



Public Art Strategy 2011 - 2015
Newcastle City Council
Policy, partnerships & commissions

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Harvey Emms, BA [Hons] MRTPI
Director of Strategic Housing, Planning and Transportation
Civic Centre, Barras Bridge, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 8PH

Introduction What is this document?

Start to explore the City
Public Art Collection

This document is the Public Art Strategy for Newcastle. It sets out a shared vision for the future of public art in the city and a series of themes intended to achieve this vision.

Public art can be used to describe many different types of work such as creative lighting, performance based work, temporary installations and the use of new 'audio visual' media as well as traditional forms such as murals and sculpture. Public art can be a collaborative process between artists and other design and construction professionals that results in a unique approach to a development, an addition to a building or detail added to street furniture. However the common factor in every approach and one that City Council endorses is that public art is work that is designed for the public as the key audience, includes the public as key collaborators, is located to allow for free public access and is supported by public resources.

Within this document, the Council has identified a number of actions and activities that will be undertaken to deliver this vision. These actions are consistent with and reinforce the commitments already made in existing partnership and corporate strategies.

Newcastle has a national and international reputation for public art, culture and creative industries that is due in part to the on going activities of the City Council and its partner organisations in both the public and private sector. The city has developed a collection of public art works that forms an important part of this profile. In addition to a number of significant major works, the city



Man with Alternative Selves 2003
Sean Henry
Bronze & traffic cones



Earl Grey Headcubes 2002
Simon Watkinson
Perspex, LED lights & footprints

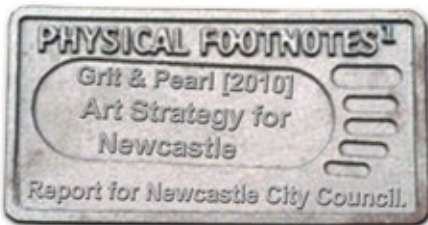
collection and approach to public art is unique through the large number of small-scale commissions undertaken as part of the Grainger Town Project, the targeting and support given to locally based artists, the exploration of new media, temporary works and the integration of art into public realm, new development and creative lighting schemes.

At the beginning of 2010 the Council commissioned Grit & Pearl, a Newcastle based public art consultancy, to review our existing approach and to prepare a city-wide strategy that, within the context of the current financial pressures on national arts organisations, will provide direction for on-going commissioning and maintaining public art works for the city.

Background

This Public Art Strategy has also been informed by the review work undertaken by Grit & Pearl¹ and is based on a range of supporting evidence that makes the social and economic case for continued activity and investment within the arts. It is also informed by the collective views of arts and cultural organisations within the city gained through a significant series of local consultation exercises that considered the scope of experiences with representatives of different groups and organisations including clients / commissioners, artist & architects and partnership bodies. It sets out a fresh vision for the role of public art and provides the basis for supporting a public art strategy for Newcastle. The supporting report by Grit & Pearl includes a full record on the consultation undertaken and the reference for the supporting evidence.

This Public Art Strategy is informed by these recommendations and objectives as they relate to the City Council in providing strong leadership in policy and specific public art projects and activities.



● **Physical Footnotes 2010**
Chris Morton
Iron & Artpods



● **Tyne Salmon Cubes 2008**
Xsite Architecture
Boxes & conceptual fish



● **Four Questions 2009**
Kathryn Hodgkinson
Glass & public library



Waymarkers 2002
Lewis Robinson
Steel & glass bottles

Why is public art important ?

The arts are an important section of the local and regional economy. The Council is committed to supporting the cultural & art industries and their contribution to the City as a sustainable community, empowering communities to become involved in civic life. The Council recognises and values the potential for public art to enhance the quality of the public realm and the creation of unique places with a strong sense of identity.

Most significantly, this Public Art Strategy will become one of the delivery plans supporting the themes within the 'Sustainable Communities Strategy' [prepared on behalf of the Newcastle Partnership, March 2010] with the expectation that public art becomes an integrated part of many different projects aiming to support a strong local economic through quality of place and working with the public to build safe, healthy, cohesive, inclusive, and empowered communities. The actions will ensure that the six key objectives of the Sustainable Communities Strategy are embedded in all processes and projects for public art work in the city:

- Improving outcomes for children and young people;
- Adult wellbeing and health;
- Safe, inclusive, cohesive and empowered communities;
- Strengthening the economy;
- Creating and sustaining quality places to live;
- Managing environmental impact

The strategy will contribute directly to the objective of creating and sustaining quality places to live through ongoing cultural development, enhancing and interpreting our historic environment; and creating and managing a quality environment. This is the starting point for the themes and suggested programme of commissions, activities and actions identified within this Public Art Strategy.

Sustainable Communities Strategy 2010
Newcastle Partnership
6 Objectives & Policies



Vision The vision for public art in Newcastle

The City Council endorses the city-wide vision for public art that supports the targeted and collaborative approach to commissioning artists and future public art works.

“Over the next four years, Newcastle will support a sustainable programme of high quality and innovative public art activity that builds on the City’s reputation and continuing ambition as the regional Cultural Capital. Newcastle will take a targeted and collaborative approach to the commissioning of artists and future public artworks, and will foster critical debate and greater engagement with the process. This is a city-wide strategy supported by a wide range of regeneration agencies, arts organisations, design specialists and artists, all of whom will become more active in the commissioning of public art.”

Themes The themes for public art in Newcastle

This Public Art Strategy sets out the actions for the Council to achieve this vision with activities targeted at three broad programme themes. Throughout all of these themes the Council will recognise the value of and maintain a commitment to public art as an integrated element to public realm works, architecture and temporary events to promote and animate the city.

Theme [1] FUTURE CITY seeks to support the early involvement of artists and designers in the commissioning of major capital developments, and their long-term creative engagement with the City’s communities and research clusters through programmes of artists’ residencies.

Theme [2] HIDDEN CITY aims to support a diverse range of projects and temporary commissions that will reveal and reanimate Newcastle’s hidden heritage, histories and forgotten spaces. It will pull out some of the stories and



Plaque 4 2004
Rupert Clamp
Words & humour



Escapology 2007
Cath Campbell
Wood & theatre

personalities of the city itself, and the people within it.

Theme [3] OPEN CITY seeks to generate a culture of informed debate and discussion around public art in the City and about the future of artistic practice in the public realm; to place greater emphasis on new media and technology projects; and make more of the existing collection of public art through marketing and interpretation.

These themes will be the basis for prioritisation for projects and funding as they reinforce our vision for a sustainable community and commitments made to take the city forward. It is expected that this will ensure an appropriate focus on new works within the city and how this will provide a distinctive element and additions to the works within the city.

Delivery Delivering the themes



● **Self Portrait Refugee** 2005
Various
Mixed media & metro

The Council will commit to a number of specific actions and activities designed to support and achieve the city-wide vision for public art. This will be in the aspects of the city-wide public art strategy where the Council has direct control through its own projects, and with statutory powers. In addition, the Council will encourage and support actions identified within the city-wide strategy that are outside of our direct control but where there are opportunities for influencing through partnership working, flexible funding and common interests over public debate.

- 1 The Council will flexibly promote public art through its statutory planning responsibilities.

The Council will use statutory planning powers creatively to support public art. This approach will include the continuation of a policy on the encouragement and provision of public art within the Local Development Framework. This will help ensure that the role of public art in place making and delivering quality public realm is considered as part of all new major development. It will deliver



● **Bewick Memorial** 2007
Mark Dion
Marble, church interior & memories



Under Your Feet 2004

Catherine Bertola

Spheres 1990

Richard Cole

Bookstack 1992

Fred Watson

Give & Take 2005

Peter Randall-Page

Parsons Polygon 1985

David Hamilton

Shoulder to Shoulder 2000

Ray Smith

Stone, brick & concrete

the policy through negotiation and the use of planning conditions. Where appropriate, the Council will consider the use of planning obligations. The Council will assist the development industry in the delivery of good quality public art and place-making through the production of further guidance on how to deliver public art through development.

- 2 The Council will establish a Public Art Panel for the City to act as Champions for Public Art within the local authority and wider City partnerships.

This Public Art Panel will have a remit and responsibility to support and advise the work of the Council and drive forward the implementation of the public art strategy. This panel will be recruited on the basis of individuals with a range of professional and public interest in public art. The resources required for the operation of the panel will be achieved within the existing budget for public art.

- 3 The Council will use the existing enabling budget for public art to support a series of small-scale research and development commissions.

Support of local artists and creative professionals will be provided through a number of small-scale commissions with an emphasis on linked research and development work by individuals that have a strategic fit with the themes and principles of the city-wide public art strategy. Ideally this will be initial stage development work that has the potential to contribute towards larger commissions for work that can be supported by private sector partners and funding. The commissions will be used creatively to attract additional partnership funding.

- 4 The Council will initiate a dialogue on the approach to public art with local cultural and creative organisations and academic institutions within the City.

There is recognition of the wealth of local knowledge, enthusiasm and expertise in the visual arts and the creative industries based within the city institutions. We will seek to build stronger working



Blue Carpet 2001

Thomas Heatherwick

Blue glass & concrete



Barriers & Dinghies 2003

Wolfgang Weileder

Barriers & dinghies

partnerships and share knowledge on processes and projects related to public art through a range of pro-active and responsive approaches to debate and dialogue.

- 5 The Council will review existing procurement approaches and the use of non-standard contracts for artists.

To attract and maintain artists and creative professionals to work and be based within the City and the City-region, the Council will seek to use appropriate procurement processes, advertisements, competitions and design contracts.

The Council recognises the need to be collaborative around the approach to supporting public art and to establish a set of shared values with key partner organisations regarding the themes for new commissions and the on-going approach to managing and maintaining the existing city-wide collection of public art. In addition to our corporate policies, the Council will seek to deliver the city-wide strategy for public art through encouragement and formal and informal working arrangements with external organisations.

- 6 The Council will encourage development and regeneration partners to initiate public art residencies and commissions appropriate to strategic development locations.

There will be specific interest in promoting public art on all of strategic sites and close collaboration with other organisations, agencies and developers. Where appropriate, this will include the use of the existing enabling budget to attract match funding and initiate commissions with these partner organisations and to seek the engagement of partner representatives on the Public Art Panel.



Limelight: Saturday night 2010
Sans facon
Street lights & Geordies



House Warming 2009
Jorn Ebner
Video, radio & biscuits

- 7 The Council will encourage collaboration and engagement with heritage organisations to add to the interpretation role of public arts.

There is an awareness of the potential role of public arts in adding to the interpretation of local knowledge and history. In addition there is benefit for the role of place-making in ensuring that local history are used to inform site specific briefs and commissions.

- 8 The Council will encourage development industry partners to target the commissioning themes identified within the city-wide public art strategy.

The Council will work with other public and private sector partners to encourage greater awareness of the current city-wide public art collection and public engagement as part of future commissions. We have a specific interest in exploring and testing the use of new media and technologies to address wider public audiences for art works and the themes identified within the city-wide strategy as a unique emphasis for future commissions in the city.

Bewick Court - A Musical 2008
Anton Hecht
Video, sound & tower block



Rainbow Code 2009
Adinda Van 'T Klooster
Lights, sound & tunnel



Summary

Action	Theme		
	Future City	Hidden City	Open City
[1] The Council will flexibly promote public art through its statutory planning responsibilities.	●		
[2] The Council will establish a Public Art Panel to act as Champions for Public Art within the local authority and wider City partnerships.	●	●	●
[3] The Council will use the existing enabling budget for public art to support a series of small-scale research and development commissions	●		●
[4] The Council will initiate a dialogue on the approach to public art with local cultural and creative organisations and academic institutions within the City.	●	●	●
[5] The Council will review existing procurement approaches and the use of non-standard contracts for artists.	●		●
[6] The Council will encourage regeneration partners to initiate public art residencies and commissions in strategic development locations.	●	●	●
[7] The Council will encourage collaboration and engagement with museum and heritage organisations to add to the interpretation role.		●	●
[8] The Council will encourage development partners to target the commissioning themes identified within the city-wide public art strategy.	●	●	●

The range of actions and activities recognise the significant value of public art for Newcastle and the contribution that artists and the creative industries can make to the ongoing social and physical regeneration of the city. They show that the Council can provide leadership, using its statutory planning powers and as a commissioning body, to create a positive climate for public art.

It also recognises the need to be collaborative and use our encouraging and enabling roles to work with other organisations and to attract high quality artists and commissions to the city that will create a unique niche for art works within the city. This is equally true through tougher economic times where the challenge is to ensure public art remains recognised as an important element of physical development and community regeneration even when working creatively with limited budgets.

This strategy will be subject to on going monitoring, review and reporting on an annual basis with the strategy subject for review during 2015. This review process will address how the actions of the Council and other city based commissions have achieved the three strategy themes.



The Grainger Town Sculptural Map 2003
Tod Hanson & Simon Watkinson
Brass & granite

iSpy Public Art 2011
Chris Morton
Guidebook & Photoshopping



Please exit through
the gift shop

