

# Arts Co-Production and Place Sensitive Governance

**Where We Live Next: A report for the British Academy**

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## Contents

Abstract.....	1
Introduction.....	2
Ethical and Theoretical Frameworks .....	4
Approaching the Urgency of Net Zero with Deliberative Democracy .....	4
Exploring place sensitive governance: arts, citizenship, and civic education .....	7
Amplification: Arts co-production as Civic Education .....	8
Administrative Citizenship Model.....	9
Modalities of Civic Education in Arts-Based Interventions .....	9
Performative democracy: more than Citizens’ Assemblies .....	10
Ecology of Activities: Models of Arts Co-production.....	11
Festival Model .....	12
Museum Model .....	13
Ecological and Environmental Design of Arts-Based Interventions .....	13
Working Methods .....	16
Member-Led Groups.....	16
Proximity.....	17
A Conversation About Humanisation.....	19
Visual Interventions .....	21
Spaces for Difficult Dialogue .....	23
Inclusive Public spaces .....	27
Recommendations for Implementing Arts-based Interventions in Environmental Governance .....	30
Sustainable Futures for Arts and Environmental Governance.....	32

## Abstract

This report makes specific recommendations for best practice in Arts Co-Production and Place Sensitive Governance (ACPSG). These recommendations build on insights from *Arts, Creativity and Homelessness: Challenging Perceptions and Policies* and *Meet me at the River*,<sup>1</sup> including 13 semi-structured interviews, participant observation and qualitative data.<sup>2</sup>

Set within a framework of visual and sensory ethnography alongside a narrative literature review and supplemented with expert interviews in methods of arts-based participatory and deliberative democracy this report builds an argument that ACPSG fosters the conditions

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<sup>1</sup> *Meet me at the River* was funded by the Liverpool City Region Race Equality Fund and National Museums Liverpool

<sup>2</sup> *Arts, Creativity and Homelessness: Challenging Perceptions and Policies* was funded by the University of Warwick Research Development Fund. Professor Nadine Holdsworth Principal Investigator

necessary for approaches to environmental governance which promote harmony and inclusion on the road to Net Zero. The findings point towards ecological approaches which foreground diversity, interconnection, and sustainability.

## Introduction

This report argues that arts interventions underpinned by theoretical frameworks of co-production can support the positive social conditions necessary for the UK to meet its Net Zero carbon emissions goals without exacerbating social inequalities. I will demonstrate how co-produced arts festivals and exhibitions facilitate environmental governance that is reflective of place and inclusive of vulnerable and marginalised humans. Given the urgency of ending our dependence on fossil fuels, I consider two recent examples of arts events that took place in 2021/22. The seven-day HOME festival exploring arts and homelessness was produced as part of Coventry City of Culture (See Figure 1). *Meet me at the River* was a pop-up exhibition exploring new approaches for museums to create spaces for dialogue around the legacies of the historic transatlantic trade of enslaved Africans (See Figure 2). The exhibition, co-produced by Migrant Artists Mutual Aid (MaMa) and the National Museums Liverpool (NML), was a new commission funded by the Liverpool City Region Race Equality Commission. Both events are examples of arts co-production with marginalised communities that deeply engaged with arts and creativity alongside policy and impact. This report focuses attention on the details of these endeavours and draws lessons on best practice that are both traceable and replicable.

The first part of this report explores the urgency around achieving a reduction in carbon emissions to Net Zero alongside current UK approaches to this aim. This is followed by a consideration of literature which explores place sensitive governance, which will underpin the premise that arts co-production is a relevant model for addressing place sensitive policy on Net Zero. Co-production is often considered an imprecise terminology. I address this imprecision by integrating the literature on citizenship and civic education. After establishing this baseline, I move on to building understanding of deliberative democratic models including citizen's assemblies. The literature I introduce grounds this discussion not only in practice but also in the legal, statutory, and practical implications for citizenship and democratic governance. In doing so I embed an understanding of the types of best practices that enable healthy and thriving communities to meet the promise of linking co-production of policy to positive environmental outcomes.



Figure 1 HOME: Arts and Homelessness Festival promotional image [HOME: Arts & Homelessness Festival - Coventry UK City of Culture 2021 \(coventry2021.co.uk\)](https://www.coventry2021.co.uk/)



Figure 2 Entry into Meet me at the River featuring the 'hero' image. Photo credit Migrant Artists Mutual Aid and Manuel Vason

The second part of this paper presents best practices in ACPSG based on field research. This begins with a discussion of the best practices and how they integrate elements of environmental and ecological design (EED). The final section brings this all together to present practical sustainable approaches for bringing arts-based co-production into practice with place-based environmental governance. HOME festival and *Meet me at the River* illustrate how a diversity of art forms and approaches can strategically mitigate implicit and

explicit barriers to participation in deliberative democracy for people at risk of disenfranchisement, while developing pedagogies for active citizenship that are place sensitive. This will serve as an evidence-base for the impact of sustainable cultural interventions making participatory democracy inclusive and reflective of the diversity of British society.

### Ethical and Theoretical Frameworks

The ethical framework for this report is grounded in Svend Brinkmann's work on Qualitative Inquiry in Everyday Life.<sup>3</sup> I engage in continuous reflection on my insider status as the Artistic Director of Migrant Artists Mutual Aid alongside my position as a Research Fellow for the HOME project.<sup>4</sup> The data for the HOME festival is based on participant observation and analysis of 13 semi-structured interviews. Analysis of *Meet me at the River* is considered within Brinkmann's framing of creative analytical practice as a way to integrate conversations with participants and audiences into this report.<sup>5</sup> The conversations undergird the findings and are reflected on continuously in relation to Brinkmann's framing of ethics of doubt.<sup>6</sup> Inclusion of digital materials was informed by a cautious approach of choosing images already in the public domain.

The understanding of co-production in the arts is triangulated and supported with different types of research materials. This is a pragmatist research approach that embeds levels of privacy and safeguarding that are appropriate for research in sustainable practice in the arts from an insider perspective. The analysis of empirical data is informed through reflexive insights shaped by lived experience as a feminist migrant artist, mother, and ethnic minority.

*HOME Festival was produced by a steering group made up of at least 50% members with lived experience of homelessness. It planned, controlled budgets and managed timelines. 'Nothing about us, without us', is a principle of Arts and Homelessness International. Data shows that this principle was implemented consistently across the HOME festival*

### Approaching the Urgency of Net Zero with Deliberative Democracy

According to United Nations Climate Action emissions must be reduced by 45% by 2030 and as close to zero as possible (Net Zero) by 2050 in order to maintain a liveable planet. A recent report by the House of Lords highlights the fact that while the UK has set ambitious targets that have been supported by legislation, there is not an adequate road map on implementation.<sup>7</sup>

The government report acknowledges the vital role citizens and consumers play in achieving Net Zero urging that 'The Government must set out and explain what is expected of citizens,

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<sup>3</sup> Brinkmann, S. (2012). *Qualitative Inquiry in Everyday Life: Working with Everyday Life Materials*. SAGE.

<sup>4</sup> Arts, Creativity and Homelessness: Challenging Perceptions and Policies, funded by University of Warwick Research Development fund. Professor Nadine Holdsworth Principal Investigator

<sup>5</sup> Brinkmann, Qualitative Inquiry, p.78.

<sup>6</sup> Brinkmann, Qualitative Inquiry, p.60.

<sup>7</sup> United Nations Climate Action, *For a Liveable Climate*. <https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/net-zero-coalition>

how much it might cost them both as taxpayers and billpayers, how it might impact their lifestyles and what benefits there will be'.<sup>8</sup>

This report addresses this inadequate roadmap by proposing an ecological arts-based approach to developing place sensitive environmental governance. An ecological approach systemically considers some of the important challenges in citizen engagement. Ecological approaches foreground interconnection between people, communities, and ecosystems at all levels of environmental governance. In this report ecological approaches are reflected in the recommendations for embedding deliberative democracy within and through a plurality of art forms and a variety of civic spaces.

Two centuries ago, the UK led the world's first Industrial Revolution. Powered by innovation and private investment, this transformation gave birth to many of our great cities and effectively created the modern world. Today we will mobilise the same forces to level up our country and enable our proud industrial heartlands to forge the future once again.

The Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution.<sup>9</sup>

Recent Government policy papers on climate change are emotionally evocative.<sup>10</sup> They recall historic greatness with illustrations of British innovation and paint a picture of a future in which Britain will be a global leader. Simultaneously, the 2021 'Build Back Greener' paper makes a commitment to levelling up alongside a strong argument for a correlation between Net Zero, pride of place and social equality.

The 'Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution', however, includes several points which have been the focus of sustained protest.<sup>11</sup> Nuclear Power is just one specific example of a divisive issue on the road to Net Zero. Extinction Rebellion, which mobilises mass civil disobedience, considers the movement a broad church and instead of advocating a specific position on nuclear power, advocates for citizens' assemblies. Citizens' assemblies are a form of deliberative democracy that entails experts presenting information in a specific time and place. A representative group then deliberates and makes recommendations. Dietz and Stern have established a clear evidence base demonstrating that effective public participation increases the legitimacy of environmental decision-making.<sup>12</sup>

Deliberative democratic methods, however, do not have explicit processes in place to include large sections of our society who are not able to participate. Data from this study points towards ACPSG providing an explicit pathway for marginalised and disenfranchised people to actively engage with civil society and the planning for Net Zero.

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<sup>8</sup> UK Parliament, *UK will miss Net Zero Target without urgent action*, <https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/517/industry-and-regulators-committee/news/161468/uk-will-miss-net-zero-target-without-urgent-action-warns-lords-committee/>

<sup>9</sup> HM Government. (2020). *Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener and The Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution*. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/net-zero-strategy>

<sup>10</sup> See *Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener and The Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution*

<sup>11</sup> See Stop Hinkley <http://stophinkley.org/>

<sup>12</sup> Dietz, T., and Stern, P. C. (Eds). (2008). *Public Participation in Environmental Assessment and Decision Making*. Washington, DC: National Academies Press. See also Hobson, K., & Niemeyer, S. (2013). "What sceptics believe": The effects of information and deliberation on climate change scepticism. *Public Understanding of Science*, 22(4), 396–412. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0963662511430459>

There are many concerns regarding disenfranchisement and democratic values in the UK including a move towards Voter ID which holds the potential for targeted disenfranchisement, and the ruling by the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) regarding penal disenfranchisement. The two art interventions I discuss have the potential to address this with a large representative number of people at risk of disenfranchisement:

- 282,000 single people, couples and families were judged as homeless or threatened with homelessness by local authorities in 2020/21.<sup>13</sup>
- According to UNHCR statistics, as of mid-2021 there were 135,912 refugees, 83,489 pending asylum cases and 3,968 stateless persons in the UK.<sup>14</sup>

The above numbers illustrate that these two case studies have the potential to reach just over half a million people at risk of disenfranchisement from Net Zero deliberation. To reach this audience, it is essential to be able to both amplify and repeat best practices in the field. This report outlines how arts-based practices may be scaled to achieve a socially cohesive Net Zero which embraces pride of place, social diversity, and hope for future generations. Amplification is a key element of arts-based strategies that is traced throughout this report. Marginalised cultural producers engaged at all levels of co-production in the case studies interacting with workers in institutional publicity and marketing teams. These teams trained and dedicated to building audiences through spreading messages. While it is vital not to instrumentalise the creative works and reduce their complexity, the co-production process brought together these different skillsets in a dynamic and creative process that holds the potential to reach a sizable audience.

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<sup>13</sup> Crisis (2022) The Homeless Monitor England. <https://www.crisis.org.uk/ending-homelessness/homelessness-knowledge-hub/homelessness-monitor/england/the-homelessness-monitor-england-2022/>

<sup>14</sup> UNHCR (2021) Mid-Year trends. <https://www.unhcr.org/statistics/unhcrstats/618ae4694/mid-year-trends-2021.html>

## Exploring place sensitive governance: arts, citizenship, and civic education

Following on from Dietz and Stern, this report explores the functionality of arts interventions in enabling civic participation above and beyond the practices that are currently in place. It argues that models for ACPSG used in the two case studies offer opportunities to scale up, amplify and replicate co-produced events in a way that creates a diverse ecology of participation in public life. This report builds on the research of the British Academy on the importance of place for policy making but moves in a new direction by mapping ways ACPSG can realise these ambitions.

Amplification and replicability are key factors in enabling ACPSG to work across the different scales of environmental governance. Drawing in the knowledge around the practices of civic education in developing democracies supports this with a strong evidence base. Civic education has roots in post Second World War West German practices to educate ordinary people in democratic values to prevent the re-emergence of totalitarian regimes. In the late 1980's USAID alongside other international donors began to integrate civic education at scale through aid packages to support the transition period of new democracies.<sup>15</sup> The cases discussed in this report mirror Steven Finkel's concerns and findings on the efficacy of 10 years of Civic Education interventions, namely that civic education's long-term impact is context sensitive and depends on program design and 'the quality of the facilitators or trainers' and that the potential is not being realised in practice.<sup>16</sup>

The principles of civic education frame one understanding of how ACPSG can and does work. According to Finkel civic education enables civic competence which includes personal capabilities to influence the political process and adherence to democratic norms and values such as:

belief in democratic principles such as competitive elections with majority rule, political equality, inclusive political participation, civic liberties, the protection of the rights of minorities, peaceful resolution of political conflict, and the willingness to apply these principles in practice [... ] active participation in the democratic process, through voting and campaign-related activities, community problem solving, contacting politicians, and participation in non-violent demonstrations or other forms of collective action.<sup>17</sup>

### Trajectories of Amplification

*Both projects were part of important networks which support trajectories of amplification through social media.*

*Best practice for replicability is to engage civil society networks which share similar values.*

*Include marketing and publicity teams from the beginning in co-production meetings.*

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<sup>15</sup> Finkel, S.E. (2013) The Impact of Adult Civic Education Programmes in Developing Democracies. WIDER Working Paper 2013/064. Helsinki: UNU-WIDER. <https://www.wider.unu.edu/sites/default/files/WP2013-064.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> Finkel, The Impact of Adult Civic Education, p. 3.

<sup>17</sup> Finkel, The Impact of Adult Civic Education, p. 1.



These competencies build a common language for understanding what is needed for place-based environmental governance to succeed. Detailing the habits and practices of democratic norms at scale enables new types of sympathetic evaluation of programming and a rigorous and theoretically traceable framework for the changes that these case studies illustrate.

While both cases demonstrate practices of civic education including participation in nonviolent collective action, community problem solving, contacting politicians and belief in democratic principles, they also offer alternatives. Forms of deliberative democracy increase engagement and participation and these cases show how arts practices enable deliberative democracy to flourish.

### Amplification: Arts co-production as Civic Education

Considering arts interventions as civic education builds the capacity of such interventions to move across scales and networks of environmental governance. Figure 3 illustrates the progression of these scales within the HOME festival and Figure 4 considers amplification in relation to NML.

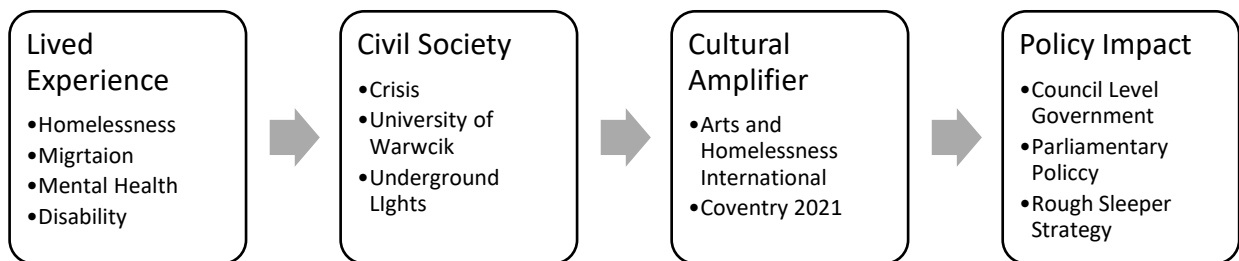


Figure 3 The pathway from lived experience to policy impact in the HOME festival

The above diagram illustrates the process of amplification for the HOME festival mapped a journey towards democratic engagement for people with lived experience of homelessness, explicitly engaging with a cluster of civil society organisations which combined advocacy with research (and arts provision) facilitated engagement with organisations which were cultural amplifiers (Coventry 2021 and AHI) prior to an explicit engagement with government and policy makers.

This is different from the *Meet me at the River* trajectory in the diagram below. Here, the amplification made use of long-term relationships embedded in local cultural ecologies. Co-production mobilised resources from cultural amplifiers (regional government and national museums) in order to realise inclusion and diversity goals for local governance. The diagrams highlight the capacity of arts interventions to operate at scale through replicating these pathways in different locations. Both approaches provide explicit models through which ACPSG connects national governance to place specific micro governance such as school boards, church and religious institution governance, and other voluntary local organisations.



Figure 4 The role of co-production in amplifying the cultural impact of local cultural ecologies.

### Administrative Citizenship Model

This report addresses a lack of interconnection between discourses. While socially engaged art considers interventions as a way to increasing well-being, environmental governance literature is exploring direct democracy through the citizens’ assemblies and co-production literature is exploring it as a means of improving democratic engagement. This report is unique for suggesting that positive outcomes for place sensitive environmental governance can be correlated with arts interventions which have a pedagogical impact on habits of citizenship. An important part of this argument is established by Bertelli and Cannas who seek to distinguish co-production from volunteerism through the frameworks of administrative citizenship and proximity.<sup>18</sup> The key message is that co-production enables active participation in governance only if it is linked to meeting a personal need and there ‘exists a territorial linkage between community member and the place where direct beneficiaries are located. Proximity, then, clearly distinguishes co-production from volunteerism’.<sup>19</sup>

This is a framework to understand the motivations for participants in the case studies. Research participants described a scale of commitment to co-production over the different arts projects in the HOME festival. This can be correlated in many cases to a territorial linkage to Coventry, particularly with outcomes linked to the ‘Days Hotel’ which I discuss later in this report. In the case of *Meet me at the River*, the framing of the initial call for participation was for local artists and the project was specifically linked to regional governance via funding tied to race equality and public space transformation.<sup>20</sup>

### Modalities of Civic Education in Arts-Based Interventions

In the case studies arts co-production functioned as one element of a pedagogical journey towards civic education. According to Finkel, civic education teaches community problem solving. In both cases community problem solving was learned and practiced in grassroots member-led organisations. Embedded in almost every single creative process and public engagement is micro level interpersonal and communal problem solving, solving logistical problems as a group approaching new creative endeavours, collaborating on songs, poems,

<sup>18</sup> Bertelli A.M., Cannas S. (2021). Law and Co-production: The Importance of Citizenship Values. In: Loeffler E., Bovaird T. (eds) *The Palgrave Handbook of Co-Production of Public Services and Outcomes*. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-53705-0\\_10](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-53705-0_10)

<sup>19</sup> Bertelli and Cannas. *Law and Co-production*, p. 198

<sup>20</sup> [Waterfront Transformation Project | National Museums Liverpool \(liverpoolmuseums.org.uk\)](https://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/waterfront-transformation-project)

exhibits and artworks. In the second part of this report, I present specific artistic practices which illustrate the development of community problems solving skills.

Nelson and King in a case study of the environmental movement, identify an approach they call an ‘ecology of activities’.<sup>21</sup> The two arts co-production models that I highlight: the festival model and the museum pop-up exhibition model can be seen as strategies which involve an ‘ecology of activities’. These strategies can be seen as a direct response to *Where We Live Now*’s key finding, which urges ‘the Government to pilot new approaches to place-based policymaking which go beyond devolution, develop pioneering approaches to involving local people’.<sup>22</sup> Examples illustrate how arts-based co-production can and should be part of an ecology of activities that address this finding.

#### Where We Live Now: Recommendations

- Integration, not fragmentation
- Valuing place-based assets
- Integration and harmonisation of community cultural needs
- Improving local consultation and participation in planning and local policymaking to understand better the real nature of place, what we care about and the scale of place we relate to in different parts of our lives

## Performative democracy: more than Citizens’ Assemblies

Public decisions on reducing carbon emissions will be most likely to create social flourishing and harmony if they are made in ways that they are visibly and performatively democratic. Performative democracy is public, participatory, and transparent.<sup>23</sup> There are a variety of forms of performative democracy that are currently being used around the world. This section discusses the forms and some of the vulnerabilities they exhibit in achieving their aim to facilitate inclusive place sensitive governance.

Climate Change Citizens’ Assemblies (CCCA) are a growing approach to place sensitive environmental governance.<sup>24</sup> CCCA’s are assembled through a stratified random sample of an area to ensure that they are balanced and representative of all forms of social diversity. Key to the CCCA model is the integration of expert presentations, scientific evidence and engaging in conversation and discussion. These elements address the pressing issues of social polarisation and propaganda which threaten to frame Net Zero as a wedge issue which mobilises identity-based conflicts.<sup>25</sup>

Capstick et al identified a critical limitation of the CCCA model, namely the lack of widespread public engagement, alongside limitations in the ability of members of the

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<sup>21</sup> Nelson, L.K. and King, B.G. (2020). The Meaning of Action: Linking Goal Orientations, Tactics, and Strategies in the Environmental Movement. *Mobilization: An International Quarterly*, 25(3), pp.315-338. <https://doi.org/10.17813/1086-671X-25-3-315>

<sup>22</sup> [Where We Live Now: Making the Case for Place-based Policy | The British Academy](#) (p.9).

<sup>23</sup> Matynia, E. (2015). *Performative Democracy*. Routledge.

<sup>24</sup> Harris, C. (2021). Looking to the future? Including children, young people and future generations in deliberations on climate action: Ireland’s Citizens ‘Assembly 2016–2018. *Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13511610.2021.1968356>

<sup>25</sup> Van de Wardt, M., De Vries, C. E., & Hobolt, S. B. (2014). Exploiting the cracks: Wedge issues in multiparty competition. *The Journal of Politics*, 76(4), 986-999.

assemblies to effectively engage with the process.<sup>26</sup> Members of citizens' assemblies need to have good communication skills in place in order to fully participate.<sup>27</sup> Social vulnerability and marginalisation hinders participation which Brandsen correlates with unfamiliar decision-making processes and a focus on verbal communication.<sup>28</sup> Together with what for some participants can be an overly burdensome demand on time, focusing solely on a CCCA model to deliver place sensitive governance entails a significant risk of excluding already marginalised members of society.

This report offers an alternative approach where explicit forms of deliberative democracy such as CCCA and legislative theatre are engaged with alongside other forms of performative democracy. legislative theatre is designed to develop implementable policy through an interactive theatre process. Performative democracy describes both explicit interventions that are aimed at co-producing policy such as CCCA and legislative theatre and arts interventions where democracy is implicit such as Variety Nights, flashmobs and Family Fun Days. These forms where democracy is more implicit nurture where the skills necessary for the explicit forms of performative democracy where policy is co-produced. This report delves into arts practices which enable the success of explicit forms of deliberative democracy.<sup>29</sup>

This follows from Matynia who posits an explicit connection between experimental and creative practice and the ability of Poland to transition to a public democracy. She points out that experimental theatre created pockets of public space where the skills of democracy could be developed.<sup>30</sup> These skills include social imagination, and free and meaningful expression. While the HOME festival included legislative theatre, it also included experimental creative spaces such as the Variety Night which incubated social imagination and free and meaningful expression.

## Ecology of Activities: Models of Arts Co-production

ACPSG provides an accessible umbrella for embedding a diversity and plurality of arts-based approaches into Net Zero interventions. This is referred to for the purpose of this report as ecologies of actions. Nelson and King advocate for studies that map the full ecology of environmental movement strategies.<sup>31</sup> They cluster social movements by a goal orientation. They identify three specific orientation which consider that change happens either as personal transformation, community mobilisation, or at the institutional level through policy. Best practices work across all three orientations adopting an ecological approach. In ACPSG

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<sup>26</sup> Capstick, S., Demski, C., Cherry, C., Verfuert, C. and Steentjes, K. (2020). Climate Change Citizens' Assemblies: CAST briefing paper 03. <https://orca.cardiff.ac.uk/id/eprint/131693>. For a further discussion on the limitations see Sandover, R., Moseley, A. and Devine-Wright, P., 2021. Contrasting Views of Citizens' Assemblies: Stakeholder Perceptions of Public Deliberation on Climate Change. *Politics and Governance*, 9(2), pp.76-86.

<sup>27</sup> Devaney, L., Torney, D., Brereton, P. and Coleman, M. (2020). Deepening Public Engagement on Climate Change: Lessons from the Citizens' Assembly (No. 314). [doi.org/10.1080/17524032.2019.1708429](https://doi.org/10.1080/17524032.2019.1708429)

<sup>28</sup> Brandsen T. (2021) Vulnerable Citizens: Will Co-production Make a Difference? In: Loeffler E., Bovaird T. (eds) *The Palgrave Handbook of Co-Production of Public Services and Outcomes*. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-53705-0\\_27](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-53705-0_27) (2021, p.532). See also Steen, T., Brandsen, T., & Verschuere, B. (2018). The Dark Side of Co-creation and Co-production: Seven Evils. In *Co-production and co-Creation* (pp. 284-293). Routledge.

Steen T. (2021). Citizens' Motivations for Co-production: Willingness, Ability and Opportunity at Play. In: Loeffler E., Bovaird T. (eds) *The Palgrave Handbook of Co-Production of Public Services and Outcomes*. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-53705-0\\_26](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-53705-0_26)

<sup>29</sup> Coughlan, S. (2020). [Dissatisfaction with democracy 'at record high' - BBC News](https://www.bbc.com/news/health-55888888)

<sup>30</sup> Matynia, E. *Performative Democracy*.

<sup>31</sup> Nelson and King. *The Meaning Of Action*.

institutional takes place through co-production of policy, personal transformation happens through arts activities that support finding a voice, community mobilising occurs through co-produced art events.

The two models of ACPSG that support ecologies of activities that I introduce in this paper are the festival model and the museum pop-up exhibition. The festival model involves a variety of interventions in a specific location over the course of 3 to 7 days across a variety of venues.<sup>32</sup> The museum pop-up as exemplified by the Liverpool case study involves a museum allocating the resources of its curatorial, marketing and exhibition staff to co-produce a temporary exhibition of three to six months. Explicit to this model is using the resources of an existing institution to add value to the co-producing partners. Both models serve as umbrella frameworks where deliberative and participatory democratic interventions can take place.

### Festival Model

HOME is an example of producing a multiplicity of activities under one umbrella (See Figure A). The festival included 13 different events, attended by hundreds of audience members and participants. Participatory democracy was embedded in the festival through legislative theatre, which produced specific policy suggestions. One of the strengths of the festival-based approach is it takes a realistic view of audience engagement. A plurality of events attracts a diversity of audiences. Participants who were council staff were more likely to have attended *Ruff Tuff* and legislative Theatre, than the Variety night because of issues of taste. In practice, there was a substantial crossover between the events of artists and performers which evidenced the interdependence that is vital to the success of this model.

<b>Event</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Data</b>
<b>Legislative Theatre</b>	October 28	PO, Video, notes, interviews
<b>St Basils Sleep Out at Coventry Cathedral</b>	October 9	PO, Images, feedback notes
<b>Send a Smile Postcard Exhibition</b>		Images, interviews
<b>Ruff Tuff Cream Puff Estate Agency</b>		Observation
<b>Arts and Homelessness Summit</b>	October 11-13	PO, Images, Vox Pop
<b>Agency: Assisted Self Portraits</b>		Images, Observations, Vox Pops
<b>Flash mob</b>	October 13	Observation, images, social media?
<b>Variety Night</b>	October 10	Observations, Images, notes, poetry
<b>Visual Arts Exhibition Art=Home</b>		Images, Vox Pop, interviews
<b>Homeless Monopoly</b>	Various	Vox Pop, PO, Images, feedback
<b>Home Grown Film Night</b>	October 12	
<b>Family Fun Day</b>	October 16	PO, images
<b>Celebration Event</b>	October 22	PO, feedback

Figure A HOME Festival events, dates and data collected

In Coventry the festival approach created new social networks which can be considered as part of a substantial legacy. This is already evidenced by increased pathways of opportunities to develop careers as artists and new positions within local government for practitioners with lived experience of homelessness.

<sup>32</sup> Vathi, Z., & Burrell, K. (2022). Emplacing Some, Displacing Others: Ethnic Minority Enterprises as Critical Urban Infrastructure in Lodge Lane, Liverpool. *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies*, 1-16. And Krüger, S. (2013). Branding the City. *The Globalization of Musics in Transit*, Jackson, C. (2011). A'ticket to ride'or'a hard days night'? The Importance of Music Tourism to Liverpool.

## Museum Model

The museum model works with existing place-based assets to increase inclusion and democratic functionality. This model builds on the strength of existing networks in the UK's national museums in order to scale up from the local.

In the UK, there are 14 National Museums established by an act of parliament. National Museums Liverpool is one of them, made up of 8 separate venues but under one umbrella for the management of the operations of the museums. This gives the pop-up a strategic position with unique opportunities to invigorate the role that museums play in place sensitive environmental governance.

Museums can access networks of micro governance through long-term relationships with local primary and secondary schools. Additionally, there is expertise and infrastructure in place in education and outreach. The vulnerabilities of this model include tight timelines and often tight budgets. Embracing these vulnerabilities as was the case in *Meet me at the River* can be framed potentially as added value. In line with statutory obligations, National Museums provide robust partnerships for an infrastructure of place-based policy in that they can be a trusted partner that is sustainable and able to co-produce to tight timelines and budgets.

## Ecological and Environmental Design of Arts-Based Interventions

This section discusses best practice in arts co-production focusing on how these programs are designed and how best practices integrate elements of environmental and ecological design (EED). There are many forms of EED but all approaches foreground sustainability, awareness of impact on the environment, and ecology, which considers how elements of systems function together. An early model of ecological design is permaculture design (See Figure 5) which is a method used to develop both agriculture and environments that work in harmony with place specific ecologies.<sup>33</sup> Elements of permaculture design were identified in the case studies and this section highlights concepts from EED which support place based environmental

## Lessons: Meet me at the River

- Use the resources and excellence of the location staff
- Include structured and explicit processes of co-production
- Work with member led groups embedded in the community to engage hard to reach communities
- Engage people who are experts with technology and audio-visual production
- Create space for emergence through well-resourced co-production residencies

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<sup>33</sup> Henfrey, T. (2018). Designing for Resilience: Permaculture as a Transdisciplinary Methodology in Applied Resilience Research. *Ecology and Society*, 23(2).

governance.



Figure 5 Creative Commons Permaculture Design Principles

Sensitive and inclusive use of place based ‘Cultural Assets’ as performative places is a robust starting point for EED design because it adds democratic value to an existing resource. Place specific cultural assets include museums, parks, theatres, and music venues. In the case studies cultural assets included public squares, churches, historic sites, cafes, and civic buildings. Performance enabled these places to be accessed and occupied by marginalised groups. Research participants described a sense of agency emanating from engaging in public spaces in new ways.

Figure 6 below captures a rehearsal of the choir with lived experience of homelessness that was part of the *Ruff Tuff Cream Puff Estate Agency* musical at the Belgrade Theatre and Figure 7 is from the flashmob that was a co-production which was part of the HOME festival.<sup>34</sup> The projects had very different levels of co-production, creative power sharing and participation. What they have in common and what the images capture, are moments when place-based assets were explicitly engaged with by a marginalised community. The groups then in turn developed a sense of ownership of the space. In both examples this ownership was linked to public policy on homelessness through the interconnections facilitated by the HOME festival and Coventry City of Culture.

<sup>34</sup> Images throughout this report have been drawn from publicity images produced by either Arts and Homelessness International <https://artshomelessint.com> NML <https://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk> and Underground Lights <https://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk> in order to insure that images that all images are embedded within organisational structures where informed consent is practiced.



Figure 6 Rehearsal of Choir with no Name for Ruff Tuff Cream Puff Estate Agency. <https://www.belgrade.co.uk/stories/qa-with-community-choir-leader-wes-finch/>



Figure 7 Flashmob in front of the Coventry Transport Museum featuring Irish Dancers. Drone footage kindly supplied by Kerry Blakeman <https://youtu.be/wtYzJ845UZk>

HOME participants described clear positive feelings around performing in places where there was considerable cultural capital or prestige. HOME festival channelled this participation into an explicit direct democracy format in legislative theatre that had direct outcomes on policy decisions at the local level. This can be contrasted with *Meet me at the River* which emerged from a long engagement with MaMa and NML, was funded by the Race Equality Commission, but there was a lack of explicit engagement with race equality policy.

These two projects considered together point towards the importance of explicitly embedding deliberative democracy within an ecological whole where arts interventions produce new engagements and entanglements with place-based assets. This means in practice that public engagement activities that explicitly addressed the policy and practices of Race Equality could have been more explicitly embedded in *Meet me at the River* as was done in the HOME festival with legislative theatre. This points towards the importance of embedding data driven knowledge explicitly into arts interventions as it was in HOME. *Meet me at the River* is likely



to have a larger footfall than HOME which points towards how best practices in co-production can be embedded and integrated into place-based assets with the highest level of cultural capital. This would happen at an institutional level, and this is one recommendation of this report.

### Working Methods

Two working methods emerged as instrumental in the success of co-productions: digital methods and design methods. Both addressed vulnerabilities of working between grassroots arts groups and professional design studios where there may be gaps around expectations, regarding deadlines and time management.

Digital methods enabled the EED principle of catch and store energy (making hay while the sun shines) to be integrated. For arts co-production this meant, using digital field work and a

*Grassroots, member-led and value driven groups provide infrastructure and momentum. Processes of governance are already in place, and they often have experience of project-based initiatives. The local networks are in place to scale up. This is just one advantage of how ecological approaches work.*

audio-visual methods to work early in the process before the pressure of deadlines. It meant engaging in improvisation with digital recording technologies of film, audio, and camera to collect a lot of ideas. It meant working with high end photography, at times reminiscent of a fashion shoot. The pop-up highlights the capacity of digital methods to protect identities in vulnerable participants and becomes both a tool for safeguarding and a creative strategy for inclusion when working with members with complex social needs.

Designing from pattern to detail is another principle of EED which was important in structuring the co-production process. The creative process is often considered in a somewhat mystical way. Co-production and co-creation as I have discussed is often not explicitly described. Designing from patterns to details is a principle that creates a shared understanding of process. This is illustrated with a creative process led by the National Museums creative studio head, Joe Brooks where co-production with vulnerable people entailed creative sessions to identify patterns and details being worked out by technical experts or experts by experience. This process was mirrored across the creative practices where visual research methods were employed by the member-led group who created themes by sorting digital materials into patterns and the technical details of exhibition elements were managed by experts.

### Member-Led Groups

Diversity and interdependence are a key component of EED. Working with member-led groups is one way to enable use of place-based assets that is inclusive. To do this, it is vital to understand the landscape of a community before any interventions. With tight timelines of co-production, the time to observe and interact can be limited, in this light building partnerships with member led groups is a pathway to best practice in the sustainable design of projects.

In both cases member-led organisations featured trusting relationships and diverse forms of creative production. Member-led organisations had sophisticated pre-existing local networks

which extended to formal and informal micro governance structures such as religious organisations, voluntary sector organisations, and local schools. In both cases member-led organisations brought strengths in trauma informed working and were positioned to meet shortcomings in experience in critical areas of work relating to safeguarding and access support for vulnerable artists.

### Proximity

Arts based interventions offered surprising opportunities for the exchange of various forms of social capital through creative approaches to proximity. Some participants argued that culture and arts provided spaces for social mobility. *Where We Live Now* identified that one aim of culture was:

better management of the cultural needs of new and changing communities to enable integration and harmonisation with the needs of pre-existing and new communities.<sup>35</sup>

HOME festival illustrated both pathways and barriers to this type of harmonisation. Elements with high production values such as *The Ruff Tuff Cream Puff Estate Agency* created opportunities for artists to work in professional environments and participants responded positively to this cultural capital (See Figure 7).<sup>36</sup> Alongside this, however, were several people who observed that in the stage production people with lived experience of homelessness were instrumentalised and marginalised. This is an unresolved tension on the role and choices around production values. The two models presented here, however, allow for a diversity of approaches.

Social spaces may create opportunities for building networks. However, they hold the potential to reinscribe social divisions. The Family Fun Day mirrored exemplary practice of

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<sup>35</sup> The British Academy, *Where We Live Now*, p. 6.

<sup>36</sup> See blog post by Underground Lights members <https://cardboardcitizens.org.uk/our-news/article/ruff-tuff-setting-the-stage>

arts based social spaces such as *the Black Lunch Table*.<sup>37</sup> Taking its name from the social segregation that is common to high school in the United States, the social arts intervention creates explicit spaces for discourse around race and arts production by and for black artists. The Family Fun Day created a plurality of open discursive spaces that enabled new forms of interactions not only between people with and without experience of homelessness, but also with a community of proximity that is racially, economically, and socially diverse (see sidebar). HOME festival developed technologies of these discursive spaces some of which appeared only at the Family Fun Day, such as the positive affirmation books and others which were repeated in different events such as the making of friendship bracelets.

Across both cases new social networks and bonds were created between participants who were considered marginalised and members of civil society organisations. In the case of HOME, participants felt that these bonds were created by living and working in proximity to each

## Family Fun Day

My daughter and I sat down at a table to make friendship bracelets. Over the course of about twenty minutes two young women sat down and we began to chat. The bracelets created a moment where we could have a very slow conversation with international students that we would have never had the chance to speak to previously.

At a second table, my daughter was invited to create a book of positive affirmations. legislative theatre is an intentional intervention in deliberative democracy, the experience of creating friendship bracelets in unintentional and informal but creates the necessary conditions for the formal interventions to succeed: familiarity and comfort in civic spaces; reducing the explicit criminalisation of people who experience homelessness; disrupting power dynamics, and practice in casual conversation across difference.

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<sup>37</sup> [Black Lunch Table – performance + archive](#)

other particularly through the ‘Everybody In’ program through the first lockdown.<sup>38</sup>

In Coventry, during the first lockdown, the Days Hotel was used for emergency housing and CRISIS was responsible for creating continuous arts-based programming in the lobby of the hotel. Participants repeatedly discuss this as a positive experience and ascribe a variety of positive outcomes to it. Participants describe members of the council housing staff walking the dogs of hotel residents who were rough sleepers, and one participant particularly pointed out that housing policy removes from people the things that make them human, such as pets.

In this context, proximity becomes a defined social intervention that enables democratic process. Proximity of marginalised groups with policymakers during the first lockdown is a product of specific governance decisions that are replicable.

With this in mind, the evidence points towards the under theorisation of how vital grassroots cultural production (member-led, embedded, and sustainable) is to place specific environmental governance. The following section illustrates with examples of how arts-based co-production enables an embedded civic education that draws marginalised and dehumanised groups back into the public life of modern democracies. Bertelli and Cannas understand that citizenship needs both connectedness and territory.<sup>39</sup> The next section discusses how arts-based interventions create places and habits of active citizenship through connectedness and place/territory.

#### A Conversation About Humanisation

As discussed above, citizenship can be enacted through connectedness and territory, Brian, and Helen two research participants who played important organisational roles in the HOME festival narrate how an administrative decision made by Coventry City Council to house rough sleepers and the council workers in the same premises enabled a process of humanisation. Embedded in this were ongoing arts activities done in conjunction with Crisis Skylight and Arts and Homelessness International.

Brian produces arts interventions and Helen is an arts facilitator with lived experience of homelessness.<sup>40</sup> The quotes below support the findings that proximity enriched with creative activities enabled core elements of citizenship (connectedness and territory) Additionally, arts-based interventions enabled re-humanisation to occur in situ. Participants correlated this process of creativity, proximity, and re-humanisation to positive outcomes in the HOME festival.

I am definitely not a policy expert, what I know about homelessness is mostly anecdotal, but mostly what I observed at the Days was mostly that by having all of the people who were experiencing homelessness and all of the staff supporting them together, everybody knew each other there was I felt quite a strong sense of community and even things like, it sounds small, but I don't think it is, but Sophie the housing commissioner would often walk a number of the rough sleepers' dogs, which I kind of struggle to see that happening in every city, at least I think it would be really good if it did happen in every city.

Brian, Coventry 2021

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<sup>38</sup> Crisis (2021) People Helped by Everyone In Scheme. <https://www.crisis.org.uk/about-us/media-centre/over-9-000-people-helped-by-the-everyone-in-scheme-are-at-risk-of-remaining-trapped-in-homelessness-due-to-a-lack-of-housing-and-support>

<sup>39</sup> Bertelli and Cannas. Law and Co-production.

to potential positive outcomes from the HOME festival, Helen suggests that

Addressing some of the issue that rough sleepers identify as being barriers to moving into hostels or temporary accommodation or something. For example, couples can't stay together, pets can't go, so maybe finding a way to solve these kinds of issues. Maybe more people would more willing then to move off the streets, because some people not everybody, some of the rough sleepers don't want to go into the accommodation that is provided for them because of certain rules, which kind of like goes back to that dehumanising isn't it? You can't come here with your partner that's not fair is it? You have to get rid of your pet, that's not really fair either is it? So, the things that make them human, they've got a partner, they've got their pet, will be stripped away from them

Helen, Coventry 2021

Figure 8 below is of a new bench. It illustrates how dehumanisation happens in a specific location at the micro level. I discussed the benches with Helen:

Jennifer: All of the different decisions, like how you have benches, somebody has to decide that. So, at some point what happens is that somebody decided that there would no longer be benches that are human body length. So, somebody chose that, and they took all the benches out that were the size of a human body and replaced them with chairs that were the size of a human bum so you couldn't lay down...

Helen: that's kind of dehumanising in itself, isn't it? That's not looking at the homeless people as a person, it's just looking at them as a problem

At the end of the interview Helen summed up her thoughts and what could be done:

the council or whoever made the decision to shorten benches so that they can't lie on the bench that's not seeing them as a human being that is seeing them as just like a thing a problem that needs to be eliminated but not in a helpful way at all, so I think that seeing what people can do, seeing their creativity that really brings them alive and humanises them again



*Figure 8 Benches on the route from Coventry Station to the HOME festival.*

## Visual Interventions

*Agency* is a series of assisted self-portraits by Anthony Luvera that were created as part of the HOME festival and installed in a green space a five-minute walk from the Coventry Station (Figures 9 and 10),

*Agency* intervened in a specific public place that is in proximity to the dehumanisation of the benches. One way to consider this is through the use of public space for civic discourse through the arts. This experience is narrated by a council worker on the rough sleeper team.

Yeah the chap I was the support worker for, he did point out where those, where the pictures of people were, that was just over the road from where he was sleeping rough and he sort of made the oh...a couple of years ago I was sleeping rough here, now I got my portrait here, he sort of recognised that the contrast and that contrast where his journey has gone really, he was in that situation a couple of years ago, and now he's got his own place and all the rest of it. and he sort of recognised that him having a, it's in the same geographical place in Coventry near enough, but when he was sleeping rough obviously, he had less, oh what's the word, now he's got his portrait up there, he's got, ownership is not the right word, but a sort of presence there that he didn't have when he was sleeping rough.

Coventry, Council Worker 2021

The agency of *Agency* can be correlated with changes in policy enacted through legislative theatre due to the fact that there was a networked relationships between participants in *Agency* and participants in legislative theatre through connecting activities of the festival such as the Summit, the flashmob and the Steering Group.



*Figure 9 A view of the Agency site in front of the estate agents.*



*Figure 10 Passers by looking at the Agency Exhibition.*

The transformation of public assets into sites of participatory democracy that engage marginalised and dehumanised citizens is transferable to Net Zero outcomes through the understanding that was outlined above. Here, the correlation between co-produced arts and civic spaces as places for participatory democracy are explicit. In the next example this relationship is more implicit, and resources and aesthetics are mobilised in a different manner.

### Spaces for Difficult Dialogue

*Meet me at the River* locates, challenges and repairs dehumanisation in an entirely different way. I will first overview this approach, then I will illustrate that by comparing these two different creative and arts-based approaches, the commonalities and correlations lead to principles which can be tested and refined. The starting point is a consideration of place-based assets.

Across this report I discuss museums as important place-based assets that can be mobilised for arts engagements that enable performative democracy. Incorporated into the discussion of museums as assets are the collections of the museums which are embedded assets. In *Meet me at the River* artifacts and archives acquired by museums that were implicated in the trans-Atlantic trade of enslaved humans become a space for deliberation and reflection. These reflective spaces are essential to enabling non polarising dialogue around public history of slavery and colonialism alongside discussions of the restitution of pillaged cultural artifacts. While there has been some significant work on decolonising museum collections, art and artefacts can become flash points for confrontations. This was the case in the ‘toppling’ of the Edward Colston Statue in Bristol and the removal of the John Castelman statue in Charlottesville Virginia.<sup>41</sup>

*Meet me at the River* is aesthetically informed by palimpsest performance.<sup>42</sup> Palimpsest performance crafts places and spaces where the discourse of restitution is engaged visually and performatively. It performs layers of history simultaneously to create an affective experience of place which foregrounds citizenship values of peaceful resolution of political conflict and community problem solving.<sup>43</sup> Figure 11 from *Meet me at the River* features a screen reminiscent of the sails of Kitty’s Amelia, the last legal voyage of a ship engaged in the slave trade, with projections of images of mothers seeking sanctuary holding artifacts and archives in the collections of the International Slavery Museum. This is an illustration of the arts creating public space for open dialogue with contested public assets that were acquired through colonisation. In this case ACPSG challenges the cultural violence emanating from the theft and spoliation of cultural heritage enabling reflections on the dehumanisation of marginalised people that is often embedded in art, artifacts, and archives.

The non-polarising space enables multiple interpretations through complex high production value images which juxtapose the visceral with the codified in order to impart humanity into a dehumanised archive. The first image in Figure 11 features shadows of the hands of MaMa members on the educational panels of the Slavery Museum that describe the movement of sugar and enslaved Africans in the triangular trade. The second image features the hands of MaMa members connected by a cotton thread. The thread references the specific commodity which connects the colonisation of South Asia to this triangular trade. The images are

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<sup>41</sup> See the documentary *Restitution* Phillippe, N. (2021) Questions and Answers with Nora Phillippe. <https://youtu.be/d-kEfOBekgs>

<sup>42</sup> Verson, J. (2021). *Performing peace: applied performance and scriptural reasoning as a peacebuilding process* (Doctoral dissertation, Coventry University).

<sup>43</sup> Finkel, The impact of adult civic education.



beautiful and ambiguous, but also make clear the connection between the history of the transatlantic trade of enslaved Africans, colonialism, and current migration. While the images in Figure 11 juxtapose the visceral with the codified, Figure 12 brings humanity to what can be a dehumanised archive. The image captures the diverse hands of MaMa. The way the hands and fingers hold each other evokes an emotional connection between the members. The nails, henna, and traces of clothing signal the age and diversity of participants. It is evident that the hands are meeting in care and not violence around a book which is an archive of the scale, violence, and dehumanisation of the specific form of chattel slavery that produced sugar in Caribbean plantations. The image is nuanced and causes the viewer to ask questions rather than dictating answers. It opens spaces for dialogue, reflection, and questions on the archives of violent histories.





Figure 11 Images from Meet me at the River. Robert Harrison



Figure 12 Image co-produced with Manuel Vason and Migrant Artists Mutual Aid

These co-produced images are illustrations of the functionalities that art can play in developing cultures of participation that are essential to enacting participatory democracy. The images capture the values of MaMa: trust, political solidarity, diversity, and migration justice and amplify these values through arts practices. The intimacy seen in Figure 12 is built through long relationships and is amplified through the engagement with both experts in performance photography such as Manuel Vason and high social status cultural institutions like NML.

These images were created during an intense three-day residency. Certain techniques used in the development of the pop-up are mirrored in innovative practices of open policy making. Policy Lab often launches open policy making with a ‘sprint’ to generate a lot of new insights and ideas.<sup>44</sup> In the case of *Meet me at the River*. The sprint was supported by the long relationships of a member led group, a technology rich environment, design experts from NML, and a robust care and safeguarding practice supplied by MaMa and was resourced by NML.

While MaMa perform regularly as a choir in public, this type of co-production enabled marginalised members with vulnerable migration status to participate in public dialogue. In this way ACPSG is creating multiple pathways for civic participation. The evidence that is presented as part of this argument supports the practice that sensitive arts co-production enables civic participation which over the course of this report, I correlate with positive outcomes for meeting Net Zero climate targets.

### Inclusive Public spaces

Common to both projects is the increased use of civic spaces by marginalised people. Emerging data from Coventry 2021 and National Museums Liverpool will support this shift in how people are accessing civic spaces with data that supports the proposition in building back greener that:

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<sup>44</sup> [About Open Policy Making - Policy Lab \(blog.gov.uk\)](https://www.blog.gov.uk/2020/05/14/about-open-policy-making/)

the link between Net Zero and levelling up is wider than just the economy, Net Zero can deliver wider benefits for people and communities across the UK by helping spread opportunity and restore pride in place.<sup>45</sup>

While the word ‘pride’ appears only once in the report, community appears 44 times. This building back greener is tied to community of place:

Community empowerment, engagement, and action can play a role in supporting the UK’s transition to Net Zero and enable communities to access the benefits that it brings, from greener jobs to improved health. Communities are especially well placed to help raise awareness and engage people in adopting Net Zero behaviours.<sup>46</sup>

Three examples of co-produced arts interventions illustrate specific points and examples of pride of place as an inclusive construct that supports social cohesion and equality.

The flashmob as a pedagogy of citizenship is captured in Figures 7 and 13. To begin with, according to accounts by participants, the flashmob emerged out of the steering group which was made of participants with lived experience of homelessness, artists, producers, council workers, academics, researchers, and civil society actors. Resources were mobilised to enable this to happen.



Figure 13 Finale of the flashmob

The images illustrate occupying public space, being present as a subject and not an object. They also particularly capture aspects of the carnivalesque elements of the flashmob where power and regular structures are turned upside down. Carnival is interesting both for being temporary and recurring, but importantly, carnival is theoretically tied to enabling social hierarchies to be inverted, but then remain in place as the carnival operates as a cathartic process.<sup>47</sup> Arts-based co-production in both examples is embedded in a long-term vision of enabling public participation, though this ‘embeddedness’ in the long-term is not necessarily explicit in every instance.

The festival approach, in which different types of interventions occur both in physical and temporal proximity, enables the events to operate as a complex system. Participants and audience members experience the activities as interconnected. Positive or negative

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<sup>45</sup> HM Government, Net Zero Strategy, p.42

<sup>46</sup> HM Government, Net Zero Strategy, p.263.

<sup>47</sup> See Andrew Robinson for an accessible discussion of Bakhtin and carnival <https://ceasefiremagazine.co.uk/in-theory-bakhtin-2> and Brecht for a critique of catharsis. Curran, A. (2001). Brecht’s Criticisms of Aristotle’s Aesthetics of Tragedy. *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 59(2), 167–184. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/432222>

experiences of one activity thus have an impact on how other activities are experienced. For HOME this meant that positive experiences of *Ruff Tuff* created a positive engagement in legislative theatre and confidence in leading activities for the Family Fun Day. In this way performative democracy forms which explicitly co-produce policy are enabled and fertilised by the social border crossing, topsy turvy nature of events like the flashmob.

Considering images of HOME alongside images of *Meet me at the River* (Figures 14 and 15), gives an understanding of how aesthetic choices function as a social equaliser to transfer cultural capital to member-led arts organisations by inverting and challenging who is and who isn't invited into public spaces. The different approach to the aesthetics in the projects contains a few salient factors.

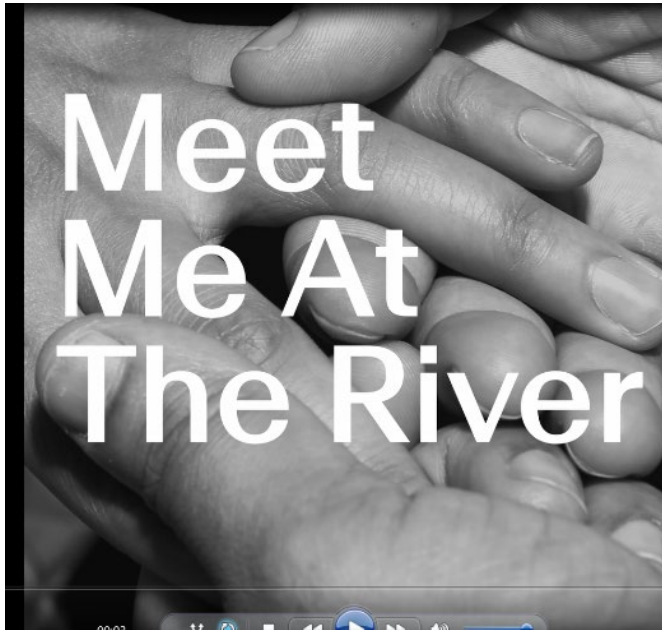


Figure 14 Close up from promotional video featuring photograph by Manuel Vason and Migrant Artists Mutual Aid



Figure 15 Screen capture from promotional video featuring photograph by Manuel Vason and Migrant Artists Mutual Aid

The first factor is the relationship between safeguarding and aesthetics. MaMa's artistic practice involves considering how to show humanity and identity without showing somebody's face, this is a trauma informed political position that is continuously under review and discussion. The approach is based on creative consent and the understanding that this will change over time and in different situations. So, the aesthetics of the MaMa video were driven by safeguarding. This is an opposite approach to how the flashmob videos depict democracy in public places. In the next section I will illustrate the core recommendation for using co-produced arts-based interventions to achieve Net Zero.

## Recommendations for Implementing Arts-based Interventions in Environmental Governance

Place based assets anchor communities, however, since 2010 Britain has closed almost 800 libraries.<sup>48</sup> The findings of this report support integrating ACPSG into strategies of place based environmental governance to create sustainable support for grassroots infrastructure alongside fostering greater access to cultural assets by marginalised communities. Informants with experience of co-production described both case studies as authentic, impactful, and going beyond 'tick box exercises' which is often considered a fault of co-production. The points highlighted in this concluding section map implementable activities that can support ACPSG interventions which involve an authentic experience of co-creation.

Animating place-based assets for environmental governance with arts interventions supports the sustained engagement of marginalised communities in real time deliberative democracy. *Meet me at the River* attracted over 7000 visitors to the Martin Luther King Jr building which was an under used place-based asset. The HOME festival supported the active participation of members of the arts and homelessness sector in accessing and producing activities and performing at the Belgrade theatre. The Belgrade and NML are supported by government funding and are part of national and international networks and part of the long-term cultural infrastructure of both locations.

The co-production of arts activities with member-led marginalised groups crafted a bridge between the sustainability of the assets and the lived experience expertise of the groups. This report highlighted processes which enabled successful co-production, these include:

- Steering groups or management committees made up of at least 50% of people who have lived experience of marginalisation
- Creative residencies where member led groups share time with professionals in high prestige cultural venues

This report has shown that arts interventions develop and sustain the skills needed for place based cultural assets to be authentic hubs of environmental governance. The case studies show how these skills are developed and nurtured over time. Civic education frameworks have provided a lens to understand the depth and breadth of these skills:

- Community problem solving and political advocacy skills are nurtured in weekly drop-ins
- Public speaking skills are developed through creative cafes and public performances both individually in Variety Nights and collectively in choir performances

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<sup>48</sup> [Britain has closed almost 800 libraries since 2010, figures show | Libraries | The Guardian](#)

- Understanding democratic norms is developed and practiced through regular meetings to produce art projects

ACPSG connects the creativity and mutual aid for marginalised people that takes place within informal spaces to local and national networks via the place-based assets. Both case studies feature regular weekly creative activities in safe and familiar places. These activities are often underfunded and less sustainable. By illustrating the correlation between the two types of activities this report highlights the urgency of funding these informal spaces. ACPSG connects the marginalised and grass roots activities where citizenship skills are developed to the places where policy is developed and implemented.

These case studies demonstrated a model for deep and sustained engagement by explicitly embedding theory into practice through the presence of researchers, artist/academics, and reflective and experienced art workers. While this report provides specific models, an area for future exploration would be to look in greater detail at best practices in facilitating civic education and training of trainers for civic education. Art workers in Liverpool and Coventry often manage precarious livelihoods. Investing in ACPSG as a form of deliberative democracy that enables scales of environmental governance will mean investing in new ways to address the financial precarity of artists working in social and community contexts.

These findings are supported by elements of the literature which I have highlighted over the course of this report.

- Environmental governance has more influence and impact if people participate in the making of the policy. Dietz and Stern have established a clear evidence base demonstrating that effective public participation increases the legitimacy of environmental decision-making.<sup>49</sup>
- Models and mechanisms for public participation in environmental decision making are still limited.
- Participants experience barriers to engagement with these limited models.
- Creative and innovative models are precarious and often not sustained over time.<sup>50</sup>

Understanding and mapping how ACPSG develops skills and methods for environmental governance through the framework of civic education enables the circulation of resources between civil society organisations with statutory obligations for net zero and the marginalised member-led arts groups who are developing the skills but are often financially precarious.

Working with member-led marginalised groups specifically decreases the risks of the negative sides of co-production which include undermining the ability of co-producers with lived experience of marginalisation to be actively critical of policy.<sup>51</sup> The reach and amplification of ACPSG is highest in the co-productions where civil society bodies initiate

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<sup>49</sup> Dietz and Stern. Public Participation. See also Hobson, K., & Niemeyer, S. (2013). “What sceptics believe”: The Effects of Information and Deliberation on Climate Change Scepticism. *Public Understanding of Science*, 22(4), 396–412. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0963662511430459>

<sup>50</sup> Steen, Brandsen, and Verschuere. The Dark Side of Co-creation and Co-production.

<sup>51</sup> See Steen, Brandsen, and Verschuere. The Dark Side of Co-creation and Co-production. and Ishkanian, A. (2014). Neoliberalism and Violence: The Big Society and the Changing Politics of Domestic Violence in England. *Critical Social Policy*, (34, 3), 333–353.



and fund the projects. This moves administrative burdens to the more resourced groups. Additionally, it mobilises the expertise of marketing, publicity, and policy experts. When the member-led groups have responsibility for these aspects, the case studies have shown how their labour and good will can be exploited.

This evidence leads to the next section where I recommend that arts interventions be embedded in the creation of mini publics which make use of place specific cultural assets and that these projects are embedded in the statutory budgeting practices across the levels of governance where there are legal obligations to implement Net Zero policies.

## Sustainable Futures for Arts and Environmental Governance

This report has included a selection of best practices that map co-produced arts interventions as a strategy for place sensitive environmental governance that can work across scales. I illustrated how different types of arts-based activities function as civic education necessary to engage marginalised people in place sensitive policy making. Additionally, I supported the premise that these types of interventions are both mapped and correlated to positive outcomes for Net Zero. I conclude by highlighting two key recommendations:

- ACPSG should foster sustainability by developing replicable events
- ACPSG should include an ecology of diverse arts activities in these replicable events

ACPSG should always include a diversity of activities set within a context specific cultural ecology. Over the course of this research, it became clear in the pursuit of replicability, civil society organisations were likely to focus on a single aspect of ACPSG such as legislative theatre. In two different examples, this practice of focusing on an explicit activity and removing it from the context of cultural ecologies that developed habits of citizenship led to less robust outcomes.<sup>52</sup> Legislative theatre with vulnerable participants cannot legitimately be instrumentalised and extricated from the grassroots ecologies of local cultural production which provide the civic skills base and support for participants. This will need careful consideration to understand the difference in local governance and decision-making structures and is an opportunity for further research.

In order to foster habits of citizenship that lead to engagement with participatory environmental governance, arts activities should consider differences between co-production and volunteerism and stress proximity and territorial connections to local places. Additionally, it is vital to include all forms of labour into a budget that includes safeguarding and risk assessments regarding the mental health impacts on participants including support for the labour of member-led groups.

The vulnerability of ACPSG is that it is a one-off event. This, however, is not inevitable as there are multiple examples of yearly festivals that are economically viable. This includes larger scale events such as Glastonbury and smaller local festivals like Africa Oye.

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<sup>52</sup> Over the course of this research, legislative theatre projects in Coventry and Glasgow were considered. While the key data that drives these recommendations came from the positive experiences of participants HOME festival initial research suggested that the Glasgow legislative theatre did not sit as fully within the local cultural ecology. Interview with sector expert who was involved in organising other LT events.

This plays an important part in addressing the general under theorisation of arts production and co-production. As I mentioned earlier in this paper there is a lack of interconnection between discourses of civic education, environmental governance, and arts. The excellence of the case studies can be located in the work of experienced and committed civil servants, artists, researchers, and practitioners who designed and implemented them. This is an important and ongoing concern regarding whose responsibility it is to initiate and implement co-production and deliberative democratic practices across all scales of environmental governance.

This report has noted several areas of best practice which can enable replicable interventions. The first is that when working with participants who face multiple obstacles including social marginalisation, seeking out and networking with member led groups is vital. Member-led arts groups privilege conviviality, proximity, improvisation, adaptation, and access over expertise or mastery of skill. Value driven member-led groups enable the types of co-production interventions to become sustainable. Projects thus add resources to local ecologies rather than diminishing them.

The second is that an easy way of embedding inclusion and diversity for participants and audiences is to work with multiple artforms, poetry, photography, music, and performance. This creates diverse pathways for participant engagement valuing a plurality of creative and artistic skills. This diversity should additionally be used when considering places for public-facing events. It is vital to create plural spaces of creative agency that have a spectrum of cultural capital attached to them. Providing a mixture of places that are familiar and places that are prestigious.

One contrast between HOME festival and *Meet me at the River* is that *Meet me at the River* used a sustainable resource in their partnership with NML. Co-productions between important cultural institutions and member-led groups is mutually beneficial. Institutions have infrastructure with people who were already in role. Member-led groups assist institutions in achieving their social value goals while institutions share resources with member-led groups from underserved demographics.

This report has documented two initiatives that have worked across the scale of environmental governance. The reach has included local government in Coventry, Metro government in Liverpool, national museums, and charities. These have been brought into dialogue with micro governance in the community in both casual forms and organised forms. This report has documented such cultural initiatives enabling marginalised citizens to learn, rehearse and perform habits of citizenship thus creating an important and current reference point for best practices in arts and place-based governance.

## Further Reading

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