to respond to urgent need, and support communities to thrive.

5. The difference to artists and the cultural sector

The report has reflected, in considerable depth, on the difference *Open House* has made to the communities of North Cambridge as well as its wider organisational impact on Kettle's Yard; highlighting their interdependence and drawing connections between how a shift in one ignites a change in the other. Through relinquishing power and '*consciously acting in full collaboration and solidarity*' (Lynch 2021: 3) with communities to become more useful, museums and galleries can support communities in their self-empowerment, bringing about positive change. The report will now turn its attention towards the third and final focus – the influence *Open House* has had on artistic practice and the cultural sector more broadly.

Artistic practice

Supporting artists' professional development

Open House presents an interesting model of artist professional development that, although not described as such, offers a form of mentoring for artists; building new connections between local emerging and more established artists, and supporting the development of new artistic practice. Through the residency programme, Kettle's Yard has matched 108 artist facilitators (who usually live locally and are at an earlier stage in their career) with seven artists in residence. The artist facilitators work alongside the residency artists assisting with research and production of work to feed into the final outcome (Kettle's Yard

2018b). They also enable the artistic projects to reach a significantly larger number of participants. The artist facilitators have described themselves as well as Kettle's Yard as 'holding space' – creating a supportive structure, an opportunity, an atmosphere and a possibility for creativity or taking risks (ibid). This is a fascinating way to describe the role of a gallery both in terms of supporting local communities through an artistic programme and enabling artists to thrive in their own practice.

Joe Lyward, a locally-based artist, first built a relationship with Kettle's Yard through the Circuit programme⁵, then became part of the *Open House* community panel after turning 25 years old, and since the gallery re-opened became a Visitor Assistant (ibid). Joe also worked closely with artists in residence Emma Smith and Harold Offeh, with Harold commissioning him to illustrate a foraging map as part of his residency (ibid). These designs were further used to create thank you gifts for guests to the *Open House Gathering and Feast* in 2017. Joe's growing body of work has led to commissions from Kettle's Yard and other galleries, including to create family activity leaflets for visitors to the new Kettle's Yard (ibid). Joe emailed Karen to thank her for the range of opportunities afforded through *Open House*:

'Thank you for the amazing opportunities you've given me to work with inspiring artists, and as part of *Open House*, and for

⁵ [Circuit](#) was a four-year national programme led by Tate in partnership with a number of galleries that connected young people with galleries to spark change.

the fantastic experience you've given me by inviting me to be a part of the Committee. There are a lot of great things about Kettle's Yard, but I truly think *Open House* is one of the best things we do. So, thank you for all the work you do and I hope the project continues in its success! Every city and town should have an *Open House* project!' (ibid).



Figure 16 Artist facilitator Hilary Cox-Condrón with artist in residence Emma Smith, runs drop-in activities to gather 'Remedies for Life' as part of *Open House*, at the Church of the Good Shepherd, 2015, photograph by Sarah Plumb

Harold Offeh also reflected on the benefits of working collaboratively with the artist facilitators, sharing in his evaluation for Kettle's Yard that:

'It was great to have the support of the artists. This allowed for a greater reach and scope of the project. I really enjoyed their responses to the project briefs and their skills and experiences really helped to enrich the project. I'm sorry there wasn't more

time to gather and discuss the ongoing aspects aspect of the project. This might have allowed things to be a bit more cohesive. But overall it was massive bonus tapping into a network of artists' (cited in Kettle's Yard 2017).

Similarly, community artist Hilary Cox-Condrón enjoyed the opportunity to work with a number of artists in residence. In her interview, when asked in what ways *Open House* exceeded her expectations, she reflected on:

'... working with different artists, considering their practice is always a real delight and opens up ideas that I wouldn't normally have had. Just coming in from different perspectives when you're working towards their outcome but putting your own interests and slant on it is a really nice combination I think. I've worked with a few different artists on the *Open House* project, and all who I wouldn't have worked with. I think seeing new ways of how the House is interpreted. I really liked having really quite an in-depth experience of an outside artist coming in and working very closely with a community that I know well. I think that's exciting to see that process. That impacts on my own process to have old eyes with new eyes if that makes sense'.

For Hilary, in particular, working with artist Emma Smith has inspired her practice and approach, it has also re-affirmed for her the value of time for reflection and slowing down in a creative process, as she shares:

'Yes, working with Emma, that was lovely because I did a lot of research work for Emma on the projects and really getting to know the community well around there. It was just lovely to see

how that came together and to watch her process and how that feeds into my own impression about art and democracy and having your own voice, yes. I really loved working with Emma. I think that of everybody, I probably worked with Emma closer than anybody else. I think that I learnt more from her than anyone else, in that she is such a good... Firstly, she's very kind and that's a such a strength, and that shines through in a really strong way. She's really good at listening and then taking the time to consider that and then reacting to it. I'm sure that I've asked myself how would Emma do this? Well, not how would she do it, how would she take the time. It's okay to reflect, it in a way takes some pressure off, not pressure, but reminds myself that I don't have to have an answer immediately, watching the other artists gather the creative responses and words from the community and not have an immediate answer to what they're going to do'.

Like many of the artists in residence, artist collective Wright & Vandame shared their enthusiasm for working with a team of artists and how invaluable the additional support was:

'After our initial presentation in the summer 2019 with the Artist Facilitators, we had very little direct contact with the artist facilitators during their projects in the first half of the residency, but their pitched ideas were really strong and it was important to us that they had their own independence over their individual outcomes and in part why we kept the brief very open to have a broad range of responses and availability of commitments. We were able to work around everyone's schedules by offering the option for Facilitators to either lead workshops in the autumn/winter to generate content for *Meeting Ground* or when

the space went live in February 2020. Some Facilitators did both! We had an incredible amount of support and enthusiasm from individual Artist Facilitators like Anu and this meant a lot to us throughout the residency, especially when the space went live. We got to know the Facilitators better through orchestrating *Meeting Ground*, especially when it went live, and working alongside them. They're a wonderful team and we really cannot fault their enthusiasm and support for our project' (cited in Kettle's Yard 2020).

Their in depth response in their evaluation for Kettle's Yard, however, perhaps, reveals an inherent tension in the establishment of the artist facilitator – artist in residence relationship. Wright & Vandame were keen for the artist facilitators to have '*independence over their individual outcomes*', feasibly recognising the unequal and hierarchical power dynamic in setting up a team of local emerging artists to support more established artists in their work coming in from outside of the area. Artist in residence Hannah Kemp-Welch raised this as a potential concern in her evaluation, though she felt it was well managed by Kettle's Yard, she wrote that:

'It was great to be able to meet the group – all the Artist Facilitators seemed on board with the ideas I had and created meaningful and diverse responses to the themes. I felt cautious about the relationship here – I was worried about constraining their creativity and I would've been deeply uncomfortable had there been any sense of hierarchy. I felt this was managed well' (cited in Kettle's Yard 2019b).

Although '*it was managed well*' in the case of *Open House* at Kettle's Yard, it is worth highlighting as an issue seen in many art institutions.

More commonly described as artist educators, and mainly managed by the learning and engagement teams, these artists are often treated differently to artists that work with curatorial departments, and their practice and processes are, in many instances, implicitly undervalued (also see Pringle 2009; 2014).

Interestingly at a later point in her interview, Hilary reflected on some of the challenges of working on *Open House*, initially she shared that: '*Not having complete control, you know, I'm used to running my own arts creative projects, that was probably a challenge, not a bad one, but just a different way of working*'. When asked about this further, she elaborated by sharing that:

'I find it challenging sometimes that outside artists come in, maybe that's just the end of the sentence actually... I think that it's good too, I've said all the things I think about how wonderful it was to bring in new practice and to have fresh eyes and a new way of working, a new energy, all of those things are absolute positives. To connect to different places and to make new links. All of those are positives. Sometimes it feels challenging to be having somebody come in and do this work and then leave again while everybody else has contributed to it. Well maybe, maybe I wanted a bloody job, maybe that's what it was. Being a local artist and working with... I really dislike the term local... Working with a lot of artists that are Cambridge-based sometimes it feels like it would be good to nurture the artists that are on your doorstep. Well obviously Kettle's Yard does. It would be wonderful to have a local person running, coming and growing out of... It would be wonderful to have somebody working on the next *Open House* that was one of the people that came up through from North Cambridge, that's worked on past

Open Houses and to really nurture them into a position where they were... I think that would be amazing. It feels like, you know, like I said I didn't like the term local artist, but of course everybody's a local artist when they live where they work. Everybody's a local artist somewhere, aren't they? Cambridge has got a lot of amazing artists and really if Kettle's Yard wants to bridge that gap between residents and these more exclusive cultural venues then we can't be seen as the "community artists" that support "real art". It's great that *Open House* is bridging that gap, but that is, in a really soft way, still saying you can come and add a sentence or you can come and have a look at what's going here, but you still won't be able to lead on anything going on here. Don't get too out of your place. That is a challenge and if we want our cultural venues to be really reflective of our society then we have a duty to make sure that our society, our communities feel like they can have a place in them and not just colour in something at a pop up. Actually, if they want to curate something, if they want to be one of the lead artists, obviously they have to be a curator or an artist, but to know that there is room that they can do that. At the moment I don't believe that there is'.

Although, at first hesitant to share her thoughts on the challenges of *Open House*, Hilary went on to raise incredibly insightful and thought-provoking concerns. How might selecting and commissioning a 'local' artist as the next artist in residence fully recognise and value the wealth of artistic practice in the area? How might nurturing local and emerging artists beyond an artist facilitator role create more 'room' for supporting artistic professional development and enhance community aspirations? And how might this further embed the values of *Open*

House in Kettle's Yard, and ultimately root Kettle's Yard in the community?

Advancing collaborative practice and enhancing ways of working with communities

For many of the artists involved, *Open House*, formed part of a cumulative way of working collaboratively with communities, that further informed and enhanced their practice. As 2016 artist in residence Isabella Martin passionately shares:

'Every participatory project like this gives you a renewed interest and excitement in the world, and belief in what can be achieved when collaboration is opened up to participants, and the *Open House* project in particular has left me inspired by what can take place when the setting is open and an environment of trust and mutual respect is established' (cited in Kettle's Yard 2018b).

Similarly, for Hilary, *Open House* did not necessarily influence her practice, rather:

'... it's very much an extension of how I work in communities, gathering stories and then looking at how that can feed into an artwork. It's strengthened the work through the practice of it and through having new eyes on it and new perspectives of it. The method of how I work with it and my involvement in the communities is very much what I do. Of course we continue to learn through working with other people and seeing how they interpret it. Like I said there's fresh eyes and new ways of interpreting it. It can only be inspiring really, yes'.



We have never experienced such a thorough and community led commissioning process, between the initial shortlist and final interview with the community panel. It was such an incredibly validating moment in our practice to be selected as the first artist collective for *Open House*.

Wright & Vandame

However, for several of the artists they experienced new ways of working collaboratively with communities through the involvement of the community panel, many of which had never worked in this way before. Harold fed back in his evaluation that the:

'The community panel was great. I really enjoyed having the constant feedback from a group of people that had experienced the previous project. I think this is one of the strongest aspects of the process. The support and their enthusiasm was really encouraging' (cited in Kettle's Yard 2018b).

Emma Smith also delighted in the opportunity to work with a panel, sharing in her interview that:

'It is just a lot of fun working with everybody and in really helpful and productive ways professionally and in just really ridiculously fun, nice ways, personally. It was just helpful to have somebody who is really connected, like Alan running

Arbury Community Centre and having those “ins” into different groups, but also a resource in the community centre. Then being able to go to Jim’s and sing karaoke, it’s great. It’s the different ways that people might be involved. I really enjoyed it and I think what was a strength of the community panel to me was you never felt like you were going to get a cohesive view. You were going to get lots of different voices and I think that’s really important. It’s not a gateway to one bit of the community, actually it did feel like it was different people. I do think that it’s really important having said that, that a community panel is recognised as being a collection of individuals, because people don’t represent anyone other than themselves ultimately. It felt to me that they were, as well as being quite actively involved and helping me think through where am I doing things or how I might run sessions or, you know, putting me in touch with people. There were those practical elements of support from the panel as well as being involved directly and contributing ways themselves. It felt like a really productive sounding board also, like it was really useful to be able to run over this is where things have got to with the project, this is what we’re thinking about at the moment and what we’re doing and to be able to always have that constant feedback and yes, there were people that would be quite willing to share opinions and those opinions would be quite different within the group, so that was quite a productive process, obviously. I think in terms of them sharing the work as well, it was helpful to have those people who were invested in the project and wanting to be support it being shared as well in its realisation. I was also aware of that, when the final work was produced as well and bringing people in and getting people involved’.

Emma felt that having a range of diverse perspectives in the room as a sounding board strengthened her residency, seeing the panel as a group of individuals, rather than as representative of the broader community. She also reflected on the practical support, knowledge and expertise the panel brought to her residency project. Wright & Vandame also found the community panel: ‘*a really valuable asset to this residency*’ and that ‘*the meetings both pushed us to make clear progress and talk openly about our ideas but also offered really great feedback*’ (cited in Kettle’s Yard 2020). Similarly, the process of working with the panel supported the ongoing programme, enabling artists to feel part of a larger whole:

‘I also benefitted from members of the community panel having worked with other artists from previous commissions and being familiar with the development process. I think while the process puts a lot of demands on the artists at the start, it ultimately provides for a strong collective process’ (Harold Offeh cited in Kettle’s Yard 2017).

Interestingly, for Director Andrew Nairne, the ongoing nature of the programme of artistic activity, that he describes as ‘a generative process’, is one of *Open House*’s greatest strengths. He expresses this as:

‘It’s been a cumulative, generative programme over a number of years where one would like to think that by the time you get to Enni, who is our current artist in residence, she’s benefitting and the resonances of her project are benefitting from all the previous projects. Another way you could describe it is that the DNA of all the previous projects is in the current project’.

Hannah Kemp-Welch also described the joy of being part of this cumulative programme, and like Harold, believed that the community

panel held the key in supporting each new artist in residence in their project development, and in building bridges with the communities of North Cambridge:

‘This was an absolute joy. Their engagement with *Open House* and commitment to it was very motivating, and it was great to be picking up the baton from previous years rather than having to explain the aims of the project from scratch to everyone involved. Having seen previous outcomes such as postcards and photos, I was able to recognise people in the community to speak to about *Open House*, and use this as an opener to begin conversations. It felt like a much more genuine engagement to know that there would be follow up and consistency in contact between the community groups and the gallery beyond what I was delivering’ (cited in Kettle’s Yard 2019b).



It’s been a cumulative, generative programme over a number of years where one would like to think that by the time you get to our current artist in residence ... she’s benefitting and the resonances of her project are benefitting from all the previous projects. Another way you could describe it is that the DNA of all the previous projects is in the current project.

Andrew Nairne

The selection and commissioning process was new to all of the artists in residence too, and for some believed it to be a really importance part of the process. Harold felt that:

‘The current commissioning process is very rigorous. I think it’s really important that members of the community are embedded in the selection process. Their familiarity with my work was a really important part of the project’ (cited in Kettle’s Yard 2017).

Wright & Vandame greatly appreciated this pioneering approach to being selected by a community, helping them to feel validated in the process, offering them new insights and informing what form the project would take:

‘We have never experienced such a thorough and community led commissioning process, between the initial shortlist and final interview with the community panel. It was such an incredibly validating moment in our practice to be selected as the first artist collective for *Open House*. There tend to be a lot of challenges as a collective and we are so grateful that we were able to be warmly received by the panel. Those connections made from the initial interview / community panel proved really valuable in early conversations, shaping our thinking for the project, for example, to be aware of the novelty or fetishisation of mental health and how to make it accessible to audiences in North Cambridge which could easily feel alienated or disconnected from these ideas’ (cited in Kettle’s Yard 2020).

Learning new skills and developing new knowledge
As Wright & Vandame shared working with the community panel heightened their awareness of potential issues or pitfalls in their

proposed project, alongside this the residency was: *'an incredible opportunity for us to learn new skills, especially managing and delivering workshops for multiple community groups and partners'*, they continue:

'Unlike any other project we've ever done, this was the first time we had to plan weekly sessions and workshops for three different community groups. This meant we had to quickly learn the importance of tailoring each session for the needs of each group, for example, if there are changes in availability due to a Christmas dinner, what to do if hardly no one shows up, or how to be sensitive to participants with different methods of learning between something visual or creative and something more text-based' (ibid).

The artist collective also learnt new practical, project management skills, as well as how to balance the needs, desires and potentially conflicting agendas of a range of stakeholders. As the largest project they have worked so far, *Open House* has clearly left its mark on them, stating that:

'We see this residency as our most ambitious project to date and we have learnt a huge amount through undertaking it. We have never had to deal with such a large budget and manage our income so directly. This was our most ambitious project in the scope of the amount of people we worked with (over 3,000?!) and fundamentally really challenging and rewarding to work with what are ultimately four unique and different agendas: what we want; what the community wants in North Cambridge; what the artist facilitators want; and what an institutional gallery like Kettle's Yard want. Each of these groups is vastly different and it was such a joy to be able to navigate these

waters with the support of Karen and Liz. We were given creative freedom to explore the ideas of wellbeing and space, further, which is how we began our practice with an art gym; we just never knew it could be made on such a significant level. The residency has pushed our practice to be able to work with larger groups of audiences while maintaining a high quality and aesthetic. There might have been some small tweaks or things we would have done differently, but we treat the entire residency as a learning experience and something we will continue to look back on positively as a benchmark for our practice' (ibid).

Hannah Kemp-Welch also focused on the very practical skills she gained through *Open House* in her artist evaluation. In her case, she learnt these through working collaboratively with the communities, which went on to inspire her to undertake further study and enhance her practice as a sound artist:

'I learned loads from the community – I felt I learned a lot from their personal stories, particularly about Cambridge, the community, and how the area has changed, but I also gained a lot of new knowledge, skills and experience through my work with amateur radio enthusiasts and the team at Cambridge 105 FM. This was my first live radio broadcast, and gave me so much confidence in the medium, that I have since done a few more, including a 12 hour overnight broadcast for SoundCamp. It was great to be able to develop these skills and experiences during the programme. This project has given me lots of new experiences in terms of working with radio, and I've learnt a lot through the stories and reflections of people in the community. I will be taking new skills in radio broadcasting further into my

practice, and will be studying for an amateur radio license this summer as a result of encouragement from the community' (cited in Kettle's Yard 2019b).

Open House inspired Emma Smith both practically and in terms of her thinking. During her residency she worked with the University of Cambridge's History and Classical Science Department undertaking research on astrology and medicinal diagnostics, that '*really informed how we shaped the apothecary and the way that works were gifted out through the work I made*'. Installing the final performative artwork and exhibition directly in the community, in a former disused bakery, has also gone on to inform her thinking around how to engage audiences and some of the challenges of stepping over the threshold of the gallery, she shares:

'In terms of my thinking, I think one of the things that struck me was how immediate the engagement is when you are working in a residential street with a big glass window and in a building that everybody is familiar with because it's a shop front. It doesn't have any status or a threshold which you know you can't go across or you're unsure about. It's just an old bakery and it's been a bit empty and mistreated for a while. Nobody's threatened by it in any way, shape or form and it's on your road. Every day during install we had kids constantly coming up to the window, banging on the glass and shouting and saying, what are you doing, what are you doing? We want to see. A couple of times when we were not in mass construction mode, and we were clear and safe inside we let some kids have a sneak peek before we opened. Every day that we were open we were really busy the whole time. It was really telling to me thinking about how much effort organisations go to, to try and make people

feel that they come into the organisation, that they're welcome and it's a space for them. The location of where you're doing the work and the frontage of that in terms of what the interface is between you and the public is so relevant because we didn't have to think once how do we get people in here. There just were people in there all the time because it had that immediacy in a residential neighbourhood. I think that's something that I've tried to think about a bit further in terms of having it in my mind and thinking about where do you make work, and the kind of spaces people feel comfortable being in, and coming to and how you utilise that and don't always expect people to come to you'.

'Stepping stone' to other opportunities

As Emma Smith mentioned, she collaborated with Lauren Castle from the History and Classical Science Department at the University of Cambridge on their 'Casebooks Project', which informed her residency. This relationship led to further opportunities, as Emma recalls:

'That was a relationship that continued beyond the Kettle's Yard project. As a result of having worked with Lauren on the Kettle's Yard piece I was then invited by the NHPS department to work on another piece of work that they initiated and funded within their department which is called *Recipes for Relationships*. Also that allowed me to take further and create a legacy for the community relationships I built through Kettle's Yard. Many of people who had been involved in the Kettle's Yard projects as participants were then also able to continue working with me on that project and so they'd created a legacy both for myself but also for the people which was really nice and that's followed through with other projects. Actually, there's been a couple of

people in particular but groups also that I've continued to work with in different ways on different projects having worked with them on *Variations on a Weekend Theme*. There's been a really nice legacy and continuation of that work, which in part stems back to my initial interest of the programme of being local and my interest in a need to work locally. Then also having a real follow through in terms of the realities of that being that if I'm working on other things locally then there is that capacity for legacy'.

During her *Open House* residency Emma moved to Cambridge, in her interview she recognises the value of building connections with the communities and appreciates how she has been able to carry these relationships forward. Emma has also continued to work with artist Hilary Cox-Condron and has brought her in to collaborate on other projects, including a piece that explores the history of 'Reality Checkpoint' located on Parker's Piece in Cambridge with at the Museum of Cambridge in 2017; and the project *We Are* with the Fitzwilliam Museum in 2018.

Emma Smith and Harold Offeh were also commissioned to create new works of art for Kettle's Yard's re-opening exhibition entitled *Actions: The Image of the World can be Different* in 2018. Emma produced *Variations on a Weekend Theme* as a digital work, she expands:

'That was really great to think about how it could exist as a piece that anybody could access from anywhere so you wouldn't have to come to the apothecary itself to be able to have a consultation. We created the consultation that I would do with people on a one to one basis into a computer programme so that you could answer questions, which was a

lot, a lot easier in some ways because the process of defining somebody's perfect performance instruction actually required me holding a huge amount of mathematical equations in my head during it. It was a lot simpler when a computer's already programmed to do it, but then a lot more difficult because you don't have the human nuance of that, to suddenly realise that you're needing to shift a number somewhere to make something more appropriate. It worked really well and we were able to create a programme working with a coder. Again it feels like it's had that legacy but it's also built this work that can have a future life but can be hosted and shared in the future as a piece of work in both forms, as a digital piece and as a live work'.

Emma is not alone in reflecting on the importance and potential of creating a legacy of *Open House* and the resulting artworks. Interesting connections can be drawn between Emma's thinking around the future of socially engaged and collaboratively-made artworks and Wright & Vandame's pondering of what might be left behind, they wrote that:

'It would be valuable to have more discussions about the legacy of the space and project, something which could still happen with continued conversations. As socially engaged artists, we are impacting people in the public realm and it's important that the finish is handled sensitively. Many participants want to see more programming continue at Nuns Way Pavilion through our project and it would be useful to see that come to light in some way and measure the value of the project and residency beyond the two weeks and overall year. This is something more generally to think about for commissions of socially engaged art, how to bring a project to a resolution within its timeframe

and budget while also being able to follow up in a few months or years' time to see the value and impact of the project in a community' (cited in Kettle's Yard 2020).

Wright & Vandame raise worthwhile questions about the future of the programme and the potential for ongoing positive effects in the community. Unmistakeably, this is part of this report's ambitions – to capture the value of the programme to the communities. But as they rightly suggest, the legacy of *Open House* does not end with each residency project nor does it end with this report. Their work, along with all of the artists involved in *Open House*, is interwoven into a long-term programme of hyperlocal artistic practice and forms part of a generative process. And as a result *Open House* is, of course, greater than the sum of its parts.

Cultural sector

An early ambition of *Open House* was to support other cultural organisations, including the University of Cambridge Museum Partners, in developing new practices and creating a three-way dialogue between cultural institutions, contemporary artists and communities. Although, through *Open House*, Kettle's Yard has worked directly with 19 cultural organisations, the influence on the other University Museums has been less successful, particularly in terms of bridging relationships with the communities of North Cambridge, as Karen shares: *'I think I thought that other cultural organisations in the city would be more confident in, or the community would be more confident in approaching other cultural organisations, I feel that that hasn't happened in the way that I would have liked'*. That being said, there has been a growth in confidence in working with contemporary artists. For example, in the past, the Fitzwilliam Museum infrequently commissioned new works, particularly

with artists with socially engaged practice (Kettle's Yard 2018b). It has since gone on to commission *Open House* artist Emma Smith to create a new work entitled *We Are* in 2018. And in the same year worked with artist Matt Smith to create a new work – *Flux: Parian Unpacked*, that challenged the traditional readings of the 19th century Parian busts and asked why museums celebrate the lives of some and ignore others (ibid).

Open House presents a number of innovative approaches and methodologies in working collaboratively with local communities and contemporary artists – sharing decisions with a community panel of local experts; collaborating with residents to select and commission an artist; supporting local and emerging artists in their professional development – all of which have been shared in depth throughout the report. Jenny recalled a recent conversation with other museum practitioners that made her reflect on just how forward-thinking and cutting-edge *Open House* is, she shared that:

'I was actually just on a call with a group of regional museums the other day and we were talking about a possible funding bid for something. I was really surprised at how people were talking about still it would be really innovative to enable a community panel to select an artist that they were going to work with. I thought we've been doing that for six years. I did feel as though we have been a bit ahead of the game really and ahead of thinking in that way'.

Mediating co-ownership of collaboratively-made artworks
Beyond the innovations listed above, Kettle's Yard has worked through a new approach to valuing participatory labour and recognising the contributions and rights of community participants in the

collaboratively-made artworks and exhibitions of *Open House*, acting as a mediator in this complex and multifaceted relationship. Often in socially engaged and community art practices the artist directs and creates the artwork, but it would not exist in its full form without the community's input or involvement: how is this co-dependence acknowledged meaningfully? As a direct result of questions asked in Sarah Plumb's (2017) PhD around authorship and ownership, Kettle's Yard worked closely with the University of Cambridge's legal team to investigate ownership of the resulting artworks of *Open House* (Kettle's Yard 2018b). Kettle's Yard has a strict acquisitions policy relating to its collection, so the artist usually owns commissioned works (ibid). However, they have developed a clause in their contracts with the artists in residence to ensure that the community has permission to re-display the resulting artwork within two years of its completion for free (ibid). And that the artist: *'agrees to consult with and take into account the views of Kettle's Yard and Open House Community Panel before licensing the Work to any other person(s) during this period'* (Kettle's Yard 2016). This clause is an essential recognition of the community's role in creating the work, and a significant commitment from the artist in valuing the community's contribution (Kettle's Yard 2018b).

Dissemination

The practices, processes, methodologies and impact of *Open House* at Kettle's Yard, University of Cambridge have been shared widely in the cultural field in the UK and internationally. Through this process of dissemination Kettle's Yard has reflected on the learning from the programme and invited critique and feedback from peers in the sector. Kettle's Yard are active members of Engage – the national association for gallery education, and GEM – the group for education in museums, both highly visible networking and membership bodies in the UK, as

well as SHARE Museums East Co-production Group. Kettle's Yard is also a founding associate of Tate Exchange, a space for collaboration, testing ideas and practice at Tate Modern. Each year between 2017 and 2019, *Open House* occupied Tate Modern over two days and, in partnership with *Open House* community members and partners, invited visitors to collaborate and explore the ways in which galleries and artists can work creatively with communities. The table below shares the variety of international conference presentations, seminars and workshops where the learning and experiences of *Open House* have been presented by the *Open House* team, community members and partners, and researcher and critical friend Sarah Plumb.

CONFERENCES – SEMINARS – WORKSHOPS

‘Open House at Kettle’s Yard’ Seminar, *Engage Summer School*, Cornwall (2014)

‘Sacred Cows - Questioning and interrogating museum ‘truths’ - Does participation truly bring about empowerment?’ Workshop, *Museums in the Global Contemporary Conference*, Leicester (2016)

‘Visual Mapping Exercises: Open House’ Workshop, *Engage East Area Meeting*, Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, Norwich (2016)

‘Open House: Art and Engagement in North Cambridge’ Presentation, *Transforming People to Transform Museums Conference*, Colchester (2016)

‘Open House: Art and Engagement in North Cambridge’ Presentation, *Better Placed? Museums at the heart of successful communities SHARE Museums East Conference*, Newmarket (2016)

‘Open House: Collaborative Conversations’ Breakout Session, *Better Placed? Museums at the heart of successful communities SHARE Museums East Conference*, Newmarket (2016)

‘What is the role of participatory artists today?’ Workshop, *Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance Seminar*, Tate Exchange London (2017)

‘Creating a space where all voices can be heard’ Workshop, *Museums as Agents of Change: Diversity, Accessibility, and Inclusion Conference*, Benaki Museum, Athens, Greece (2017)

‘Creating a space where all voices can be heard’ Workshop, *Museums as Agents of Change: Diversity, Accessibility, and Inclusion Conference*,

Macedonian Museum of Contemporary Art, Thessaloniki, Greece (2017)

‘Open House: A Researcher’s Perspective’ Presentation, *Friday Lectures*, Leamington Spa Museum and Art Gallery (2017)

‘Open House Symposium: The Conditions for Creative Communities’ Various Presentations and Workshops, *Open House Symposium*, Tate Exchange, Tate Modern, London (2017)

‘Open House: Art and Engagement in North Cambridge’ Presentation, *Arts Council England Visual Arts Team National Meeting*, Kettle’s Yard, Cambridge (2018)

‘Open House: Working Together to Co-Curate and Co-Create in North Cambridge’ Presentation, *Universeum, Working Together: Partnership, co-curation and co-creation Conference*, University of Glasgow (2018)

‘Arbury Carnival comes to Tate’ Workshop, *Tate Exchange*, Tate Modern, London (2018)

‘Diversifying audiences through a “Trading Zones” approach’ Workshop, *Diversify your audience! Conference*, Museumsakademie Joanneum Graz, Berlin, Germany (2018)

‘Open House’ Presentation, *Locality Convention*, Bristol (2018)

‘Light Years with Cambridge Community Arts’ Workshop, *Tate Exchange*, Tate Modern, London (2019)

‘Open House’ Presentation, *Harlow Cultural Leaders Network* (2020)

‘Care, Kettle’s Yard and our communities’ Workshop, *Art & Care Workshop*, Anglia Ruskin University (2021)

The findings from *Open House* have also been published in a number of peer-reviewed and professional journals, as well as academic publications, these include: Thomas (2021) 'Campaign for Empathy in North Cambridge' in *Cambridge Humanities Review*; Plumb (2016) "'We're all travelling the same route, but it's a different journey for everybody" Open House: Art and Engagement in North Cambridge' in *Engage Journal*; and twice in *GEM Case Studies*. The first – Thomas and Ballard (2018) 'Open House: art and engagement in North Cambridge', which had a general focus on *Open House*; and the second – Thomas (2021), that highlighted the partnership with the Red Hen Project – 'All at sea? A voyage through a community partnership'. Plumb's PhD thesis – *Hearing community voice: The ethics of socially engaged arts practice mediated through the gallery* – which spotlights *Open House* as a central case study, was completed in 2017 and is available online at the University of Leicester's Research Archive. *Open House* has further potential to influence current and future international practitioners and academics through featuring as a significant case study in lectures and on reading lists on the following School of Museum Studies Masters Programmes at the University of Leicester – MA and Flexi-course in Socially Engaged Practice in Museums and Galleries (Distance Learning), and the MA in Art Museum and Gallery Studies (Campus Based). *Open House* has also informed part of a lecture series called 'Live Labs' that explores experimental and emerging practice in the field on the Museum Studies MA and Heritage and Interpretation MA (both Distance Learning). In addition, *Open House* has been shared as a case study in teaching in the Department of History of Art at the University of Cambridge, and at the Estonian Academy of Arts as part of their Museum Studies MA.



Figure 17 *The Conditions for Creative Communities*, 2018, *Open House*, Kettle's Yard

As a result of the first *Open House* Tate Exchange—a symposium that comprised of workshops, presentations, and manifesto writing—the most important factors when embarking on socially engaged community projects were collated and the publication – *The Conditions for Creative Communities* (2018a) was produced. Kettle's Yard invited over 50 people to contribute to the symposium, these included community partners, innovative community organisations, and international practitioners and artists working collaboratively with communities, coming from as far as Australia. This publication offers ten 'top tips' and acts as a guide for artists, communities and arts organisations wishing to work creatively together. The publication was distributed in print form and is available to download on the Kettle's Yard website. The ten conditions can be found in Figure 17.

Impact

Kettle's Yard has received wholly positive responses from the sector with many follow up enquiries and requests to observe panel meetings and attend events (Kettle's Yard 2018b). Relatedly, practitioners and policy-makers alike have commented on how inspiring the community programme is (see figures 18 & 19), shared how the methodologies of *Open House* have informed their future practice plans and, in part, shaped funding applications for co-productive work with local communities.

In September 2016, Kettle's Yard welcomed a delegation from Arts Council England to North Cambridge, including John Orna-Ornstein (who, at that time, was regional head of Art Council and National Lead for Museums), the conversations revolved around how cultural organisations can best support traditionally 'disengaged' communities in the future (Kettle's Yard 2018b). After the event John shared his gratitude to Kettle's Yard, stating that:

'Thanks to you and colleagues for the visits today. I'm genuinely impressed by what you're doing in North Cambridge, and also by the opportunity of the capital redevelopment for welcoming the groups you've been working with into the gallery (with a consequent impact on your programming and so on). Thank you for setting up such a stimulating event' (cited in *ibid*).

 **McKaila Ferguson** @McKailaAtHome · Jun 14
"Going on a Journey Toolkit" made into interactive map. It's integral to value community input — brings up ideas of shared guardianship and q's about ownership. Trust + conversations are key here. Very cool projects, @cornishkarer + @SarahJPlumb #Universeum2018



University of Glasgow, Information Studies, Universeum Network and 3 others

🗨️ 3 🍷 4 📧

Figures 18 Tweet from cultural practitioner attending the *Universeum, Working Together: Partnership, co-curation and co-creation* Conference, 2018

Dr Alex Woodall, Programme Director for Creative and Cultural Industries Management at Sheffield University, and former Head of Learning at the Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, Norwich, wrote to Sarah to describe how *The Conditions for Creative Communities* published by *Open House*, Kettle's Yard is a valuable guide for a range of cultural practitioners:

'*The Conditions for Creative Communities* is a really useful little publication for arts practitioners from across all cultural forms -

not least because it has been written collaboratively with artists and creative communities, thus taking exactly that kind of inclusive, open, and listening approach that it advocates (and that Jim and Helen Ede lived through opening up their home for exploration and conversation at Kettle's Yard). The booklet is an example of generous and transparent sharing - it may seem obvious that relationships with communities take time and need nurturing in order to flourish, but having this learning clearly explained means it can be used both as a practical guide, as well as for advocacy around the importance of the creative process'.

Ronan Brindley, Head of Learning and Engagement at Manchester Art Gallery, similarly, shared via email how the methodologies of *Open House* and *The Conditions for Creative Communities*, had, in part, informed and influenced the gallery's thinking in developing *Platt Hall Inbetween*⁶. *Platt Hall Inbetween* is a programme of activities that sets out to reconnect with local communities and collectively re-imagine the future of Platt Hall; an 18th century house in a park and the former Gallery of Costume. Ronan shared that they had recently finished their initial Paul Hamlyn Foundation funded part of the work and, on reflection, thought:

'Actually, it doesn't feel like the Platt Hall work is complete. This links back to *The Conditions for Creative Communities* – 4, 'The journey is as important as the destination'. Cueing from this, we sought to 'de-projectivise' Platt Hall. We titled it, *Platt Hall Inbetween*, keying into William Burrough's identification of the

inbetween period as being a space ripe for creativity and experimentation. Platt Hall is about behaviours, interactions and manifestations of lived experience. It does not aim to be a shiny museum end product.

In many ways I think *The Conditions...* pre-empted some of the elements that have become even more important during the pandemic and will probably be very influential its aftermath. Being a good neighbour, being open and kind, valuing everyone, sharing, allowing time and using creativity to connect people, these are the behaviours that are vital and increasingly of the moment. There are enough big, showy manifestations of cultural enterprises and products. The next period needs more collaborative, power dispersed models of working that are embedded in communities. *Open House* led the way and has helped stimulate this'.

Curator Natalie Josephine Pace, of Pier Projects a small art agency in Felixstowe, contacted Karen in 2019 for advice on working with local communities as key decision-makers in the commissioning process. This year, Natalie shared news of their latest commission with artist Alisa Oleva *Port-to-Port* – a site-responsive walking activity, and thanked Karen for her 'generosity and advice', and 'support with regards developing socially-engaged / community focused programmes'.

Several students from across all three of the University of Leicester's Distance Learning Masters Programmes, who participated in the 'Live Labs' in 2021 (many of whom are also current practitioners in the field), fed back that a session that featured *Open House* as a case study would

⁶ For more information about *Platt Hall Inbetween* visit their [dedicated project website](#).

inform their future practice and research. One student shared that the session had an instantaneous impact on their work:

‘Each lab added and reinforced new ways of thinking about museum practice. For example, I just today had to think up an activity for people with mental health issues, the authorship lab has encouraged me to think about more appropriate ways of "rewarding" people for their input’.

Another student expressed that it is important to: ‘*not patronise your collaborators by not asking difficult questions around authorship; asking the question will start the conversation*’, and another believed that: ‘*we need to have these types of discussion more often to better enhance our future practice*’. One student also reflected on how the learning from *Open House*, specifically around collaboration and co-authorship, could be extended and will influence their own research in other museum and gallery practices:

‘I have been thinking a lot about the meaning of collaborative practice and co-authorship, particularly with disabled audiences. The discussing and examples given around this will definitely inform my research’.

Karen also shared that beyond the cultural sector *Open House* has also had a subtle influence, with Cambridge City Council now adopting the language of the programme, shifting to using terms such as ‘collaboration’ with communities and focusing on the ‘hyperlocal’ rather than the outmoded phrase – ‘ward locations’, as well as ‘*talking about recognising local expertise and all of this language which is so embedded in our practice*’.



Figure 19 Tweet from cultural practitioner attending the *Universeum, Working Together: Partnership, co-curation and co-creation* Conference, 2018

6. Conclusions and questions for the future

The research has shared a significant view of the long-term socially engaged community programme – *Open House*, initiated and administered by Kettle’s Yard, University of Cambridge, and has traced critical changes institutionally, within the communities of North Cambridge, individual artists’ practice, and more broadly in the cultural sector. The research has also demonstrated that *Open House* has fulfilled its early ambition to create meaningful connections with its neighbours, and has gone some way in supporting local communities to have a confident voice in shaping the cultural life of their city. Kettle’s Yard has relinquished more and more power and, in so doing, become more useful and more used by residents on their doorstep. Participants taking part in the research study clearly illustrate the profound significance that *Open House* has had on their personal and professional lives. Simply put, *Open House* has had a vast range of impacts.

The distinctive characteristics of *Open House* are the ambitious and innovative models developed and evolved through working collaboratively with communities – challenging traditionally hierarchical ways of working with marginalised individuals and communities; generating deep and long-term dialogues and collaborations between contemporary artists, communities and a cultural organisation and; beyond this, nurturing new creative capabilities for all. What is more, *Open House* has achieved an incredible amount and reached tens of thousands of people with modest funding and resources. The learning from *Open House* has generously inspired

and informed other museum and gallery practitioners’ work and will, undoubtedly, continue to do so.

Importantly, the research has asked – what place has *Open House* played in being a catalyst for broader organisational changes, alongside sharing findings that demonstrate the benefits for Kettle’s Yard working in this way. The research points towards a set of insights and future possibilities, suggesting that the next stage for *Open House* is to integrate its values and approaches more fully into the mainstream activity of Kettle’s Yard. The report will now draw conclusions and ask a series of questions that consider the future of *Open House* at Kettle’s Yard.

A moment in time – the end of the beginning

Open House began in a period of change – a new director, a new programming team, a new ambition to connect meaningfully with their neighbours, and a major building redevelopment. Today museums and galleries, including Kettle’s Yard, face an incredibly difficult and unsettled moment in time; a time of inevitable, and in many cases much needed, change. As Kettle’s Yard undertakes an organisational review and *Open House* in its current form draws to a close (or optimistically arrives at the end of one part of its journey and begins another), there is

an opportunity to reflect back and a chance to consider the future, building on the incredible work from the last seven years.

In their publication *The Conditions for Creative Communities* (2018a), *Open House* at Kettle's Yard recognised the importance of 'being a good neighbour':

'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'.

Today, this has never mattered more. *Open House* started with Jim Ede and, in essence, his neighbourly attitude. He welcomed his neighbours into his home seven days a week, between two and four, and generously shared cups of tea, rounds of toast, and magnificent artworks. First artist in residence Emma Smith acknowledges that: 'given Jim's history of thinking about what it means to share artwork with people, it feels to me that there's a real poignancy to it being Kettle's Yard as opposed to any other institution working in a neighbourhood and it feels like that's something quite important'. As *Open House* affirms being a good neighbour is about 'being there when needed', Kettle's Yard has been there for the communities this year, and the previous six. But being a good neighbour also means continuing to be there, continuing to support and enable, and enduring through adverse and unstable times.

The importance of the long-term engagement, investment, and commitment of *Open House* cannot be overstated. Working collaboratively over seven years has, without doubt, contributed to its effectiveness—being able to foster meaningful connections with individuals and communities built on relationships of trust and mutual respect, knowing each other well enough to be radically open and honest—all of which have allowed the programme to evolve and flourish. *Open House*, although still innovative, is no longer a novel activity. How can Kettle's Yard keep the momentum going? How can museums and galleries, like Kettle's Yard, re-new and refresh a model of excellence whilst not losing what matters? Director Andrew Nairne shared similar insights in his interview, stating that:

'I think when we talk about *Open House* now and this is an interesting reflection going forward because we are, like so many other places, doing a bit of a reset, a rethink and we need to find some more funding as well. We need to remember that that cumulative DNA is there, and we don't want to lose it, essentially, that richness, the DNA of all the previous projects coming forward and what that may mean for members of the community'.

Assistant Director Susie Biller relatedly considers the identity or 'brand' of *Open House*, reflecting on the fact that it 'has got stronger and more recognised' over the years and that 'more people appreciate what that is'. Similarly, Golzar from NCCP recognised the power of the *Open House* brand, sharing: 'When we talk about Kettle's Yard in the area, and *Open House*, it's such a brand for people, and they are ready to go for high quality, great experience'. How might the visibility or brand of *Open House*, along with its richness or DNA, run through the future community programming at Kettle's Yard? And perhaps more

importantly how might the learning from *Open House* shape the next stages of Kettle's Yard?

What might be gained by further embedding the values and approaches of *Open House* institutionally?

Avoiding reverting back to traditional ways working
What happens when a gallery re-opens? How does a community programme, so embedded in its locale, work in the site of the gallery? How do gallery practitioners maintain integrated and collaborative work across departments? And how do practitioners sustain innovative and radical practices in the physical space of the gallery? These are some of the pertinent issues and questions arising for Kettle's Yard since the gallery re-opened in 2018.

As we have previously heard from Karen in the report, it was all too easy to revert back to 'traditional' ways of working when situated onsite in the gallery. Through reflexive practice and learning from *Open House's* approaches and underlying values the 'Community Days' were re-thought and became more collaborative and experimental. But do other staff members in the organisation need to adopt a more reflexive mode of practice, step out of their comfort zones, and resist reverting to type? One of community panel member Alan Soer's greatest fears in relation to *Open House* is that: *'I think it's easy for Kettle's Yard to slip back into a bit of an elitist cliquy type set up, I would not want that to happen'*. Unquestionably, the workload of staff increased when the gallery re-opened, but how might carving out more space and time for reflection support a more nimble, flexible and collaborative practice?

The community is visible and valued

Staff and community members alike felt that there was a lack of community presence in Kettle's Yard. Andrew reflected that: *'when I think about Open House, where is it in the new Kettle's Yard, where is it visible, where does it exist and there isn't really an answer to that'*. Similarly, Jenny felt that:

... as the project progressed the visibility of the project within Kettle's Yard spaces is something which we could have promoted more. That was everyone's responsibilities essentially. I think we didn't quite get there in terms of valuing the project within our own spaces enough'.

The absence of community voices, experiences, contributions and collaboratively-made artworks in the gallery, did not go unnoticed by the community either. Val of Grovebury Ladies shared that:

'We thought that Kettle's Yard should have something in Kettle's Yard. They fork out a lot of money for these sessions for us but there's nothing in Kettle's Yard to say what we've produced. And perhaps this would encourage more people to join. It doesn't have to be all our work, perhaps just the best bits or whatever you like, but it might encourage more people to join the groups. I think it would mean that anyone, from any background could be involved in art. And it's not just the really good artists that get noticed or wealthy people who pursue art, but everyday people and every different walk of life can get involved in art and enjoy it'.

Similarly, Alan, when responding to the question ‘if Kettle’s Yard were to run *Open House* again, what would you recommend they do differently?’ in his interview, considered that:

‘Kettle’s Yard have been very good at what they’ve done. They didn’t withdraw behind the drawbridge, which I half expected to happen once it was all reopen and lovely. That they would say, oh we’ll be doing this now. I think if we did it again, I don’t think there’s anything fundamentally wrong with what we did I think it would be rather nice to be able to implant within Kettle’s Yard. There’s no criticism on anything they’ve done and how they’ve done it, but I would like to think there maybe perhaps a little bit more of a community presence within Kettle’s Yard’.

For Karen, it is not just a case of how visible the communities are within the gallery, rather how they and their contributions are valued in every sense. Clare, from Cambridge Community Arts, although incredibly positive about her experiences of participating in *Open House*, felt that the lack of investment and resources in the resulting exhibition of *Hyperlocal Radio* shown at Kettle’s Yard, de-valued the communities’ efforts, she shared that:

‘I thought how fantastic, how absolutely fantastic. The concept was brilliant, the artists running it were brilliant, the people involved in both the community arts organisations and Kettle’s Yard were brilliant. It was run on such an unbelievable shoestring it was totally undermined for a start. I believe that many hundreds of people who were desperately poor, desperately ill, incapacitated, juggling enormously, put huge amounts of effort, personal time and effort into participating to the best of their abilities in this. Yet, their efforts were

represented on tiny little throwaway postcards and slips of paper at the end of the day in a tiny little space in Kettle’s Yard, right at the top where nobody really went and nobody was aware that it was there’.

At the facilitated workshop at Kettle’s Yard, staff spent a considerable amount of time reflecting on and discussing these issues. Helen Dickman, Communications Assistant, thought about how the varying strands of the gallery’s programming are valued differently, responding in the chat she wrote:

‘I think this idea of a permanent space at Kettle’s Yard is really important – we do small interventions, such as ‘Empathy Objects’, where the project is given a month. But we constantly have exhibitions on etc. and we should be giving the community projects that same permanency within Kettle’s Yard’.

Helen noted the temporary nature of *Open House*’s outputs, highlighting the recent example of Enni-Kukka Tuomala’s ‘Empathy Objects’ exhibited in the House as part of her residency, in contrast to the time and space given over to other parts of the programme. Although it could be argued that the majority of Kettle’s Yard’s programming is temporary in nature, it does appear that the work associated with *Open House* shown in Kettle’s Yard has considerably less resource given over to it, less attention paid towards it, and less space and time on display. What might be gained by re-focusing attention and resources on the communities’ voices, experiences, contributions and collaboratively-made artworks in the physical site of the gallery? What might be gained by placing more value on *Open House*? Interestingly, Clare reflects on how value can be ascribed without necessarily needing additional monetary investment, she states that:

‘It wouldn’t cost them anything, just to give it a little bit more space and time and publicity. I don’t believe it would have cost them anything for people in far more important positions to get involved, to be enthusiastic, and to take an interest. I think that resources come when organisations and people take the proper level of interest and enthusiasm. They are placing a value on it by their attention to it and their value of it and what they have to say about it and what they have to put in to it. Also, how they understand what it means for people involved in it. There’s this huge amount of energy being generated in those kinds of project which I can see, hear and feel. The way I see it is, yes, the people on the ground doing these projects are undermined because they’re not given the attention and the resources they deserve at all and the outcomes are therefore undermined’.

Clare makes incredibly powerful points. However, building on these reflections, funding is also fundamental in enabling a programme to thrive and there are often hidden costs associated with these activities. It is an undeniably challenging time for museums and galleries financially. Kettle’s Yard, like many, are thinking through the gallery’s sustainability and revisiting priorities with less money and less staff. But what might Kettle’s Yard look like if the community engagement programme was prioritised in similar ways to the other programming strands? And what might be gained by blurring the boundaries between artworks produced collaboratively with communities and artworks exhibited as part of the ‘main’ programmes? As Jenny shared there are instances of Kettle’s Yard shifting towards more integration of the *Open House* artists’ work in the ‘main’ exhibitions programme:

‘We were trying to get away from the hierarchy of this is our *Open House* community programme artist and this is our main

gallery programme artist. That was again one of the aims of the project to say that those two things shouldn’t be separated or valued in different ways. Quite a few of the *Open House* artists were also involved in the, in inverted commas, main exhibition programmes in some way, so some of them were commissioned to make works for the reopening shows or have been since. We tried to build on that relationship with them’.

But what might be different if there was more integration of the collaboratively-made artworks too? How might a core budget equally invested in *Open House* alongside the ‘main’ exhibitions programme make communities more visible and valued? Liz reflected on this in her interview, believing that:

‘... with most learning and community outcomes there’s always this question of quality and it’s not about the quality of ideas or the content. Well from my point of view anyway, it’s about the quality of the presentation and when you want to show the work off in the best way, you need resources, you need technicians, you need the right kind of equipment, you need the right amount of time to do that. When we have a display at Kettle’s Yard I don’t think it’s given the same amount of resources as the exhibitions programme. I’m not saying it should have the same, but it should have the same sort of percentage’.

Similarly, Karen dreams of *Open House* being ‘*programmed into the exhibition space at Kettle’s Yard*’ and believes that this: ‘*would address a lot of concerns from the community*’. She continues:

‘I would hope that by displaying their work in the same professional and high quality way that we present any

exhibition, in the galleries at Kettle's Yard that that would increase the shared ownership of the work, and the shared ownership of Kettle's Yard'.

Several members of staff reflected on the potential of a longer *Open House* artistic residency, perhaps running over two years instead of one, and how this could enable a more integrated approach to programming. Susie, when asked what her future aspirations for *Open House* are, responded with: *'I would love to see it continue in some form and I do wonder if funding allowed a longer term residency would maybe offer us the opportunity to develop things a little bit more, in a little bit more of a considered way'*. Echoing this, Karen shared that:

*'A lot of actual engagement doesn't start until about six months in, and then you're very hurried to reach an outcome. I think two years would be better and would allow it to be part of the exhibition programme at Kettle's Yard. It would raise the public understanding of how we value *Open House* and the understanding of the practice as well, and that it is equal to all the other artists' practice. It's worthy of being in a gallery context. The outcomes that we've had at Kettle's Yard have always been in non-gallery spaces which I feel slightly disrespects the project and the artists' practice themselves'*.

Beyond the possibilities of forming part of the 'main' exhibitions programme, a longer lead in time might offer further benefits for all stakeholders involved. As previously explored in the report, an extended residency would also support the artists in residence through providing a committed income for a longer period of time, and by enabling the artists to develop a better understanding of the context of North Cambridge, potentially leading to a more sustainable and genuine

model of collaboration. Susie also considered some of the issues relating to the residencies running over one-year in relation to marketing and communicating the programme with audiences:

'Sometimes the difficulties is with the one year annual cycle, that the lead-in time is never what you want it to be. Ideally, if you're working on a multi-campaign, audience development plan you'd have much longer to develop it, to work on it. It's often felt quite rushed but that's the nature of the programme. The artist starts and their process of thinking and discovering and working out what they want to do and then in terms of the marketing coming maybe quite late into that process'.

Visitor Services Manager Lilja Kupua Addeman also felt that: *'not having enough time to understand the full breadth of the program'* presented a challenge. Perhaps then, with more attention paid, more resources and investment, and a longer lead in time *Open House* would be more visible and valued externally, as well as internally.

Embedding *Open House* structurally

As we have seen in part four of the report, community engagement processes, practices and values have started to be integrated into Kettle's Yard more broadly. We have seen examples of learning from *Open House* being directly applied in day-to-day practices, such as a more outward looking approach, becoming more flexible and adaptive, learning new skills, as well as more strategically. However, we also saw examples where some members of staff felt the organisation-wide commitment had dropped off in recent years and that in reality more work is required to fully embed *Open House* in Kettle's Yard structurally. Although 'access and inclusion' has recently been written into all job descriptions, what does this look like in practice?

In 2018 Kettle's Yard (2018b) shared with the funders of *Open House* – the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, that capacity was a major issue and that: '*demands on the team are extreme, with a great deal of TOIL accrued, annual leave unused, health impacted and additional temporary staff brought in to support activity*'. This remains to be a significant problem, as Karen honestly lays bare:

'There have been times I think where I've just been over-stretched by it. I think because we don't want it to fail or we don't want to let anyone down. We don't want to let the community down, we don't want to let the artists down, we don't want to let Kettle's Yard down. We exceed our capacity trying to make it a success and that's not sustainable. Actually maybe that says it's not embedded enough at Kettle's Yard that we need more support, we need other members of staff there. Not just at the outcome because although that's hard work it's actually throughout the programme'.

Susie understands the importance of having 'trusted faces' in an organisation in order to meaningfully engage with audiences and communities, and recognises the labour it takes to develop those relationships, she shares that:

'I do feel for my colleagues [in the *Open House* team] though because I think that is, in itself it's quite a big thing [the *Open House* programme]. To know how important that is. Maybe if more of us [Kettle's Yard staff] were those faces that could help, we can be trusted faces as well. That could be a good thing as well'.

How does an organisation, like Kettle's Yard, support its staff in taking on new responsibilities and in fully embracing a community

engagement ethos, so that they also become 'trusted faces' and increase the capacity of the *Open House* team? Alison Newbery, who recently joined Kettle's Yard as the Operations Manager, reflected on the critical role Front of House play in not only welcoming audiences, but in reflecting the values of an organisation. In the workshop she asked: '*How do you continue Open House beyond the delivery of it?*' What further roles might Visitor Assistants, for example, play in ensuring that the principles of community engagement permeate throughout the gallery?

What opportunities might be gained through new partnerships?

Greater collaboration with the University of Cambridge
Kettle's Yard is a non-school institution of the University of Cambridge, and as such is required to undertake research. We have seen examples of Kettle's Yard working with other University of Cambridge Museums, but how might Kettle's Yard benefit from developing closer connections with the University through a research focus on community?

In Emma Smith's residency we witnessed stronger connections develop with one University department to support the development of new artistic practice. In her interview, Karen reflected on future possibilities to enhance artists' practice by generating more robust ties with the University. She also considered how this embedded relationship could build bridges with the communities of North Cambridge, sharing that:

'Personally I'd love it to grow and become even more embedded. I think there's an exciting opportunity for it to be a real bridge between the University and the community. I think it

comes back from the artists that they want access to the amazing resource that is the University of Cambridge and the knowledge there. I can totally see departments that past artists would have really benefitted from having some access to that knowledge... It's something, all the way through that the community have asked for, that they feel the "town and gown" divide and for them to impact the research at the University would be a huge game changer, but also to understand the impact the University has on their lives as well. I think it would just do a lot of damage control on the relationship in the past, just to have that experience in each other's shoes a bit more. What I would love to do is continue to have artists, but also work with a 'researcher in residence', who would work alongside the artist'.

Similarly, Andrew considered the potential and benefits to Kettle's Yard of more closely aligning with the University:

'I think where we're going we need to think in the future – is there also a University lens that we need to look through? I do think that's another part of this asset. I think we've got to move closer to the University for our own resilience and because it makes sense to. Could we look at our future community and learning programme even more through the lens of the University and not immediately assume that that narrows our focus or that limits what we can do? It would mean potentially connecting with departments, researchers and so on – but is

there a way of doing that, that further enriches or gives more value to what we can do in the community?

As Andrew suggests moving closer to the University will enable the gallery to become more resilient and more sustainable. Jenny has also felt for a long time that: *'I think long-term you can't continue to try for three year pots of funding essentially, my ambition would be that it does become core to Kettle's Yard's own spending and there's a core commitment to continue it in some way'*. How might additional financial support from the University further embed *Open House* in Kettle's Yard and build capacity? How might extending the relationship with the University more fully support the entire Community Programme at Kettle's Yard?

There are interesting examples of Universities focusing on their locale, including De Montfort University's Square Mile project⁷, that used the skills of University staff and students to benefit the communities living in the one square mile of Leicester around the campus. Now known as DMU Local, and taking place as part of the University's public engagement work, staff and students have volunteered on more than 100 projects and committed over 20,000 hours of work in communities in Leicester. Another interesting model is the knowledge-sharing strategic partnership between gallery Nottingham Contemporary and Nottingham Trent University and Nottingham University. Historically both universities have invested significant funding into the gallery, including fully funding three posts in the gallery's Public Programming team, as well as providing a programming budget (Fisher 2012). Today the gallery is a founding member of the Midlands Higher Education and

⁷ For more information about the [Square Mile project De Montfort University, Leicester](#) visit their website.

Culture Forum, that builds partnerships between higher education and the cultural sector in the Midlands⁸. Similarly, Liverpool John Moores University developed a model of ‘distributed posts’ with senior academics based in three Liverpool arts organisations (ibid). And Bluecoat Art Centre has partnered with the University of Liverpool to support a new strand of residency programming, with two academics from the University participating as a ‘philosopher in residence’ and a ‘sociologist in residence’ (Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation 2017). How might these exciting models be adapted to build a more solid bridge between Kettle’s Yard and the University of Cambridge? How might an embedded relationship with the University further benefit the communities of North Cambridge?

More, and more diverse, community partners

Several of the *Open House* community panel shared a desire to work with more communities, beyond the four target resident groups set out in the initial stages of the programme. Golzar shared that:

‘I think what could be done or improved with that is just that the main focus is on schools and local groups. If we can change it to work with other schools and other people, ordinary families in the area that would be great as well. This happened during *Meeting Ground* but I’d really love to see more of this in the area, perhaps make it more open to everybody, especially people with different backgrounds and other people who can join and have more attendees, that would be great. Sometimes I feel like some people are not completely aware of what’s happening.

⁸ For more information about the [current strategic partnership](#) between Nottingham Contemporary and Nottingham Trent University and Nottingham University, visit the gallery’s website.

There is still opportunities to target more people and just to make sure that other groups, other than the school children, are there to have their say. I know they’re working with a few other groups but I feel like there is still some space to work on in terms of audience and getting feedback from the whole community’.

Similarly, community panel member Shahida Rahman, who also represents Cambridge Mosque and the Karim Foundation, felt that Kettle’s Yard could do more to engage with more diverse groups:

‘I think it’s just the lack of engagement with diverse communities and it’s something that, I suppose with all organisations and all areas really where that is an issue. It’s how you draw people like that to the arts, where sometimes arts can be seen as being undervalued as a subject itself. I think Karen’s doing a great job and there hopefully will be more opportunities to make that happen and make that work’.

Shahida also believed that the positive benefits of *Open House* could be shared beyond North Cambridge, to reach other parts of Cambridge experiencing multiple deprivation:

‘I think perhaps that [*Open House*] needs to be expanded to other areas of the city because we can’t just generalise and say CB4 area is deprived. It’s a mixture of all over the city, even South Cambridgeshire and other areas. It would be good to see them expand in other places’.

However, in her interview Karen shared a mindful approach to developing relationships with partners, and had clearly thought carefully about what is involved in working with new, and too many, partners, she states that:

‘I think I would have been very conscious that some of our partners remain constant, which is not a bad thing because actually some of them started from small beginnings and they’ve grown into really meaningful partnerships now, and collaborations. You’ve only got so many hours in a day and so many days in a year. Sometimes the artists want you to do something that’s quite bonkers and it’s quite hard to build a new partnership to introduce something that’s quite conceptual at an early stage of partnership. We’ve had to be really conscious of that and when we introduce a new partner we need to think that okay, this is the small step, this is step one. We think that by year three of our partnership we should be here and that’s worked to some extent, but I think we probably need to refresh some of those partnerships and be more inclusive. Yes, maybe that’s a capacity thing. You can only do so much, we shouldn’t be so hard on ourselves’.

Some of these concerns materialised as the Covid-19 pandemic led to the first national lockdown in March 2020 in England. Throughout the lockdown: ‘*Kettle’s Yard was inundated with requests for support and creative ideas from across the city and beyond*’ (Kettle’s Yard 2021c). Due to the gallery’s own reduced capacity, and with several staff furloughed, Kettle’s Yard took the strategic decision to focus on supporting existing *Open House* partners and providing activities for these partners only (ibid). Once more, this demonstrates how much *Open House* is valued by community organisations in North Cambridge to support them in

serving the most vulnerable and marginalised members of the communities.

Moving from ‘us’ and ‘them’ to ‘we’

To conclude the report, I wish to return to, and consider in further depth, the shifting relationship between Kettle’s Yard and the communities of North Cambridge – to ask how the learning from *Open House* can help move the dynamic from ‘us’ and ‘them’ to ‘we’. As community engagement at Kettle’s Yard continues to evolve and becomes more embedded institutionally, what further benefits might be drawn from adopting a ‘*philosophy of solidarity*’, where museums and galleries become useful and relevant through working in ‘*fellowship*’ with communities ‘*in conscious, equitable and interdependent relations*’ (Lynch 2021: 4)?

Solidarity in practice

Andrew contemplated the very beginnings of *Open House* in his interview when asked about his future aspirations for the programme, recognising even at this early stage, the potential of the gallery in creating a ‘*framework*’ to enable communities to be ‘*self-made*’, he shared that:

‘It’s worth going back, for a moment to the first project. I remember so clearly Karen did so brilliantly. It was essentially a photography project, it’s not a particularly original idea on one level, to give some kids a camera and see what happens. It was extremely well done. It really was reminding you of ideas around self-worth, identify, reflecting back who you are, trying to empower the participants so they have the agency. You set up the framework, but they are the project. You’re not the

project, they're doing the project, they're making the project and they're shaping it. In a way the ethos of that very first project has run through all, I hope, the subsequent ones, that you're always trying to create a framework where the most powerful change or enrichment is always self-made, in a sense. Of course, that self-made sometimes requires the framework, the support, the environment, the inspiration, the nudge, the materials, the money, whatever, to enable it to happen. Yes, it's worth thinking back'.

Jenny shared a similar desire to Andrew's, hoping that in the future the communities drive forward the work and that Kettle's Yard take a '*step back, not abandon but step back and know that those communities are empowered to take these things forward*', she continues:

'My ambition would be that the community is enabled to either take forward some of these grant applications themselves or lead other projects working with artists where Kettle's Yard is an observer or like a critical friend, so it becomes the other way around. They organise it essentially and we play a more advisory role. That would be my ambition. Yes'.

Open House artist Hilary Cox-Condron, also believes the future of Kettle's Yard lies in the community taking charge, she shares that:

'We need something, it needs to go to the next step now doesn't it. It's great that it has given voice to different ways of working and communities, but actually going the next step of having the community lead something [otherwise] it's just ticking boxes isn't it, we can't just tick boxes if we want to change lives'.

In many respects these future ambitions, derived from the achievements of the past, echo an '*ethics of solidarity and collaboration*', as advocated by Lynch, whereby museums and galleries: '*help create the circumstances by which people can help themselves, building their own capabilities*' (2021: 3). Museums and galleries can become useful through supporting communities and: '*empowering people to know, claim and activate their own rights... and by giving people the opportunity to exercise their rights*' (ibid: 12).

However, Lynch recognises that this ethical shift in museum practice is difficult and that challenging deeply entrenched hierarchies is not an easy task. One of the central issues in participatory and collaborative work with communities in museums has been embracing a model of kindness and charity, which: '*brings with it hierarchical positioning, and with that, the suppression of being able to speak out loud for oneself, to show emotion, to weep, and sometimes to shout, even in anger*' (ibid: 4). Lynch further summarises this challenge as:

'Throughout its recent history therefore, much self-proclaiming museum participatory practice has inadvertently undermined the museum's relations with others. This dilemma could be summarised as an 'us and them', centre-periphery, beneficiary versus 'teacher/ carer' or 'victim versus saviour' approach. These continued hierarchical relationships have often remained deeply patronising. Despite good intentions on the part of museum institutions and their committed workers, their participatory work with others has frequently been steeped in legacies of prejudice' (ibid: 5).

Interestingly, community participant Clare, also recognised this as an issue caused through a widespread misconception in arts practice working with communities, she shared that:

‘A total misunderstanding as well of the way that community arts synergy works. This is quite critical really, nobody is giving and nobody is taking within this process if it works correctly. There is a mutual creative synergy and it feeds everybody involved. There aren’t ‘the givers’ and ‘the receivers of charity’. There are people engaged in projects, which produce together a huge amount of creative synergy, which is good for everybody. It’s not artists doing a charitable thing. That’s where it’s all been got wrong’.

A truly collaborative relationship, based on solidarity, is mutually beneficial. As Clare says, there aren’t ‘givers’ and ‘receivers’. To move away from this charitable model or a relationship of ‘us’ and ‘them’ towards ‘we’, museums and galleries need to stop assuming positions of superiority and, instead, support communities to become genuinely equitable partners, generating ‘*a profound sense of interdependence*’ (Lynch 2021: 15). Or as Lynch advocates in her introduction to *Museums and Social Change: Challenging the Unhelpful Museum*:

‘The categorisation of people into the ‘vulnerable’, the ‘marginalised’, which has its uses as part of a process of active socio-political agency and change, must give way, as people move beyond their labels. As will be seen here, those who began engaging with these museums as the ‘marginalised’ are now collaborators, researchers, experts, co-creators, advisors, critical friends, trainers, campaigners and political change agents’ (ibid: 14-15).

Lynch goes on to describe how museums and their collaborators, despite very different backgrounds and experiences, could attempt to develop a reciprocal and equitable relationship through working together in ‘*proximity*’ (ibid: 15). How might a literal closeness further support Kettle’s Yard in becoming a useful museum; a community asset that is inclusive, relevant and truly valued by the community? In the last community panel meeting Golzar shared a hope that:

‘... we can have some sort of a real physical *Open House* in our area. Something like an art workshop or a facility so that the artist in residence can be just sitting there and working with people face-to-face all the time and it’s open to all communities. That’s what one of my hopes and I hope one day it will happen’.

This space would certainly demonstrate a significant investment from Kettle’s Yard in the community, and is similar to an early ambition of *Open House* to create a studio space directly in the neighbourhood. However, as we have seen in the report, there is also a noticeable lack of community presence in the gallery, perhaps this a more urgent issue to address and might do more to make the community visible and show that they are valued. What might be the benefits of having a dedicated community space *in* Kettle’s Yard, beyond the traditional learning studios that most museums and galleries provide?

An ‘in-between space’

How might an ‘in-between space’, both a literal physical and conceptual space, situated within the territory of the gallery, but at some distance, foster more equitable relationships between Kettle’s Yard and the communities of North Cambridge? How might this space enable Kettle’s Yard to become a useful museum?

An 'in-between space' can be conceptualised as a space for ongoing critical and reflexive relations between the gallery and the communities (Plumb 2017). In this space, there is a need for a dialogue that includes negotiation, challenge, provocation and critique in order to generate mutual benefits, that supports the communities in shaping their own culture and creativity in ways that authentically reflect their interests, needs and desires (ibid). In order for this shift in power to take place both the gallery and the communities need to be invested in a process of change – a dual process of building capacity and enabling self-empowerment in the communities, and in ensuring that the gallery opens up their spaces in a genuinely welcoming way. It is important that the 'in-between space' is within the territory of the gallery and not cut off from the institutional establishment, rather that it is located in the fringes. Through being literally in the gallery, there are obvious benefits of space and resources, but by positioning this practice on a symbolic border or an 'in-between space' there are also opportunities for institutional critique (by both the communities and the gallery itself).

As we have seen throughout the research, the active and politicised members of *Open House's* community panel purposefully question and challenge the processes, and work with the gallery and artists to shape the programme. They also act as spokespeople on behalf of the wider community, with the communities' interests as their main concern. How might their role be expanded in the 'in-between space', or even through the proposed new Community Advisory Group – *Your Kettle's Yard – Your Voice*? How might they further assert their agency and support the wider communities in articulating their self-representation and in becoming self-determined?

How might an 'in-between space' work in practice at Kettle's Yard? We have seen examples where this type of 'space' has been brought into

action, for example through the shifting approach to the Community Days, the Holiday Lunches taking place at the gallery, and in offering up spaces for free for community groups. Kettle's Yard could also dedicate one of its spaces to working with and consulting the communities of North Cambridge to identify needs, support local agendas, instigate change and respond to ideas, co-commissioning, co-creating and co-curating artworks that deal directly with local concerns, whilst continuing to reflect broader societal and global concerns (ibid). Operating as a democratic working group and working through an integrated programming approach, curators, educators and self-empowered community members could collaboratively devise programmes, alongside opening up the space to the broader community welcoming proposals for new activity.

And finally, is there potential for *Open House* to become a break-away collective, led by active, politicised, and self-empowered members of the communities with staff from Kettle's Yard and artists in residence invited as agitators? Self-initiating, self-organising and self-managing from the ground up rather than top down, and after a period of testing and piloting, self-funded (ibid). Echoing Tiller's 'participants' initiative' on the participatory spectrum, where participants instigate and realise their own creative ideas, and where they are directors and the artistic vision is led by them (2014: 11-13). Could *Open House* become a community-led organisation in its own right, working with communities, for communities, focused on community need, but still situated within the territory of the gallery and recognising the expertise and value Kettle's Yard brings? Could *Open House* become an 'in-between space'?

As *Open House*, in its current form draws to a close, and we begin to consider its future – what larger role might the programme play in

Kettle's Yard, the communities of North Cambridge, and the broader cultural sector? How might it be renewed and re-envisioned in a way that does not lose what matters and what makes it so unique? What might its ultimate destination look like? Returning to the ambitious Outcomes of Arts Council England's strategy *Let's Create* (2020) once more – how might *Open House* continue and further support people to experience the highest-quality cultural experiences and express their creativity throughout their life; build on a collaborative arts practice that enables communities to flourish; and foster a thriving cultural ecology that is innovative, collaborative and international?

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Community participant questions/prompts

<p>Overarching Research Questions</p> <p><i>What difference has working collaboratively through Open House made to the communities of North Cambridge, the staff and volunteers of Kettle’s Yard, University of Cambridge, and the Open House artists? What does this mean for the future trajectory of Open House?</i></p>	
<p>Introduction</p> <p>These are a series of questions which explore your experiences and perceptions of the community engagement programme Open House and the impact the programme has had on you.</p>	
<p>Questions</p>	1. What’s your role/involvement in Open House?
	2. What motivated you to take part in Open House?
	3. What have you (and your community/clients/service users) gained from participating in Open House?
	4. In what ways did Open House meet and/or exceed your expectations? Conversely, what fell short?
	5. How has Open House made you think differently about galleries and artists?
	6. In what ways has Open House changed the way you feel about the place that you live?
	7. What possibilities have been opened up by Open House?
	8. What action have you taken as a result of Open House? What action might you take in the future?
	9. What has challenged you and what has excited you about Open House?
	10. Has Open House impacted on your (your service users) confidence? If yes, in what ways?
	11. What opportunities have you had to take ownership of Open House?
	12. What has been your best experience of Open House? And your worst?
	13. What do you (your service users) value the most about Open House?
	14. What do you feel you contribute to Open House?
	15. If Kettle’s Yard were to run Open House again, what would you recommend they do differently?
	16. What are your future aspirations for Open House?

Appendix 2: Staff questions/prompts

<p>Overarching Research Questions</p> <p><i>What difference has working collaboratively through Open House made to the communities of North Cambridge, the staff and volunteers of Kettle’s Yard, University of Cambridge, and the Open House artists? What does this mean for the future trajectory of Open House?</i></p>	
<p>Introduction</p> <p>These are a series of questions which explore your experiences of the community engagement programme Open House, your role at Kettle’s Yard, and the impact the programme has had on your practice.</p>	
<p>Questions</p>	1. Can you tell me about your role at Kettle’s Yard? What was your role and involvement in Open House?
	2. How has Open House made you think differently about collaborating with the communities of North Cambridge?
	3. What impact has Open House had on your working practices and processes?
	4. What action have you taken as a result of Open House? What action might you take in the future?
	5. What possibilities have been opened up by Open House?
	6. In what ways did Open House meet and/or exceed your expectations? Conversely, what fell short of your expectations or was less successful for you?
	7. What have been the strengths and weaknesses of Open House?
	8. How might you embed this approach into your future work and practice?
	9. What has challenged you and what has excited you about Open House?
	10. How has Open House impacted on your confidence in engaging and working collaboratively (and in socially engaged ways) with artists and communities?
	11. What’s the significance of Open House to Kettle’s Yard and the communities of North Cambridge more widely?
	12. If you were to do it again, what would you do differently?
	13. What are your future aspirations for Open House?

Appendix 3: Artist questions/prompts

<p>Overarching Research Questions</p> <p><i>What difference has working collaboratively through Open House made to the communities of North Cambridge, the staff and volunteers of Kettle’s Yard, University of Cambridge, and the Open House artists? What does this mean for the future trajectory of Open House?</i></p>	
<p>Introduction</p> <p>These are a series of questions which explore your experiences of the community engagement programme Open House, your role as an Open House Artist, and the impact the programme has had on your practice.</p>	
<p>Questions</p>	1. What was your motivation to work with Kettle’s Yard and the Open House programme?
	2. What difference has Open House made to your working practices and processes? (for example, what have you gained/learnt/new skills/knowledge/new partnerships/new perspectives/inspiration)
	3. How has the experience of/the learning from Open House influenced your approach to working collaboratively with galleries, communities? And other artists?
	4. What action have you taken as a result of Open House? What action might you take in the future?
	5. What possibilities have been opened up by Open House? What’s the lasting legacy for you?
	6. In what ways did Open House meet and/or exceed your expectations? Conversely, what fell short of your expectations or was less successful for you?
	7. What challenged you and what excited you about Open House?
	8. What’s the significance of Open House to you, Kettle’s Yard and the communities of North Cambridge more widely?
	9. If you were to do it again, what would you do differently?
	10. What are your future aspirations for Open House?

Appendix 4: Community participant survey

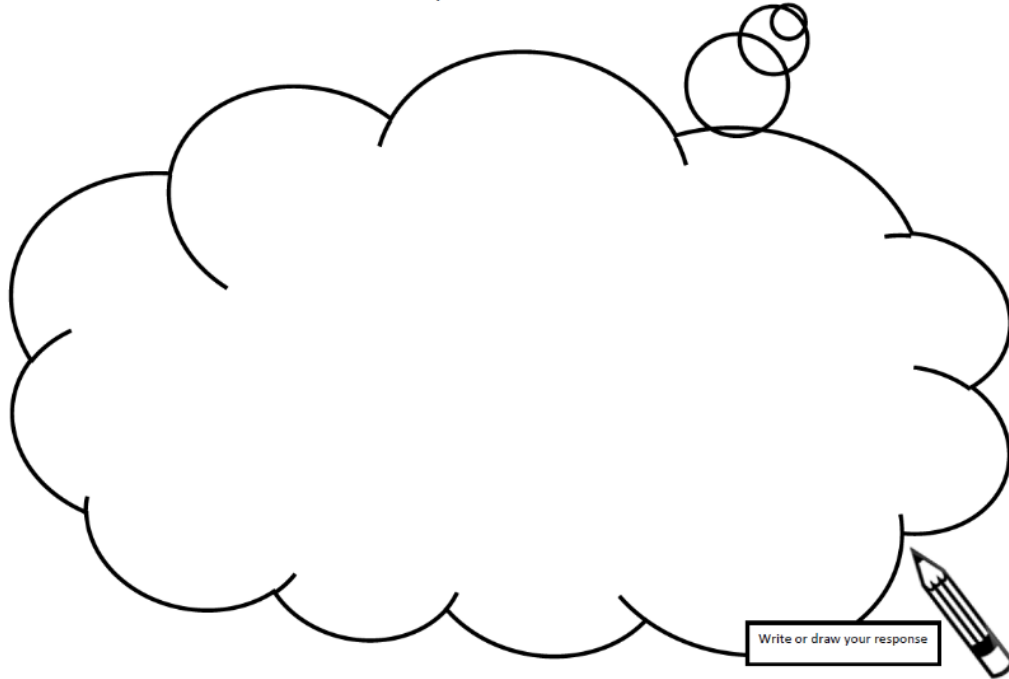
<p>Introduction</p> <p><i>Open House: The difference made through working together</i> is a research project between the Research Centre for Museums and Galleries (RCMG), University of Leicester and Kettle’s Yard, University of Cambridge. It explores the impact of working collaboratively through <i>Open House</i> on the communities of North Cambridge, the staff and volunteers of Kettle’s Yard, and the <i>Open House</i> artists. It also aims to consider the future trajectory of <i>Open House</i>. RCMG is carrying out research with community participants, artists, and staff and volunteers to find out more about a range of experiences of <i>Open House</i>.</p> <p>These are a series of questions which explore your experiences and perceptions of the community engagement programme <i>Open House</i> and the impact the programme has had on you.</p>	
<p>Name: (can be left blank if you wish to remain anonymous)</p>	
<p>Questions:</p>	<p>1. How are you involved in <i>Open House</i>?</p>
	<p>2. Benefits of <i>Open House</i></p> <p>a) Has <i>Open House</i> been a positive experience for you? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>b) Has <i>Open House</i> been a positive experience for the communities of North Cambridge? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If you answered Yes to either of the above questions, please use the space below to say in what ways <i>Open House</i> has been a positive experience.</p>
	<p>3. Impact of <i>Open House</i></p> <p>Has <i>Open House</i> made you think differently about Kettle’s Yard? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If you answered Yes, please use the space below to say in what ways <i>Open House</i> has made you think differently about Kettle’s Yard.</p>
	<p>4. Challenges of <i>Open House</i></p> <p>What challenged you and what excited you about <i>Open House</i>?</p>
	<p>5. The future of <i>Open House</i></p> <p>If Kettle’s Yard were to run <i>Open House</i> again, what would you recommend they do differently? What are your future aims and aspirations for <i>Open House</i>?</p>

Appendix 5: Staff and volunteer survey

<p>Introduction</p> <p><i>Open House: The difference made through working together</i> is a research project between the Research Centre for Museums and Galleries (RCMG), University of Leicester and Kettle's Yard, University of Cambridge. It explores the impact of working collaboratively through <i>Open House</i> on the communities of North Cambridge, the staff and volunteers of Kettle's Yard, and the <i>Open House</i> artists. It also aims to consider the future trajectory of <i>Open House</i>. RCMG is carrying out research with community participants and artists, as well as staff and volunteers to find out more about a range of experiences of <i>Open House</i>.</p> <p>These are a series of questions which explore your experiences of <i>Open House</i>, your role at Kettle's Yard, and the impact the programme has had on your practice.</p>	
<p>Name: (can be left blank if you wish to remain anonymous)</p>	
<p>Role: (can be left blank if you wish to remain anonymous)</p>	
<p>Questions:</p>	<p>6. Benefits of <i>Open House</i></p> <p>a) Has <i>Open House</i> been a beneficial experience for you? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>b) Has <i>Open House</i> been beneficial for Kettle's Yard? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If you answered Yes, please use the space below to say what the benefits have been to you and to Kettle's Yard of participating in <i>Open House</i>.</p>
	<p>7. Impact of <i>Open House</i></p> <p>Has <i>Open House</i> impacted positively on your working practices and processes? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If you answered Yes, please use the space below to say what impact <i>Open House</i> has had on your working practices and processes.</p>
	<p>8. Challenges of <i>Open House</i></p> <p>What have been the challenges to you and to Kettle's Yard of participating in <i>Open House</i>?</p>
	<p>9. The future of <i>Open House</i></p> <p>What are your future aspirations for <i>Open House</i>?</p>

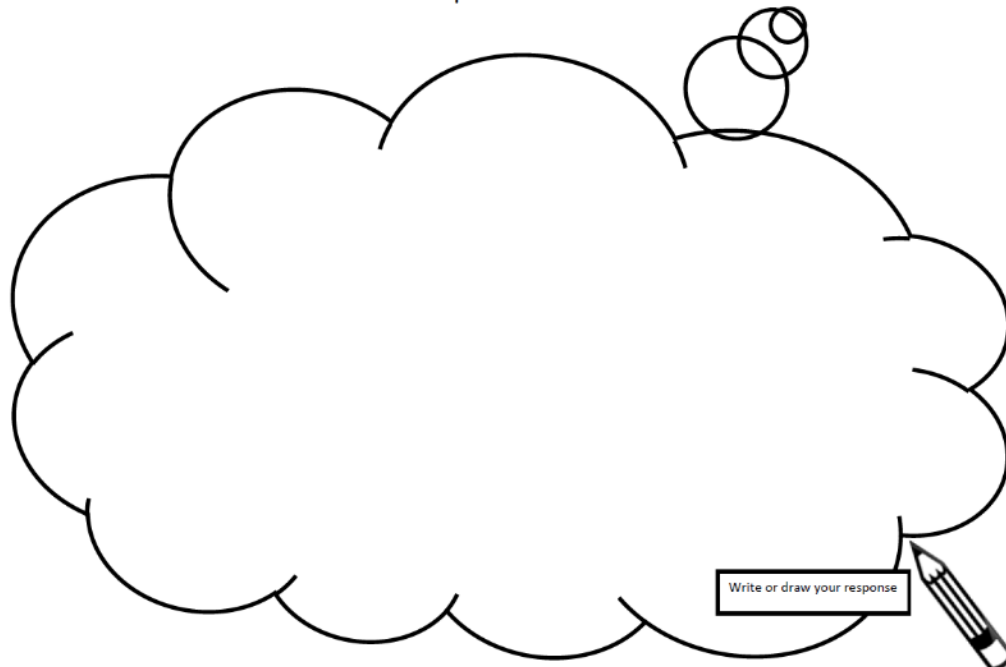
Appendix 6: Grove Primary School feedback form

What amazed me most about Open House with Kettle's Yard...



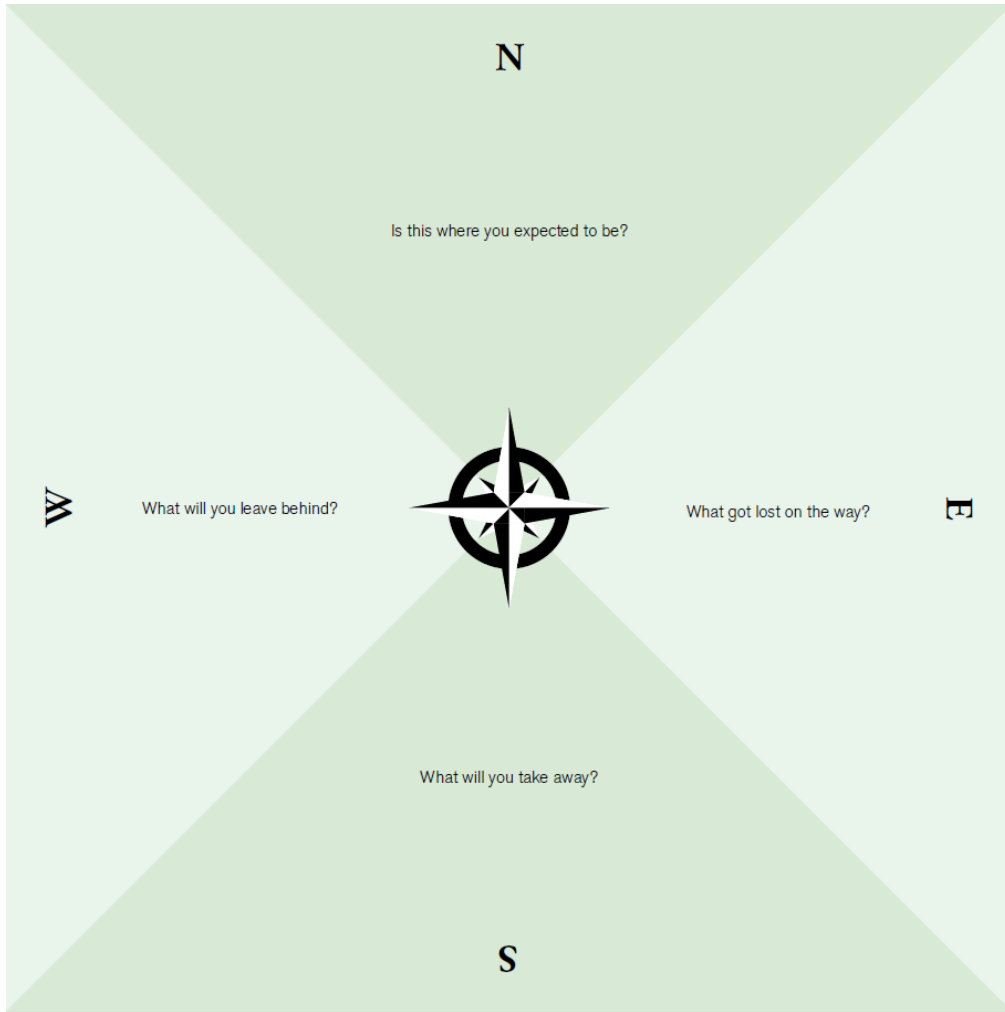
A large, hand-drawn thought bubble with a scalloped edge. At the top right, two overlapping circles are connected to the main bubble by a thin line. At the bottom right, a pencil is drawn pointing towards the bubble. A small rectangular box with the text "Write or draw your response" is positioned at the bottom right of the bubble.

What I would like the future of Open House at Kettle's Yard to be...



A large, hand-drawn thought bubble with a scalloped edge, identical in style to the one above. At the top right, two overlapping circles are connected to the main bubble by a thin line. At the bottom right, a pencil is drawn pointing towards the bubble. A small rectangular box with the text "Write or draw your response" is positioned at the bottom right of the bubble.

Appendix 7: Taking Bearings arriving questions/prompts



Back cover image: *Hyperlocal Radio*, *Open House* artist in residence, 2019, Hannah Kemp-Welch, photograph by Jeroen Van Houtte

Open House has been generously supported by:



Kettle's Yard is grateful to the following for their continued support of their work:



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SEA CADETS Hall is the most readily available hall in the city. Unfortunately it's a bit of a dump, and on the edge of town and only holds 250 people - but it is about the only place you'll see heavy metal and punk. Bookings Tel: 55 5600.

SEA CADETS HALL

DOUBLE LINE



STURMED