

Reflections on Higher education, creative engagement & the creative economy: the Australia experience

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This short report aims to provide some insights on the relationship between higher education and the creative economy in Australia. It is the result of a research visit undertaken by Dr Roberta Comunian (King's College London) and Dr Abigail Gilmore (University of Manchester) to Brisbane and Sydney between the 2nd and 15th of July 2012. The visit included two research workshops, hosted by Queensland University of Technology and University of Western Sydney which brought us together with almost 60 academics, policy makers and practitioners, to enjoy formal and informal exchanges on this topic of research. The report aims to summarise and share some of these conversations and exchanges, and is structured in three parts. The first provides a brief overview on recent policy documents and frameworks which emerged during these discussions¹ as key factors in shaping engagement between academia and the creative economy in Australia. The second part of the report presents a summary of the workshops organised, and the third and final part reports on the opportunity to reflect on the UK model of engagement via an invited talk and a contribution to Arts Queensland online blog ([AQblog](#)).

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¹ The authors are aware that this might not be a complete view on all the policy frameworks in the Australia context. The selection to focus on these themes was derived by the conversations that the researchers were involved in and might therefore be very partial or limited. The authors would be happy to receive feedback or references in relation to any omission or mistake via the project email address: hcreativeeconomy@gmail.com

Policy framework, changes and values in the Australia context

From the perspective of external visitors unfamiliar with the local university structure, history and policy framework, there are a few key issues that came to the forefront during our visit. Far from suggesting that these are the only or the main topics in considering higher education engagement in Australia, we simply suggest that they have been of special interest to us during the visit and workshops and could provide interesting points of reference in an Australia / UK comparative analysis of the topic.

These topics, presented here in no particular order are: shifts in disciplines and the role of arts & humanities; the focus on creative careers and graduates; the importance of bridging communities and higher education through community arts practice, and, finally, collaborative funding opportunities.

Shifting disciplines and values? The role of Arts & Humanities

While our research visit aimed to specifically explore the links between higher education and the creative economy, it would be reductive to limit the views of this engagement to 'creative disciplines'. In fact, although our events were populated by more academics and practitioners from arts fields than humanities (and I think part of the reason for this could be in our wording or dissemination) the humanities provided a useful broader standpoint for reflecting on ethics, social practice and social/historical understanding of the (development of) creative arts. Despite the interesting academic debate beginning in Australia (Bullen et al., 2004) about the role of arts and humanities in the knowledge economy, our discussion with policy organisations and academics suggested that alongside the importance of creative arts as part of the economy, there is a deeper level of engagement and critical understanding with which humanities engage with the economy and the arts world (such as the paper presented by Kate MacNeill around ethical practices in arts). Of course, the policy language found here is not so different from the one in the UK, for example in the 2003 report Our Universities: BackingAustralia's Future:

"close relationships with business and industry ensure graduates are prepared for the labour market and that the commercial potential of research and innovation is maximized" (Nelson, 2003, 39).

Although universities might re-brand disciplines and try to accommodate courses and research activities targeted at developing the creative and knowledge economy, it is important as highlighted by Bullen et al. (2004) to understand that these might not fully accommodate the range of disciplines that make up the rich landscape of the arts and humanities (for example history, philosophy, literature and cultural studies et al.). However, we agree with the conclusion of Bullen et al. that

"those working in the creative arts and humanities might respond to and shape the knowledge economy by situating themselves as critical cultural intermediaries" (2004, 18)

Certainly, the discussions we had in Australia suggest that this is currently happening, for example through the case study of a gallery-based book group which was engaging members of the public in critical theory and art history, or through the involvement in design practitioners in primary, secondary and tertiary education policy for regional community development.

Importance of creative careers and graduates

From our conversations, policies which seek to further creative and artists careers are central concerns for both arts policy circles and those engaged in the establishment of higher education infrastructure and pedagogies.

In reference to arts policy, it is interesting to note that for the past ten years the Australian Council for the Arts has commissioned leading economist Prof David Throsby to gather data and evidence about the livelihood of artists in Australia (Throsby and Hollister, 2003; Throsby and Zednik, 2010). Furthermore, further research has recently been developed by Queensland University of Technology and The Centre for Creative Industries and Innovation (CCI) specifically analyzing census data of arts employment in Australia (Cunningham et al., 2010) with more recent focus on creative jobs and careers, within and beyond the creative industries. The first publication in 2010, 'What's your other job?' is currently being updated with 2011 census data.

In our discussions at both QUT & UWS attention was also given to understanding the qualitative nature of creative graduates work, their experiences, motivation and aspirations. In the case of QUT, the new infrastructures at Kelvin Grove campus highlight the aim to give students high quality practical experience whether in TV recording studios or at the design board. Alongside the physical facilities, we also heard from Dr Ruth Bridgstock about the importance of building awareness within curricula about the diverse careers of creative practitioners (including the need to be prepared for portfolio careers). From a more critical perspective - but also linked to graduates' careers – at UWS we heard about the research of Dr. George Morgan which examines those who aspire to make a living out of their 'cultural work' as they enter creative education, but who lack the specific cultural and social capital required for this often precarious work specifically looking at those from minority/working class backgrounds.

Funding infrastructure for collaborations: ARC Linkage Initiatives

We were made aware during the visit of the importance of funding initiatives which promote academic engagement with the creative and cultural sector. For example, in Queensland, a key objective in their framework for the creative economy (Arts Queensland, 2004) is 'Fostering better collaboration and linkages between industry, Government, educational institutions and research organisations' (p.6), which highlights state recognition of the role that education can play in supporting the creative economy.

The ARC Linkage Initiative emerged in our meetings both with academics and with external organisations (such as the Australian Arts Council) as a central platform to support this kind of engagement. The Australian Research Council (ARC) is a statutory agency within the Australian Government's Industry, Innovation, Climate Change, Science, Research and Tertiary Education (IICCS RTE) portfolio. Its mission is "to deliver policy and programs that advance Australian research and innovation globally and benefit the community"². Within the broader funding schemes available to Australian researchers, the ARC's Linkage funding aims "to encourage and extend cooperative approaches to research and improve the use of research outcomes by strengthening links within Australia's innovation system and with innovation systems internationally". Within this broader innovation agenda Linkage funding promotes research partnerships

² From http://www.arc.gov.au/about_arc/arc_profile.htm (accessed 05/08/2013)

between researchers and business, industry, community organisations and other publicly funded research agencies, across all disciplines and fields, through initiatives including: Linkage Projects Linkage Infrastructure, Equipment and Facilities; ARC Research Centres; and Special Research Initiatives.

Although we did not directly address the broader impact of the programme specifically on the arts and humanities research, we did encounter a dynamic range of applications of the opportunities it offers via the Australia Council for the Arts, who is an active partner to a variety of these funded initiatives³. The funding has clearly enabled academic research to research further into arts policy as well as the arts and cultural sector, although it has by no means replaced or substituted the need for additional commissioned research and data collection which the Australian Council and other state agencies requires for operational and strategic development of the sector. Rather, it provides an opportunity for the solicitation and initiation of exploratory and collaborative projects across a wider range of arts and humanities research interests.

Bridging communities, arts disciplines and academia together

Lastly, during the seminars we have encountered a strong passion and commitment of creative arts academics towards exploring the boundaries between academia and communities. This area of interest is concerned with the multifaceted nature of arts teaching and practice within and outside academia. On one side, it has been made clear in our seminars, the importance of preparing students for a portfolio career – one which will surely involve working across sectors and specifically working within community settings. It seems obvious therefore for higher education to reach out to communities in order to provide students with training and practice opportunities which will benefit their professional development. There is also a broader discourse about the role played by artists as teachers (Huddy and Stevens, 2011) and the responsibility of higher education concerning issues of life-long learning and diverse opportunities for its creative graduates (Boughen and Huddy, 2009).

This topic has further links with the general framework through which arts education is developed within primary and secondary education, for children and young people (Stevens, 2010). This leads to further interconnectivity between higher education & community arts: on one side to the development and encouragement of students (sometimes from diverse communities and cultural backgrounds) to enter creative careers through higher education courses; on the other side, arts education and community arts become a viable career path for arts graduates integrated with their practice portfolios.

Underpinning all these discourses of collaboration and exchanges between academia and communities through arts practice and training, there is a strong ethical mission of the academic-artist-practitioner to break the silos and boundaries of knowledge and bringing larger sections of the community into a deeper engagement and understanding of arts practice.

³ The ARC Linkage projects in which Australia Council for the Arts is involved are listed on their website http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/research/australia_council_research/arc_linkage_projects

Higher education, creative engagement & the creative economy: the Australia experience: workshop #1

Centre of Excellence for Creative Industries and Innovation, Queensland University of Technology, 8th July 2013⁴

The presentations at this first workshop were solicited through a Call for Papers circulated by QUT earlier in the year, which asked for paper and case study presentations on different aspects of the Australian experience of engagement between higher education and the creative economy. They focused on the ways in which higher education teaching and research staff are involved in different kinds of engagements concerned with researching, reviewing and improving working practices to ensure benefits to students and community partners, to local geographies and to the economy as a whole.

The keynote presentation by [Stuart Cunningham](#) began this discussion at a macro-level, looking at large data sets and the implication of their analysis for higher education teaching and training and for the status and structure of academic disciplines on which to base creative industries' pedagogies. Beginning with an anecdote whereby arts and humanities' subjects were implicated as the side order to other subjects' main courses (the "fries story"), and situating this anecdote in current critical assumptions about oversupply arts and humanities taught programmes, the presentation set out two main debates. The first concerns what we can derive from tracking and understanding the progression of creative graduates, who are revealed by destination data to take longer to find their place in the workforce than other graduates but who contribute important "deep transferrable skills" across creative and non-creative industries. This distinction between creative and non-creative is part of the 'creative trident' approach pioneered by QUT's CCI, which identifies the 'embeddedness' of creative occupations across the economy (Higgs et al., 2008). The findings were based on a graduate survey conducted by CCI on QUT Media, Communication and Cultural Studies Graduate Career Outcomes which asked about progression and application of skills acquired in higher education to identify where course gaps and skills deficits lie. This 'honest' approach aims to develop relevant curricula as well as identify and inform others of the private and public good associated with education targeted at producing a creative workforce.

The second debate is concerned with what we might learn about the status of arts and humanities graduates from 'top down' census data analysis, based on the last job held question. CCI have analyzed Australian data and found a number of encouraging results. According to the creative trident model [[link or reference](#)], there are more people found in non-creative industries working in creative occupations than in creative industries. If the further distinction between 'frontline' cultural production (film, tv& radio; publishing; music, performing & visual arts) and creative services (architecture & design; advertising & marketing; digital content & software) is made, then far higher employment and growth can be found in the latter (there are more working in support services for the creative industries, but these show lower rates of growth). The implications from both these studies, Stuart argues, is that creative graduates are important to the economy as a whole, but more research is required to understand the motivations, risks and longer term working life cycles of creative in order to fine-tune higher education and training fit for

⁴The presentation and audio files from the event are available at <http://www.creative-campus.org.uk/-qut-workshop.html>

purpose. Questions raised by the keynote – the precarity of work in the creative industries, the relative hiddenness of the self-employed in available data, the very large number of students being educated for creative work as cultural producers for a very small pool of jobs, the motivations and risks of undertaking creative industries education - continued into the following session.

[Diane Tolmie](#) from the [Queensland Conservatorium](#) presented on the development and evaluation of MLAAM – My Life as a Musician – a non-music skills core course for Bachelor of Music and Bachelor of Music Technology students which was introduced to provide fundamental theoretical and vocational preparation for portfolio careers in all areas of the music industry. Drawing on Bloom’s taxonomy for learning (Anderson et al., 2005) which highlights knowledge, comprehensive and application as key three stages, the course encompasses a diagnostic exercise in reflective thinking followed by work to establish a portfolio of assessment including a formative career plan, networking opportunities, action research and experiential learning. It hopes to address, amongst others, the issue that so many music performance students want to be concert performers but only (an estimated) 0.001% will - and to give them both realistic aspirations and tools to improve their life chances.

[Anna Rooke](#), the CEO [Creative Enterprise Australia](#) spoke next about the organisation’s programmes to support targeted investment funding, incubation space, for creative businesses who are commercially driven, across four cities (Brisbane, Melbourne, Perth and Sydney). [Greg Hearn](#) (a last minute replacement for an unwell [Ruth Bridgstock](#)) explored [four scenarios](#) for creative graduates, based on the Centre’s research and also his unique position as father to two CCI graduates who are currently making their way in the creative economy. These ranged from the ‘healthy heartland’ of work in cultural production for specialist creative firms, to the ‘surprise surprise’ proposition for those working as creative producers within other sectors. Growth was identified as particularly strong in the other two areas of the matrix: the digital boomtown of work created in specialist services through technology-led innovation and content distribution, and the opportunistic realm of brokerage within other sectors. He suggested that creative graduates require transferrable skills and flexibility to take them across and through these four scenarios as they are likely to encompass them all at some point in a portfolio career. When challenged to say how we might understand the contribution of universities, Hearn suggested we should deregulate the curriculum as the labour market doesn’t recognize the same fixed system of academic disciplines to which HEIs are so wedded. Issues of the ethics of oversupply were again raised, alongside the responsibility of universities to prepare creative graduates who either choose or who are unable to take part in other industries as ‘embedded creatives’ – for example, who may go into teaching or who wish to continue creative practice in as part of a social economy rather than as a paid up member of the creative services.

The next session looked closer at higher education projects and practices across different educational levels and within regional geographies to connect up local communities with creative practice, with a particular focus on dance and design. [Avril Huddy](#) explored how universities can act as community cultural brokers by looking at two case studies – *Bodies Stories* and the [Q150 project Dancing across Queensland](#) – which used artists-in-residencies to work with primary and secondary education. These dance projects crossed generational, cultural and institutional boundaries by bringing together communities of practice into reflexive engagement with the large resource base of universities which, Huddy argues, can provide brokerage and help embed creative skills and aesthetic practices into everyday life if a holistic, multi-layered and cross-institutional commitment to collaboration or ‘nexus’ is made.

[Natalie Wright](#) and [Beck Davis](#) presented their work with colleague Sam Bucolo to produce a [Knowledge Economy Market Development Mapping Study](#) commissioned by the Queensland Government which aims to explore the value of design education programs in the knowledge economy. This wide-ranging study is part of policy development for 'design thinking' at a regional level, although the policy makers prefer not to use either the term 'design' or 'creativity' in the title. The primary research explored links, practices, educational curricula and partnerships with industry in local primary, secondary and tertiary education across Queensland. The research has identified a range of findings and recommendations for the 'learning landscape', including those which aim to better connect research and teaching in design education in HEIs with industry partners and local infrastructures. Further commentary on the work can also be found in Wright et al. (2013 / in press)

[Kym Stevens](#) and [Vanessa Mafé-Keane](#) also considered reflexive practices and the importance of collaborations for developing pedagogic processes which have inbuilt formative feedback mechanisms, but exploring their professional relationship as artist-as-teacher and teacher-as-artist and the models and 'incubated spaces' they built for reflection and professional development. The discussion considered these different modes of reframing and reflecting on community engagement and teaching practice, and asked how to transfer research findings across different creative practices and disciplines.

The final session concerned two local case studies which highlighted different aspects of creative engagement and relations with higher education from participants' perspective. The first by [Penny Holliday](#) and [Liz Ellison](#) was on the [TEXTA Book Club](#), a partnership initiative themselves and the QUT Art Museum which aims to create a 'thirdspace' (Soja, 1999) for 'lived' engagement between museum visitors, book club participants, literary and exhibition content, spaces and curatorial practices as texts. This prompted discussion about how the bringing together of different art forms, arts and education professionals and communities of interest in this way might promote different kinds of critical engagement and audience development, although it was noted that this was not necessarily the kind of engagement that might be accessible to all communities given the usual profile of art gallery and book club participants, as retired baby boomers with discretionary time and cultural capital. The final case study by [Patricia Chun](#) featured some early findings of qualitative research exploring the narratives of visual artists who are exhibitor-stall holders in [Queensland's Young Designers Market](#) and their experiences in higher education and their trajectories and seemingly fragile positions in the creative economy.

Closing discussion provided an opportunity to think about how Australian and UK experiences might differ or share common interests. We discussed structural constraints and inequalities relating to access to/accessibility of creative education, including differences in socio-economic class, cultural and social capitals, regional and spatial configurations and cultural diversity. We also had the chance to briefly compare experiences across sector and art forms, across macro- and micro-perspectives, and for workshop participants to make some connections with each other across the disciplinary boundaries which the workshop hopefully helped to at least temporarily dissolve.

Higher education, creative engagement & the creative economy: the Australia experience: workshop #2

Institute for Culture and Society, University of Western Sydney, 12th July 2013 ⁵

The second workshop on the Australian experience began with a session which critically examined the tensions and conflicts between institutional frames and creative practices, embodied in practice-based research in creative arts and creative education. [Kate McNeill](#) and [Barb Bolt](#) explore the misfit between ethical-legal frameworks held by HEIs and those articulated through artistic practice using the concept of the 'aesthetic alibi' (Jay, 1998), which they say is used to legitimize different behaviour to those expected by the standards of institutional research ethics – for example testing audience responses to self-harm or animal neglect and photographing children naked. Their research, itself a collaboration of artist-practitioner and lecturer with a law background, shows that in the case of PhDs by practice, the ethical approval process as stands can inhibit and change the course of research and aesthetic practice, in ways which leave students less able to navigate and respond to ethical challenges in their ongoing working lives (Bolt and Kett, 2010).

[Barbara Doran](#) presented a bisectional account of her experience as a teacher and artist using digital technologies for teaching and aesthetic practice in ways which cast different capacities on the body as medium for reflexivity and learning – an embodied 'thirdspace'. Her description of the disconnection between these capacities through online and blended learning technologies as they actively displaced the body with digital teaching platforms such as podcast, Moodles and MOOCs clearly resonated with fears of untested pedagogies and business models currently being imposed in HEI. The display of her work as a practicing artist challenging these shifts – re-embodying teaching materials and re-patterning the cultural dynamic of creative education – made these sentiments more powerful.

Our keynote presentation for the workshop was billed as "what next for the creative campus?". On the day [Justin O'Connor](#) tackled the wider scope and sweep of the recent relations between cultural studies and creative industries in terms of the value of arts and higher education to the creative and broader economy. Arts and humanities disciplines, O'Connor argues, can contribute to an education in democratic citizenship (Nussbaum, 2010), notwithstanding the debate about the autonomy and revolutionary potential of cultural studies' academics given their state-funded and sometimes isolated positions (Turner, 2011). It seems academics who want to support development of creative economies through work in such interdisciplinary areas as critical cultural policy studies get stuck on the fulcrum of debate over lack of means to get involved and engaged in their immediate environments on the one hand, and a lack of critical distance on the other, implicit in valorising both commercialism and state behaviour.

O'Connor considered the place of vocationalism in higher education for the creative industries - and asked where the skills and pre-requisites for the (evidentially highly educated) cultural workforce come from. One argument is that cultural literacy required for cultural work comes from going to university not from creative industries training per se, and that this habitus is in turn structured by gender, class, ethnicity and other structural determinants in a Bourdieusian sense. This does not tackle the issue of precariousness of

⁵The presentation and audio files from the event are available at <http://www.creative-campus.org.uk/uws-workshop.html>

creative labour, however this is something which cultural studies brings to the story (and which by implication, more vocationally-targeted creative industries education misses in its hubris). This is not to say that higher education institutions are not good at furnishing the creative skills - rather the opposite - but we need to ensure students are provided with critical capabilities concerning the cultural field, the industry, its structure and dynamics and the wider cultural policy context for the creative economy. So, O'Connor argues, this takes us back to Nussbaum, and the case that a better understanding of cultural economy through cultural studies and arts and humanities higher education is not about delegitimising opposition to the state, but opposing the reduction of education as a tool serving only the gross national product.

[George Morgan's](#) paper looked at a neglected area of study: those who do not yet make a living through cultural work, the 'creative aspirants', through research which focuses particularly on the experiences of young people of working class and minority group backgrounds. This research suggests that working class kids don't necessarily have skills or cultural capital which match the requirements of creative training - entrepreneurialism & flexibility, the ability to network with other social groups and to navigate the blurred boundaries of class, gender and other social stratifications obscured within creative work. It identifies the problem for these young people of developing of their sense of 'vocational self' - codified as a "just-in time self" in reference to the demands of flexible specialisation - which underpins personal development in a fragmented and just-in-time labour market of precarious creative industries. The paper raised the question of whether the same pressures exist in other types of work available to these young people which might also be similarly precarious and also require particular kinds of social capital, entrepreneurialism and skills development, for example hairdressing and childcare, as well as the responsibilities of secondary and tertiary education in encouraging working class youth to go down these challenging career paths.

[Scott Brook](#) also explored the demand for creative education in his paper, in relation to the criticism of current levels of oversupply, and argued that it is more productive to deploy educational models than those drawn from cultural economics to consider how and why students make higher education choices and the types of motivation and values they attach to these choices. His research surveyed three cohorts of undergraduate creative writing students from different universities - with assorted academic status and programmes - and found that these students didn't seem very instrumental about their choices, and were less motivated by the opportunities for career development than for developing other kinds of value, such as symbolic capital and the intriguingly termed 'psychic income' (Menger, 2006).

Models for regional creativity were explored by [Margaret Woodward](#) & [Craig Bremner](#), who set out some case study research on the 'geographies of creativity' undertaken by the Faculty of Arts at Charles Sturt University. They argued that the definitions of creative economies applied to other geographies don't necessarily work with places of their case studies, which included arts, cultural, heritage and agricultural practices and products within their typologies of creativity and which need to be taken into account in higher education teaching and research on regional creative economies.

The final paper of the day by [Philip Marr](#) discussed the current Linkage project between Institute for Culture and Society at UWS and the Australia Council for the Arts on arts organisations and practices and their relationship to the 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Promotion and Protection of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (the 'DICE Convention'), which Australia signed in 2009. The research was generated out of a memorandum of understanding between the Australia Council and the UNESCO Bangkok office, which is

seeking to promote the DICE Convention throughout the Asia-Pacific and will result in eight 'best practice' case studies to support the implementation of the DICE Convention in the arts sector. The research is revealing how this Convention acts more as an international cultural policy framework rather than policy per se and is difficult to apply unilaterally in every national context.

Sharing some reflection on UK

As we enquired and learnt about Australian models of engagement, we have also been asked to reflect and report on the UK context and what we have learnt in our research network activities so far. On the 5th of July we were invited at QUT for a seminar to talk about “Higher Education & the Creative Economy in the UK: old and new patterns of collaboration”. The key issues and ideas of the talk have been summarized in an online blog piece for Arts Queensland ([AQblog](#)) which we thought was a good way to leave our ideas open for discussion and available to the Australian arts and research community. Here below is reported the content of the blog we have written.

Higher Education engagement with the art and cultural sector: bridging community knowledge and practices

Dr Roberta Comunian (King’s College London) and Dr Abigail Gilmore (University of Manchester) recently visited Queensland University of Technology to discuss the relationship between higher education and the creative economy in Australia. Bringing the UK experience into this discussion they consider the role of collaborative frameworks for connecting universities with regional arts and creative industries.

Historically universities have been key cultural players in cities and communities, and the UK higher education sector has long been engaging with arts and culture, for example through hosting museums and performing arts spaces on campus and by engaging in academic research on arts and cultural topics and activities. Latterly, there has been a growing pressure from policy to understand better the real contribution (and impact) of higher education to the arts sector and the creative economy, and also to facilitate and support this engagement to enhance its potential. There has been a marked evolution in the thinking and practice of engagement between higher education institutions and the arts and cultural sector in recent years in the UK, which has been fuelled by a series of policy and consultancy [research reports](#) as well as by new funding initiatives such as the [AHRC Creative Economy Hubs](#).

Initially, relationships between higher education and the arts and cultural sector have been characterised by the assumption that knowledge sitting within academia can benefit the work and practice of creative practitioners and organisations. Although this ‘ideal type’, which we call in our typology the ‘injection model’, is still relevant to today’s collaborative practices (especially in the case of consultancy work and commissioned research), it remains quite unidirectional. Similarly, collaborations which position higher education institutions as ‘cultural agents’ in their own right (often via their own galleries and cultural infrastructure) can have limited scope in linking university stakeholders with local communities to widen participation.

However, other modes of engagement are emerging to take central stage in this landscape, which question and blur the boundaries and roles of academia and the arts sector. Two dimensions are key to these new, more essentially collaborative approaches: firstly, human capital, and secondly, the production of shared space or ‘third space’.

In reference to human capital there is a clear acknowledgement both within academia and the arts world that collaborations and exchanges are based on individuals and their networks and knowledge. Here the arts is a source of knowledge assets for academia, as theoretical knowledge requires the importing of practice-led expertise, for example professionals engaged in teaching as guests and sometimes even in tenured, permanent positions. Similarly students and academics are encouraged to take part in community cultural activities, which see their ‘local

citizenship’ and ‘social responsibility’ as a key element in the dialogue. One interesting case study of shared human capital is at University of Manchester, where the Director of the university-owned Whitworth Art Gallery, Dr Maria Balshaw, is also Joint Director of the Manchester (City) Art Gallery, and has just become the Strategic Lead for Culture for Manchester City Council (you can listen to Dr Maria Balshaw talking about this [here](#)).

Shared spaces are another key form of engagement which instigates collaborative practice. Some shared spaces are physical infrastructures (for example incubation spaces, shared facilities), others are virtual platforms or ‘third spaces’, where academic knowledge mixes and negotiates with specialist knowledge from the art sector and its communities. An example of creating shared space is the curated Public Programme ran by Nottingham Contemporary in close partnership with the local universities (listen to the presentation of Isobel Whitelegg on this project [here](#)).

The AHRC-funded research network ‘Beyond the Campus: Higher Education and the Creative Economy’ tries to capture these modes of engagement and dialogue that enable higher education and the arts and cultural sector to add value to each others’ work via collaborative practices and knowledge exchange. It can be difficult to capture the nuances of the wide range of interactions taking place but we hope that a better knowledge of these modes of engagement – and their limits and challenges – can give both academics and creative practitioners better tools for future collaboration on and off-campus. Whilst early research shows a reciprocal commitment from both parties, there are also challenges and difficulties emerging in the findings specifically in reference to institutional and practical processes and structures and also connected to motivations and rewards for collaboration. It would be interesting to find out whether these challenges are relevant in the Australian context and whether arts organisations face different issues in their work with academia in Queensland?

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