



Mandate Event: Mapping Contemporary Art in the Heritage Experience

Hosted By: Newcastle University

Date: July 29/30, 2019

SCAN Mandate Attendee: Louise Briggs, Arts and Heritage Officer, Studio Pavilion

The conference was part of the wider [Mapping Contemporary Art in the Heritage Experience](#) (MCAHE) project, a three-year interdisciplinary research project that critically examines the role and practice of contemporary visual art commissioning within heritage properties in Britain today. It is funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) and delivered in collaboration with The National Trust, The Churches Conservation Trust and English Heritage.

The two-day event provided a collective platform to discuss contemporary art in heritage practice. It ran alongside an exhibition of work in the [Hatton Gallery](#), Out of Place, that brought together six new commissions from four heritage locations in the North East of England. [Read a review of Out of Place here.](#)

The event was aimed at:

Artists, curators and producers working across the visual arts, heritage organisations and cultural sectors.

The discussion:

How contemporary art can play a role in addressing the challenges of access, representation and identity in heritage settings

I had begun to think about a programme that aims to bring together our arts and heritage offering at Studio Pavilion; thinking about, utilising and exploring our own context in terms of our setting alongside the House for an Art Lover, its site and related histories. The conference highlighted a number of important elements that need to be addressed in terms of knowledge and of voices and posing questions around access and representation.

5 'Take Aways' from the discussions were:

1. Being more actively aware of the importance of including and engaging young people in Studio Pavilion's research and work.
2. Reaffirming barriers that need to be addressed in terms of privilege and access to arts and heritage – understanding there is a lot to be done in terms of opening access up and providing opportunities for there to be more voices and positions particularly within the Heritage sector.
3. Reaffirming the importance of getting staff on board with Studio Pavilion's work – gaining their trust, interest and support (this includes a staff team where the majority do not come from an arts, heritage or cultural sector).
4. Commissioning process – importance of lead in and research time required to develop projects that are positioning themselves within heritage issues / narratives.
5. Ensuring any work or projects undertaken deepen an artist's practice.

Was there anything to note from the event that you think would help SCAN and its membership to drive forward the demands of our Visual Arts Manifesto?

The conference was attended by professionals working in the heritage sector, and there was certainly the over-arching feeling that the visual arts has the unique and invaluable position of being able to inspire agency and change through learning, promoting equality, celebrating diversity – all key points in the Visual Arts Manifesto. It was great to hear this from a different sector. The need to continue championing the Manifesto demands outside of our own sector is key.

What will you do next or differently as a result of attending the event?

Over the next year Studio Pavilion will focus on developing the Heritage Centre that is on site, and to really think about this as a space; what should it be; what should it offer and how can we do this. It's given me the impetus to think about our heritage offer more creatively but ensure we think carefully about audiences, access and voices and also ensure artists and are their practices are utilised appropriately and not as an add on or simply as a tool.

The information above was summarised by SCAN from an event report by Louise Briggs, Arts and Heritage Officer at [Studio Pavilion](#), based alongside the Mackintosh-designed House for An Art Lover in Bellahouston Park, Glasgow.