

Art Machina



Evaluation Report

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1. Introduction

This report considers the outcomes of an evaluation process for the *Art Machina* project.

Art Machina set out to consider how young people can work with professional artists to explore new innovations in digital media. Artists were invited to explore how technology could be used as a resource and a source of inspiration for digital creativity with young people, whilst also developing their own creative practice.

The aims of *Art Machina* were:

- Explore the potential for artists to use digital technology in their working practice with young people
- Explore how young people can relate to, and benefit from, creative use of digital technology
- Encourage artists, young people and educational settings to embed the use of technology into their creative practice, co-developing models of practice



A partner project ran alongside *Art Machina* called *Museum Machina*. In addition to the overarching aims of *Art Machina*, this aspect of the project considered how creative digital practice could be further enriched by the use of museum collections.

The findings in this report are based on feedback from 21 educational settings, 8 of which worked with museum collections .

Each setting collaborated with an artist and hosted a workshop to examine how young people engage with digital technology creatively.

The project was led by *Daisi*, in collaboration with *RAMM (Royal Albert Memorial Museum and Art Gallery)* in Exeter, and *Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery*.

2. Project Overview

Art Machina brought artists and educational settings together to create young people led digital art works with outputs that included sound work, digital paintings and animated gifs.

The project supported the development of artists' own digital practice, creating an opportunity for them to collaborate with young people and to devise workshops models in response.

Workshops were informed by young peoples' use of digital technology and through artists developing an increased understanding of the equipment and resources young people can access in educational settings.

In addition to supporting young people to develop new skills, the project aimed to help them learn about career pathways, and to develop an understanding of the skills and knowledge required for work in the creative industries.

Artists shared their own practice with young people helping them to understand what it means to be a creative professional, highlighting opportunities in the local area and beyond.

An end of project festival brought together the work created by all the young people across the county, and provided an opportunity to raise the profile of young people led digital art works amongst the general public.

Creative industry partners attended giving talks and information about career and employment opportunities that utilized the breadth of digital skills covered in the project.

3. Evaluation Process

The project was evaluated against an outcomes framework (see Appendix A) to help consider the successes from the project and to reflect on learning points.

The outcomes were devised to take account of both *Art Machina* and *Museum Machina*. Therefore findings in this report also include data and research about the value of working with museum collections in the context of creative digital practice.

The evaluation was carried out through visits to workshops, interviews with participants, artists and educators as well as questionnaires, bench marking and feedback forms.

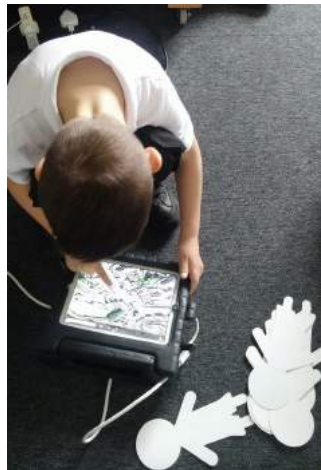


4. Evaluation Findings

4.1 Connect young people to key players in creative, digital innovation through research & exchange

Key Successes

- Young people reported a better understanding of how to collaborate with artists to create new digital work, recognising it made a positive impact on their creativity
 - 72% said that working with an artist increased their confidence to be creative with digital tools
 - 65% said that they shared their ideas with the artist
- Young people explored how artists work with exciting innovative creative digital technologies
 - 80% said that they now know how artists use digital technology
- Young people better understood how to use museum objects and stories as an inspirational tool
 - 80% of young people said they would use museums and objects to inspire their work in the future



I loved the range of new ideas and techniques introduced by the artists, the support I was given, and also the freedom to explore my own responses *Young person*

Learning Points

- Young peoples' sense of collaboration with artists is increased when the artist has an opportunity to share their creative journey and talk about their own practice

- Young people benefit more fully from museum collections when they are helped to understand the context and heritage of the objects

It was really interesting to see the artist and hear about their experience and work, I would have liked more time to learn about what they do *Young person*

4.2 Upskill young people, creating progression pathways to further training and creative employment through primary and secondary phases, and into higher education and creative industries (as well as Arts Award and Artsmark opportunities)

Key Successes

- Young people learnt new creative digital skills and became more confident
 - 67% said that they were confident using digital technology creatively
 - 37% said they were more confident using digital technology creatively as a result of the workshop
- Young people learnt how artists use digital technology to create work
 - 43% said they were more aware of how artists use digital technology as a result of the workshop
- Young people were interested in a career in the creative industries
 - 63% said they would like to work in the creative industries
 - 17% felt more inspired to work in the creative industries as a result of the workshop
- 100% of educators said that they know the pathways into creative industries and that they understand the skills young people will require to work in the creative industries

I thought art was just about drawing and painting, I didn't realize artists made work digitally
Young person



I've learnt new skills, working with an artist made an impact on my abilities and it helped by expanding my ideas *Young person*

Learning Points

- To encourage wider understanding about progression pathways into industry, and career opportunities, young people would benefit from talks by industry professionals to highlight career opportunities, and the skills required

4.3 Connect and mobilise digital creative skill and confidence among young people, artists and educators (e.g. including develop the artistic practice of the project artists by creating opportunity to adapt and fine-tune their participatory workshop models that respond to current and relevant digital practice through collaboration with young people and educators)

Key Successes

- Young people increased their confidence to create digital art works and how to use objects as a starting point to work from
 - 65% said they understood how to use objects and stories as an inspirational tool
 - 37% said they increased their understanding as a result of the workshop
- Educators reported feeling more confident to utilize museum objects as educational tools with an increased understanding of their potential

- 100% of educators said they feel motivated to use objects and stories as an inspirational tool
- 33 % of educators reported feeling more confident supporting young people to use digital technology
- Artists expressed a new confidence in their ability to create workshops that respond to young peoples use of digital technology
 - 87 % of artists say they understand how young people use creative digital technology
 - 50 % of artists say that as a result of the project they now feel more confident supporting young people to learn new digital skills



I definitely feel I have developed an improved workshop structure as a result of this project, I have a far deeper understanding of the needs of educational settings and how to overcome the challenges they face, especially around the use of digital technology, time and resources Artist

I valued going in with a brief that was experimental – I was genuinely empowered to expand my practice Artist

Learning Points

- Artists need to know in advance what technical equipment is available at an educational setting to enable proper planning leading to successful digital outcomes

- Artists need to collaborate with museums to feel confident working with collections



I feel I need to do more homework before workshops, i.e. have the software to play with first ahead of going into the schools, you need to know the subtle differences in operation of software, you need to learn by getting it wrong yourself Artist

4.4 Build relationships between key partners in the region in creative, digital innovation (e.g. Plymouth University, i-DAT, SpaceX, Exeter Phoenix, Knowle West Media Centre, Devonport Market Hall, RAMM, and Plymouth Museum), sharing knowledge & skills

Key Successes

- Artists, educational settings and museum partners were introduced and connected to each other through collaboration
- 100% of the artists said that they now feel connected to educational settings
- 75% of the artists said they now know how to access objects from museums to use in their workshops
- 100% of the educators said that having a visiting artist excites and inspires young peoples' creativity
- 50% of educators said they now know how to access objects from museums

The facilities and culture of creativity I experienced at the setting I worked in was promoted by governors and senior management – I really felt this enabled the formation of strong relationships with staff Artist

Learning Points

- Joint planning and meaningful dialogue between artists and educational settings provides the most benefit to young people
- School 'buy in' to the project in terms of staff commitment and support is essential to a successful collaboration
- Relationships with museums are best strengthened through physical visits and good curator support

Staff need to be fully engaged to see the value of creative arts practice in the school setting *Artist*

4.5 Develop sustainable business model *developing wider artists' skills; creating case studies; developing future market*

Key Successes

- Artists have developed successful workshop prototypes as a result of collaborating with educational settings and museums
 - 100 % of the artists have developed a workshop outline for creative digital practice with young people and say they now know what educational settings need to deliver creative digital practice
 - 100 % of the artists say they feel confident sharing digital practice with young people
 - 84% of the artists said they would feel confident delivering training to other artists to help them produce workshop prototypes
- All of the educational settings said they would like to work with museum collections in the future

This project has helped me see how I can focus a workshop and tie in more with themes and curriculum...it has really developed the content of my practice
Artist

I'd love to have a workshop like this again the pupils have really benefited from exploring new ways of working digitally with an artist in a way we couldn't support here at the school ourselves, we just don't have the capacity *Teacher*



Learning Points

- Artists and educators benefit when they are able to collaborate to ensure workshop content fits into current schemes of work, and so that digital outcomes can be supported

I would have appreciated more time to develop a relationship with the artist, to really analyse how my pupils think and where the project could go to support their use of our equipment *Teacher*

4.6 Raise the profile of young people-led digital arts among public, including amongst target groups of disadvantaged young people

Key Successes

- Digital art works created through the project by young people from educational settings (including two special schools) were showcased at two key public venues in

Exeter as part of an end of project festival; Exeter Phoenix (multi-arts venue in Exeter) and RAMM

- Over 150 members of the public attended the festival; 65 took part in artist led workshops; 85 attended drop in sessions and talks led by project artists
- 13 industry professionals from the local region gave talks and presentations on higher educational opportunities and career pathways into creative practice

It was great to find this drop-in workshop here. My son doesn't engage creatively he just uses tech (sic) so it's really nice to think he might try that now Visitor



Learning Points

- Not all the young people who took part in the project were able to attend the festival. They could have benefited from industry professional talks in their own educational settings

4.7 Daisi positioned to 'lead' the conversation with schools and other education settings around contemporary art, including digital creativity. This project will enable us to develop this leadership capability. Schools and settings currently desperately lack confidence that they have the skills or equipment to engage with contemporary creative practice, especially digital visual artistic practice

Key Successes

- *Daisi* has gained an understanding of the challenges and barriers to engagement that educational settings face, and are in a strong position to work with them to help overcome these

- *Daisi* has developed a robust understanding of what practical resources schools need to engage with creative digital workshops, and how to support them to access these

Learning Points

- A planning visit is really useful to develop a relationship with settings and educators in order to get a sense of resources and support available, as well as other practical issues
- Digital technical equipment, resources and technical support varies greatly between settings

Working with digital equipment adds a layer of risk to the workshop in terms of equipment, which ranges from simply not available, not working or not understood! Artist



5. Summary

The project successfully brought together artists, educational settings and museums to create partnerships and build working relationships:

This project is definitely going to change the way we work, we are thinking about collaborative ways of working with the DT department. The outcomes for us might be joint working – but also thinking can other schools join us, and send us files to process laser cuts for them? Teacher



The evaluation findings suggest the project supported an increased knowledge and understanding of how young people currently engage with digital technology and how artists can enrich this engagement:

There is a huge value in hosting artists who work with digital practice, it's not just about the emphasis on the technology but how it can support young peoples creative process *Teacher*

Young people developed a better awareness of the creative potential of technology they were already using. In addition, some young people learnt to create work using digital tools that were new to them:

I loved the techniques and ideas the artist introduced to me. I learnt to use new digital programs, I will definitely use these techniques in the future *Young person*

Educational settings were inspired and motivated by the support and insight artists brought to the process; however they faced some challenges. Many schools and colleges have limited digital equipment and resources, and educators reported feeling they lacked sufficient digital skills:

Pupils are digital natives, but we as teachers are not. However, we recognize it is so important to support our pupils to see how it can relate to them, what relationship they can have with it
Teacher



Additional evaluation findings directly relating to *Museum Machina* suggest that museum collections offer a rich resource and provide a wide range of stimulus for digital creativity.

Educational settings demonstrated an appetite to work with the collections recognising the additional depth they add to curriculum based learning and creative outcomes:

I've been reminded of the importance of using museum collections *Teacher*

Key points relating to both *Art and Museum Machina* can summarised as:

- Young people benefit the most when educational settings and artists have time to collaborate. Assessing the skills of the young people in advance of workshops is vital to help artists gauge appropriate entry points
- A high quality creative digital workshop requires careful planning to ensure appropriate equipment is available and fit for purpose; many settings simply do not have adequate digital equipment and software
- To enable a high quality experience young people need adequate support, having sufficient teaching staff in the room greatly enhances this experience
- Artists can inspire and encourage young people to creatively engage with museum collection by bringing a fresh perspective and potentially a new way of 'seeing' the objects
- The opportunity for artists to talk about their own practice is a key factor in engaging and inspiring young people to think about careers in the creative industries

Pupils experienced a new way of approaching a subject and new ways of looking. I have learnt from that approach too, I've seen that we spoon feed our pupils; giving them space and time opens up their creativity
Teacher



6. Conclusion

In conclusion, the project nurtured and supported partnerships creating a 'community of interest'. It provided opportunities for young people to engage with digital arts whilst developing the artistic practice of project artists.

This core group of artists are now in a position to offer support and training to other *Daisi* artists, helping them to gain skills to expand their digital practice:

It's given me more of an overview of a range of student needs, how you need to encourage and sustain on all levels

Artist

I really enjoyed the contact with the young people and their input. Seeing my processes from the students perspective was very illuminating

Artist



As a result of the project *Daisi* has also produced an 'online tool kit' containing valuable information and resources providing digital workshop ideas for educational settings and artists to try out.

The learning and development from the project will enable *Daisi* to support educational settings to better engage with creative digital projects through a deeper understanding of what is needed to make each project a success. In turn this learning will further support and inform related work in the future:

One of the aims of Art Machina was for Daisi to deepen our understanding of young people-led digital practice, such that we were in a position to 'lead' the conversation with schools and other educational settings around contemporary art, including digital creativity. The Art Machina project has enabled Daisi to develop this leadership capability. Daisi has developed a set of models of young people-led digital practice that we now feel confident are deliverable in settings, interesting to young people, and meet setting needs. This will enable Daisi to provide young people across Devon and Torbay with increased opportunities to take part in innovative digital creative experiences within their settings, through the development of a set of digital visual arts 'products'. Daisi's increased confidence in incorporating technologies within the design of creative experiences means we are now able to include digital across a wide range of current and future projects, so producing a step-change in young peoples access to innovative digital creative experiences

Liz Hill, Director, Daisi

6. Links

<http://www.daisi.org.uk>
<https://www.rammuseum.org.uk>
<https://plymhearts.org/pcmag/>

Evaluation Report and Photographs
Clare Fisher
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Appendix A

1. Project Partners

Daisi (Devon Arts in Schools initiative) is the arts education organisation for Devon and Torbay, working alongside more than 100 professional artists to create arts experiences with over 7,000 young people each year. Daisi works across all art forms - from dance to literature, media arts to music - and with children and young people from pre-school age to their late teens, both in and out of school. Woven into all their projects are learning and development opportunities for teachers, school communities, artists and other partners, strengthening confidence and ability to work effectively with the arts and young people in their own, unique settings. Daisi advocates widely for the positive impact of arts activities on outcomes for young people across their learning and social needs, documenting and evaluating their work in order to influence good practice in the region and beyond.

RAMM, Exeter's Royal Albert Memorial Museum and Art Gallery is a flagship Exeter City Council service, working with a range of partners to reach wider audiences, offer dynamic and top-quality exhibitions, access funding, and play a role at both a national and local level.

Current partners include museums and heritage centres such as Plymouth City Museum & Art Gallery; funding bodies such as Arts Council England; academic institutions; cross-sector collaborators from the fields of youth services, health and wellbeing; environmental and wildlife organisations; and festival organisers. Many of the museum's objects can be found online via the South West Collections Explorer Service.

Partnerships with many of the country's leading museums and galleries have enabled RAMM to have an exciting programme of temporary exhibitions. With four newly-refurbished, high-specification exhibition galleries, RAMM brings an even wider variety of national touring exhibitions to the South West.

Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery houses a wide variety of collections covering the fine and decorative arts. It has been actively collecting since 1897 and has nine permanent galleries, two exhibition galleries and hundreds of events and activities throughout the year. The museum also provides an education service for schools, colleges, universities, pre-school children and young people, plus outreach and access services for community groups

and adults.

Over 4000 of the museum's objects can be found on their website. In addition, the Museum has commissioned new digital photography of 100 of its most significant items including 25 3D models and this set of resources is key to promote creative engagement with Plymouth's collection whilst it is closed from mid-2016 to 2020, when the collections reopen as part of a major new History Centre development.