

DEMOS

report

The Right to Art Making aspirations reality

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Robert Hewison
John Holden

robert@hewison.demon.co.uk
john.holden@demos.co.uk

Foreword

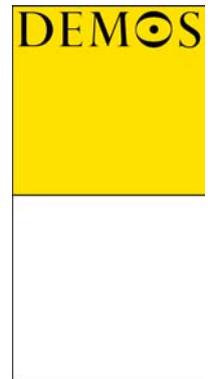
This essay is published at a time when culture is being debated not only in terms of its contribution to wider social, economic and political agendas but also, with the recent circulation of a discussion paper by Tessa Jowell, Secretary of State for Culture Media and Sport, in terms of its intrinsic value and how that might be measured.

Contemporary visual art in Britain is enjoying unprecedented levels of public interest. The opening of new and refurbished spaces throughout the country, the re-invigoration of many local authority and Arts Council supported galleries and a burgeoning number of contemporary art events are indicative of the art form's strength and diversity. This vitality is underpinned by the determination and vision of both artists and the cultural organisations that create exhibitions, commission new work, train individuals and provide opportunities for people to engage with, learn about and enjoy contemporary art.

Yet for too many people, art - in its many guises and with all that it offers - can still be seen as 'for others' and not for them. The poverty of cultural engagement and aspiration cuts across society. VAGA, the Visual Arts and Galleries Association, consulted widely with its members and visual arts and museum colleagues as to how this deprivation might be tackled. Taking our cue from Article 27 of the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948: "...the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts...", we invited Demos to consider art as a human right from a 21st century perspective; in particular to find a language and vision that addresses both contemporary visual arts practice and the broader cultural dialogues embracing audiences, learning and personal development. They have explored this through the concept of 'creating public value'.

The organisations and individuals that make up the membership of VAGA are committed to supporting the work and ideas of modern and contemporary artists and bringing that art to the widest public. The Right to Art Steering Group represents a coalition of VAGA members and colleagues from across the visual arts sector. We are very grateful to those who have shared their ideas and time with us, to Arts Council England for financially supporting the work of VAGA and of course to Demos itself.

We hope that the ideas expressed here will become part of a shared language and re-enforce the argument for 'cultural entitlement' as a right not a privilege. The arts themselves need to consider how they will meet the intellectual and practical challenges of a right to art, whilst wider examination of the responsibilities of government in recognising art as being of significant public value and reflecting this in its policies now needs to take place.

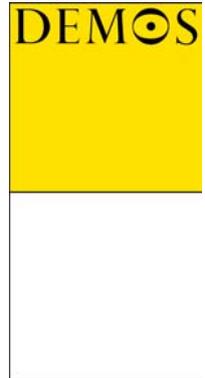


Right to Art Steering Group

Nick Dodd, Director Sheffield Galleries & Museums Trust
Vicky Dyer, Director, Central Lobby Consultants
Stephen Foster, Director John Hansard Gallery, University of Southampton
Sue Grayson Ford, Director Campaign for Drawing
Peter Jenkinson, Founding Director Creative Partnerships
Catherine Lampert, Chair Visual Arts and Galleries Association
Sandy Nairne, Director National Portrait Gallery
Tim Marlow, Broadcaster and Exhibitions Director White Cube
Andrew Wheatley, Director Cabinet Gallery
Hilary Gresty, Director Visual Arts and Galleries Association
Les Buckingham, Researcher, Visual Arts and Galleries Association

righttoart@vaga.co.uk

www.vaga.co.uk



Introduction

A “Right to Art” is enshrined, simply and straightforwardly, in the 1948 United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. But what does it mean in the contemporary world? Can we still talk about “rights” in this way, and if we can, how is “the right to art” dealt with in policy and in practice? In particular, how can we raise the appreciation and status of visual art in contemporary society in order to give greater meaning to such a universal right?

In this essay we argue:

- That as a signatory to the UN Declaration the British government has a responsibility to make this aspiration a reality.
- Current policies preach the principle of universal access to visual art, but this is not being achieved in practice.
- Not just cultural policy, but educational policy must address the problem of society’s lack of visual literacy.
- The contribution of visual artists to the economy is underestimated and misunderstood.
- To encourage visual literacy and the exercise of the right to art, a new language must inform public policy.
- That language is the language of public value, where the instrumental drives of social and economic policy find a new context in the moral, creative and collective values expressed by the right to art.

The Right to Art

Among the rights and freedoms solemnly inscribed in the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, Article 27 (1) makes this commitment to the rights of everybody to have access to and enjoy the fruits of human culture:

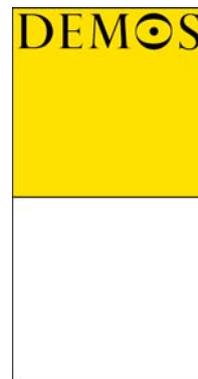
“Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts, and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.”

The U.N. Declaration of Human Rights is now fifty-five years old, and the language of Article 27 seems to come from another age. When in 1948 the Declaration spoke of culture and art, it did so in a context where culture was taken to mean the local and the indigenous, giving rise to collective and shared identity and value. Art was primarily high art, which took place in galleries, theatres and concert halls. Now, culture and art fuse the local and the global, the popular and the esoteric. Each of us constructs our own sense of cultural identity, and chooses different arts to enjoy. Self-determination today is about the individual, not the state, and we are encouraged to think of ourselves less as citizens and more as consumers.

Yet the idea that art, however defined, is essential to our joint, collective humanity still needs to be confronted. However individual and distinct our personal responses to art may be, we need to agree a shared political framework to make those responses possible. The aspirations contained in Article 27 of the UN Declaration are still valid. The difficulty lies in translating them into lived experience. As a signatory to the Declaration, the government of the United Kingdom is obliged to give meaning to its provisions. But more than half a century on, official policy has not yet turned this noble aspiration into reality.

Current policy in the UK: “the many not the few” – and the cost

At a rhetorical level, the present government acknowledges both the value of the arts, and the need to extend participation in the arts, as widely as possible. The Labour Party's cultural policy document *Create the Future* (1997) took as its starting point that “The arts should be supported by government for their intrinsic merit”. Commenting that “For too long the arts and culture have stood outside the mainstream”, Tony Blair made a commitment: “That has to change, and under Labour it will.” He also said that the arts must be “for the benefit of the many not the few”, making access the primary policy priority in the document: “Access will be a cornerstone of our cultural policy. Experiences of the highest quality must be available to the widest possible audience.”

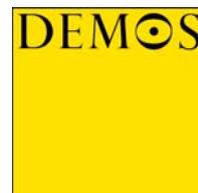


The commitment to making culture available to “the many not the few” has been reiterated time after time in policy documents and ministerial statements since then, perhaps most importantly in *Culture and Creativity: The Next Ten Years* (2001), which devoted a chapter to “widening participation and access”. Significant political actions, backed by Treasury funding, have followed, such as free entry to the twenty-four national museums and galleries, and the programme for regional museums *Renaissance in the Regions* (2002).

As an incentive to increase access the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) has set precise targets in the funding agreements it makes with institutions receiving public money. During the period 2003-2006 national museums and galleries are expected to raise the number of children visitors to seven million a year by 2006. The number of adult visitors from the socio-economic group C2DE should increase by 8 per cent over the same period and the target for children in organised education programmes is 2.4 million. The DCMS’ lead in promoting access has reshaped the cultural funding system. The need to make special efforts to include the whole population is recognised by Arts Council England (ACE), which has adopted public inclusion with special reference to race, disability and economic class as one of its five strategic priorities. The Museums Libraries and Archives Council (formerly Resource) has as one of its corporate objectives to encourage the development of accessible and inclusive collections and services that provide learning, inspiration and enjoyment for everyone. These strategic aims and priorities have in turn affected the practice of individual arts and cultural organisations, large and small, across the entire country.

Throughout the funding system then, access and widening participation, the involvement of young people, and the creation of new audiences have become serious priorities. Yet in spite of targeting worthy ends, central government has been less forthcoming with the means to achieve them. The new access targets set for national museums will have to be met with little extra revenue funding from the DCMS, where individual settlements show little increase, and in most cases are below the level of inflation. National museums will not have enough to meet their running costs, let alone expand activities or make acquisitions to keep their collections up to date.

In the regions, local-authority funded museums, whose upkeep is not a statutory obligation, are under extreme financial pressure. In 2002 the government welcomed the publication of the report from Resource, *Renaissance in the Regions*, which called for the commitment of £267.7 million over five years to revitalise England’s regional museums. But the DCMS came up with merely £70 million over three years, thus permitting only a partial implementation of the scheme. Neither national nor regional museums can make art available to all when they are forced to close galleries to save money, when their resources are stretched by the number of visitors they do have, and when they cannot support the education and outreach programmes that would do so much to give meaning to a right to art.



Yet the push to widen access and expand audiences is there. The use of Lottery money to improve visual art facilities and create new ones, and the insistence that all national museums should be free have been positive steps towards meeting the idea of a universal right to art. But have they gone far enough?

Access for all?

In 2002 a joint survey by Arts Council England and Resource, *Arts in England: attendance, participation and attitudes in 2001* reported that 35 per cent of its sample had been to an art gallery or a museum of one kind or another in the past 12 months. Where free access has been introduced, results have demonstrated the numerical success of the policy. Figures released in March 2004 show that visits at the former charging museums are up 72% in the year to December 2003 compared with the year to December 2001 when the policy was introduced. In terms of numbers of visits, the “decision to scrap admission charges has paid a rich dividend, with 13.3 million people visiting the former charging museums last year compared to 7.7 million when the turnstiles were in place.” (DCMS, 2004). The Victoria and Albert Museum saw an increase of 117 per cent, but the increases were not confined to London – National Museums Liverpool witnessed a rise of 106% in the two year period. At the national museums that had always been free, (including the phenomenally successful Tate Modern) the picture was not so rosy, with visit numbers more or less static. This is against a backdrop where, during the 1990’s the overall number of visitors to museums and galleries nationally appeared to be falling. The success of free entry in increasing free visits makes an unanswerable case for widening the scope of free entry to include all regional museums.

It also appears to be the case - although detailed evidence has yet to be published - that where there has been institutional renewal and financial investment, such as the opening of new galleries or the refurbishment of existing ones, audiences have not only increased but have broadened. But if a right to art is to be enjoyed by all, audiences need to be widened even further beyond the traditional social groups.

The joint survey by Arts Council England and Resource *Arts in England: attendance, participation and attitudes in 2001* (2002) concluded that: “There was a clear association between socio-economic status and the likelihood of attendance at arts and cultural events. The proportions who reported going to at least one event in the year prior to interview ranged from 89% of the managerial and professional groups to 67% of those in semi-routine and routine occupations.”

Similarly, a MORI report, *The Impact of Free Entry to Museums* (2003) warned of the nationally funded institutions that, “while the number of people coming through the door might have dramatically increased, the profile of a typical ‘population’ of museum or gallery visitors has remained relatively stable, and

firmly in favour of the ‘traditional’ visitor groups.” There is still a strong bias towards visits by the well educated and affluent, and geographically, by those in the South East of England. People with a degree are almost four times as likely as those with no formal qualifications to have increased their visits as a result of free museum entry.

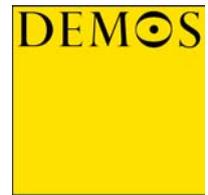
According to statistics prepared for the Arts Council’s Target Group Index, a large scale annual survey tracking changes in the audience for the arts, in 1989/90 the proportion of adults who reported going to an art gallery or art exhibition was 21.2 per cent. By 2001/2 that had risen to 22.5 per cent. But while more people may be taking advantage of the government’s policy, they are by and large the same kind of people as those who went before. This is to be expected in the early days of the implementation of the policy; the crucial point is that those institutions and organisations who have married a commitment to broadening access with sufficient resources and energy appear to be succeeding in attracting visitors who they have not attracted in the past.

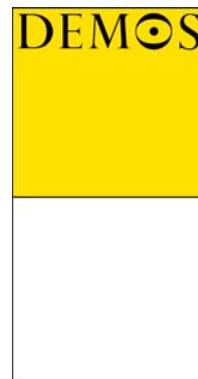
Engagement for all

We see a picture emerging where nationally, greater numbers of people are visiting museums and galleries, but not every social group is participating equally. The sociologist Pierre Bourdieu argued in *Distinction* (1984) that museum and gallery attendance is a matter of socialisation. The processes of familiarisation with the physical spaces, social customs and mental stimuli associated with gallery visiting begin early, and are reinforced by repetition. Once established, patterns of behaviour stand a good chance of being passed on by one generation to the next, - and not just from older to younger: there is evidence to suggest that children who go to museums on formal school visits return with their parents (MLA, *What Did You Learn at the Museum Today?* 2004). However, for large numbers of people this is still not happening.

It is here that we come up against one inadequacy in the language of the U.N. Declaration. Enjoyment of the arts is not simply a “right” where take-up can be taken for granted. To have meaning, the right to art must translate into active engagement not passive provision. If the aim is to enable everyone to have an informed choice, it is not enough to open the doors of the gallery, make entrance free and provide wheelchair ramps and explanatory leaflets. There are also barriers to be removed in people’s minds.

Those barriers are many and complex. A detailed study of the literature concerning inequalities in arts attendance, “Poverty and Access to the Arts” (Moore, 1998), found broad agreement across a range of international studies from the U.K., Ireland, Sweden, Austria and the U.S. Reasons include “lack of awareness, lack of time, lack of interest”, attitudinal barriers such as disinterest, fear of not understanding, anticipated discomfort and image – “it’s not for people





like us". The study also highlights a need to understand the social and psychological factors relating to attendance. It is argued for example that some people value social interaction in their leisure time and find the arts too passive. The barriers are succinctly summed up in a Swedish study as "spatial, economic, time, physiological, social, psychological (such as alienation), lack of self-confidence, uncertainty in public environments and difficulties in breaking everyday regimes." (*Swedish State Cultural Policy: A National Report*, 1990).

It is clear then that policy responses to inequality of access must range across wider educational and social agendas if they are to stand any chance of success. It is not simply a matter of dealing with the issue of access from within a cultural silo. The evidence points to a particularly strong correlation between poor educational attainment and lack of interest in the arts. A survey by DiMaggio and Ostrower, "Participation in the Arts by black and white Americans" (1990), concluded that "educational attainment is the most significant factor contributing to higher participation and should be targeted to create change".

There is a need for interdepartmental government action on this issue, primarily in relation to the formal education system, but also in terms of life-long learning. One hopeful sign appears in the DCMS' *Culture and Creativity: the Next Ten Years*: "We want to give a cultural pledge so that, in time, every pupil will have the chance to work with creative professionals and organisations, and thereby to enrich their learning across the whole curriculum". We look forward to this pledge becoming a reality, beginning with the education sector.

Visual literacy

When the National Curriculum was introduced in 1988 a long-standing prejudice against visual education became formalised by an instrumental emphasis on literacy and numeracy that prioritised science and technology and pushed art to the margins of the school day. In spite of the work of dedicated individual teachers, art in schools has long been treated as a "soft option", setting the tone for long-term negative perceptions of art and artists.

Concern about the position of cultural and creative education within the curriculum, and the apparent squeezing out of the arts from mainstream school life was addressed in the 1999 report by the National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education *All Our Futures*, which helped to further a number of initiatives including Creative Partnerships, ArtsMark, and Space for Sports and Arts.

But in all of these initiatives, and in the delivery of the curriculum itself, there is little concentration on the issue of visual literacy – the ability, the language and the critical tools to assess and interact with the visual environment. Visual literacy ranges well beyond matters of art into design, architecture, planning, publishing,

film, fashion and so on, but in spite of the fact that it directly affects every citizen, it is a subject that is rarely discussed in educational or political circles.

Young people live in an image-soaked environment but they can easily pass through school without any significant discussion of the visual world around them. It is difficult to see how a right to art can enjoy any meaning unless visual literacy is given more weight within the education system and beyond.

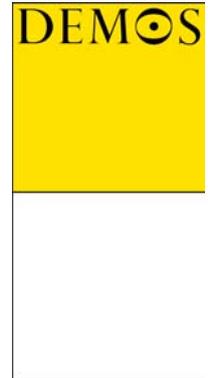
Invisible artists

So far we have looked at how a right to art could enable citizens to participate in and enjoy visual culture. What about those who create it?

The creative industries, as they have become known, are taken seriously in government because of their economic value and social significance. In U.S. studies the proportion of GDP attributable to them shows a growth rate much higher than that of the economy as a whole, and those working in the creative industries have higher than average earnings (see Richard Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class*, 2002). At the same time, the British government regards the creative industries as “central to the task of re-establishing a sense of community, of identity, of civic pride” (*Create the Future*).

There is, however, a surprising omission in the government’s own definition of the creative industries: “Advertising, Architecture, the Arts and Antiques Market, Crafts, Design, Designer Fashion, Film and Video, Interactive Leisure Software, Music, Performing Arts, Publishing, Software, TV and Radio”. There is no mention of painting, sculpture or other forms of individual visual creation. This demonstrates the low value placed upon individual artists within the creative industries, in spite of the fundamental importance of their contribution to the sector as originators of ideas. The government’s definition fails to acknowledge the effectiveness of artists as micro-businesses: they manage truly creative, flexible and productively adaptable operations – but most do not share in the rewards of the economic activity they help to generate.

Outside the industrial arena, the media success and apparent wealth of a handful of Young British Artists has raised the profile of contemporary art, but has completely distorted the reality of being a practicing artist in Britain. Artists’ earnings are well below the national average. In 2001 it was estimated that about half a million people work in art, craft and design, of whom some 34,000 are visual artists. The lack of a well-developed, nationwide commercial market for contemporary art means that most artists live on the margins between the subsidised sector, teaching and other forms of employment, with incomes supplemented by modest sales. In 1996 the value of UK domestic trade in contemporary art was estimated to be as little as £35 million. At this time around two-thirds of artists earned less than £10,000 a year, and a third less than £5,000.



Just 47 per cent worked full-time at their principal artistic activity. (Sara Selwood (ed.) *The UK Cultural Sector*, 2001) Official rhetoric about creativity and the primacy of the individual artist begins to sound hollow when most visual artists work on unequal terms with other creative producers, and receive unequal rewards.

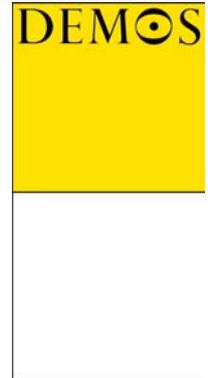
The public's perception of artists, as reflected in the media, is varied and quixotic. Yet it is the willingness of artists to work against the grain, to reject conventions and seek new forms that engender change and renewal. Such questioning of conventional ideas and traditional ways of doing things should be seen as a healthy stimulus; a mature society should allow controversy as a necessary ventilation of ideas.

In spite of the economic and social significance of their output, artists lack visibility in crucial ways. They do not sit easily within the structures and methods that government – both central and local – have adopted to measure what they consider to be important. There is no Department for Trade and Industry checkbox for small-scale artistic production, so it is off the agenda. Nor does the Department recognise a category of not-for-profit cultural industries. The subtle, but vital, interactions between the private sector, the education sector and the not-for-profit sector are lost and in this sense do not “count”, because they are not counted. Similarly, Regional Development Agencies and local authorities generally fail to recognise the value of artists' activities because they have no means of recording them. It follows that the true economic value of visual art has yet to be properly measured. The same is true more generally in the cultural sector. As a recent National Museum Directors' Conference report states “ the DCMS have confirmed that there is no ready-made and reliable methodology in place for calculating the impacts of cultural institutions.” (NMDC, *Valuing Museums*, 2004).

Beyond the direct art economy itself, the myriad ways in which the visual arts add value to the wider economy are not collected together. The fluidity of roles and people between artistic practice, art education, and the wider commercial and voluntary sectors is hidden. The portfolio lives of many of those involved in the visual arts mask the overall contribution that they make in both economic and social terms, whether they call themselves artists or go by some other description. It is as though visual artists are invisible.

Evaluating the Visual

Such attempts as have been made to measure the economic and social contribution of the arts have proved unsatisfactory. Disillusionment and dissatisfaction with the way the arts are measured quantitatively, and in terms of their instrumental value, are widespread on both sides of the funding equation. As the cultural statistics analyst Sara Selwood says “Until the collection and analysis of data is carried out



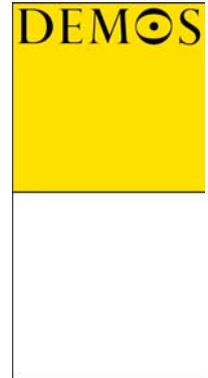
more accurately and objectively, and until the evidence gathered is used more constructively, it could be argued that much data gathering in the cultural sector has been a spurious exercise” (Sara Selwood, *Cultural Trends* 47, 2004.13).

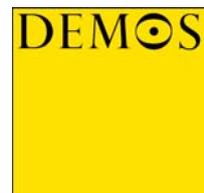
Just as important, current ways of measuring the arts fail to express their value in terms that relate to lived experience. Data about footfall and numbers of visitors provide an impoverished picture of what the arts achieve. Too often, we look at form not substance, because we have inadequate tools and language to deal with the space where art and artists, and those concerned with visual culture meet public policy. As the arts minister Estelle Morris has recently acknowledged: “Target performance indicators, value added, evidence bases are all part of the language we have developed to prove our ability to deliver, to make progress to show a return and justify the public money that is used. I have no problem with that but much of the [arts] sector does not fit into this way of doing things. I know that Arts and Culture make a contribution to health, to education and crime reduction, to strong communities, to the economy and to the nation’s well-being, but I don’t always know how to evaluate it or describe it. We have to find a way of describing its worth.” (Morris, 2003)

How can we begin to capture this value of the arts in general – both economically and socially - and the visual arts in particular? How can we, in Estelle Morris’ words “find a language”?

The fundamental difficulty with current forms of measurement is that they deal with the crowd, whereas the arts connect at the level of the individual. This essay began with the assertion that art is now a matter of self-determination for the individual not the state. Concentration on the individual does not sit easily with large structures, whether in government or outside it. The arts can have powerful, indeed transformational effects on individuals, but funders have no means with which to measure the impact of blinding flashes of inspiration, life-changing events when an artist works in a school, or when someone is saved from a nervous breakdown by a piece of music. Quantitative measurement is a blunt, unsubtle tool that cannot capture direct individual experience. Nor does it track the long-term and secondary effect of engagement with art – changes in attitudes that feed through to changed behaviours at work or in the home.

The measurement tools at our disposal are also inadequate for taking account of ‘soft’ and ‘intangible’ effects at a mass level. A great building like the Eden Project or a gallery like Tate St Ives can transform a regional economy and affect thousands of lives in a much more sustainable and economically healthy way than, for example, subsidising a semiconductor factory. That can be measured, but the boost to the sense of identity and confidence that results from an individual work of art such as the Angel of the North have transformational effects which everyone recognises but which are hard to embalm in statistics. This is a well known example, but others on a lesser scale proliferate around the country.





Artistic intervention sometimes has powerful effects way beyond its recorded value. Systems theory acknowledges that within complex systems, there are points of leverage that have astonishing potential to make changes happen on a wide scale. The arts are an area where low cost/high impact interventions abound, but where recognition is at best limited.

The current language of measurement fails because it is wedded to the collective not the individual, to the objective, not the subjective, and yet attempts to quantify the unquantifiable. We are left with a set of reductive and unhelpful conversations that concentrate on spurious dichotomies: excellence or access, quality or participation, public or private, subsidy or investment.

To begin to find a new language, we must look at how the world around us is changing, and seek to place the right to art within a new framework that recognises that art occupies a space where value is created and not delivered. As society becomes more diverse, personal aspirations are changing, and the consequence is that people increasingly want forms of connection with the arts that reflect their own outlook and circumstances. The right to art may be universal, but its universality must now take many forms to meet many individual needs. Our new language of talking about art in the public realm, and the means by which we measure and value it, must recognise the increasing need to personalise the debate.

How does this concentration on the personal square with the profoundly democratic principles of our current cultural policy? The answer is, perfectly well. The principles that would underpin the present government's cultural policy were laid out shortly after it came into office:

“The key themes are *access, excellence, education, and economic value*. Access, in ensuring that the greatest number of people have the opportunity to experience work of quality. Excellence, in ensuring that governmental support is used to underpin the best, and the most innovative, and the things that would not otherwise find a voice. Education, in ensuring that creativity is not extinguished by the formal education system and beyond. And economic value, in ensuring that the full economic and employment impact of the whole range of creative industries is acknowledged and assisted by government. All of these themes are interlinked around the focal point of the individual citizen, no matter how high or low their station, having the chance to share cultural experience of the best, either as creator or as participant. This is a profoundly democratic agenda, seeing cultural access as one of the egalitarian building blocks of society.” (Chris Smith, *Creative Britain*, 1998)

This “democratic agenda” is an acknowledgement of the right to art, and a bold commitment to the quality as well as the quantity of experiences of art that should be available to all. There is no point in increasing access to the mediocre.

Excellence in the visual arts will only be generated if the importance of visual art, and of those who make it, is more widely recognised. A fairer distribution of greater resources is a necessary part of that recognition - but there also needs to be a commitment to policies that recognise the visual arts and visual literacy as key factors in enhancing the social environment as a whole.

Art and public value

The government is aware of the economic value of a positive cultural policy; contemporary art and the institutions that sustain our visual culture bring economic benefits that can be enhanced by further economic investment. But though adequate financial resources are essential, our argument is that the true value of the right to art will only be realised when it is calculated on a broader measure than that of narrow instrumentality, or profit and loss.

The existence of a successful and creative visual culture is a public good, just as much as are clean air, domestic security, public health and universal education. All these goods can be subjected to economic calculation, but we do not rely on the market to produce them. That does not mean that we should not also consider an arts institution like the Baltic in Gateshead as something that produces economic value in terms of direct employment, ancillary employment, urban regeneration and returns in taxation to the Treasury – as the DCMS plainly does – but what also matter are the “contingent” values created by the Baltic: as a source of local pride, for its contribution to the visual environment, as a site of cultural excellence and even, possibly, as a place to experience truth, beauty, and a sense of the sublime.

Public value is judged by public preference. It is not enough for something to be judged desirable, the public must be willing to give something in return for it. The most obvious example is assent to the use of money raised in taxes to sustain the arts and culture, just as it is used to produce other public goods such as the army or the police. But the public must also be willing to give their time to the enjoyment of culture, and be willing to see educational resources devoted to it. They must be willing to accept limits on their individual rights to alter the visual environment in the interest of a less degraded environment for all. It should be part of the government’s educational mission to encourage people to enjoy the public value of what is being offered: in doing so, by changing preferences, public value will be increased.

In practice, public value is best produced in a “mixed economy” of public and private activity. It has been argued here that the economy of the visual arts suffers as much from the lack of a private market as from an inadequately resourced public sphere. Public value as an aspect of democracy – where individuals are citizens not consumers, and “choice” is not a synonym for the inequalities of individual wealth – means that neither the state nor the private sector should be

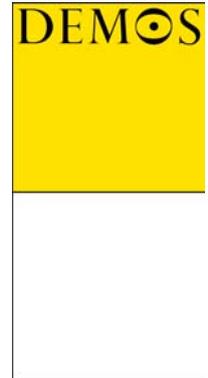


the exclusive provider, but there is a range of options, including the voluntary sector.

Viewed through the lens of public value, much of the so-called “social agenda”, compliance with which has been made conditional for arts institutions to receive public funding, is no longer something that interferes with their core activities, but becomes a logical concomitant. Social inclusion, confidence, security, the sense of ownership through collective participation directly result. Two aspects of public value that have particular relevance are the stewardship of the built and natural environment on behalf of future generations, and something whose economic value is almost impossible to cost-quantify, but which is acknowledged as the key to future national prosperity: creativity. An increase in public value folds back into economic benefits.

An understanding of public value avoids many of the pitfalls inherent in the current language of debate about art and culture. The instrumental drives of social and economic policy find a new context in the moral, creative and collective values expressed in the language of public good. Public value connects with lived experience and provides a means of escape from the reductive approach of audit and quantification. Above all it creates a way of engaging with the idea of a right to art in terms of individual experiences brought together in a greater whole.

If the concept of public value is embraced it will provide an opportunity to turn a right to art from an aspiration into a reality. True implementation of the right to art will produce a more vibrant visual culture, a visually literate citizenry, and ensure a genuinely creative future.



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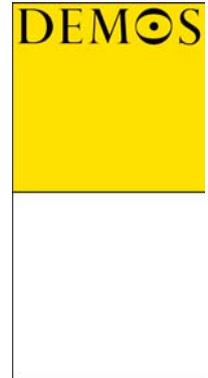
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