



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Post-Doctoral Research Fellow School of Performance and Cultural Industries (PCI) Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Cultures

Project title: Cultural Participation; stories of success, histories of failure (funded by the AHRC)

The way in which cultural organisations and projects apply for funding and are evaluated means that stories of failure are largely overlooked and even suppressed in the dominant discourses about state supported cultural participation projects. This is further exacerbated by the state of financial precarity in which many artists and organisations permanently function. As a result, there is limited capacity for learning and change in the field of cultural policy. In contrast, this research project is founded on theories about the value of recognising, understanding and learning from failure in policymaking. It seeks to move on from critiquing the outcomes of existing cultural policy to a more explicit focus on why cultural policy appears so difficult to change. It will do so by focusing on failure as something positive that must be honestly acknowledged, at an individual and organisational level, if cultural policy is to change. Specifically, it will explore cultural participation projects via the stories that are told about them, by a range of different agents. It will consider by whom they are told, and for what purposes. It will examine how the construction of these stories may be contributing towards the calcification of cultural policy outlined above.

Through the production of a monograph, the creation of a creative output (led by the Post Doctoral Research Fellow), a journal article, several public events, and a public report, this 2 year project seeks to disrupt the taken for granted knowledge upon which existing policy processes and practices are sustained and reproduced. This will increase the legitimacy and impact of alternative stories about how cultural participation might be supported.