



**ARTWORKS CYMRU CONFERENCE REPORT
MAY 2014**

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1. BACKGROUND

ArtWorks Cymru is part of the ArtWorks Special Initiative run by Paul Hamlyn Foundation, an action research project exploring how we support best practice in the participatory arts which has been running since April 2011. The ArtWorks Special Initiative has created a knowledge bank around participative practice and structures to support artists in their work. The next step is to take this knowledge and use it to create a more stable and confident sector.

ArtWorks Cymru is a consortium project, led by Community Music Wales, Head for Arts, Jen Angharad, National Dance Company Wales, Sherman Cymru, Streetwise Opera, Professor Hamish Fyfe at University of South Wales, and Welsh National Opera.

ArtWorks Cymru Vision

As the research period comes to an end in September 2014, ArtWorks Cymru seeks to use the ArtWorks brand and knowledge to create a sustainable collaborative network for Wales designed to build resilience and confidence in the participative arts sector.

ArtWorks Cymru will build a community of practice across Wales that is committed to learning and sharing. This community will join up across artforms and across sectors, bringing Higher and Further Education, freelance artists, organisations, commissioners, and participants together. In this way, ArtWorks Cymru seeks to change the conversation, strengthen the sector and raise the profile and the quality of experience of participation in the arts. ArtWorks Cymru will also join up with the wider ArtWorks network, linking to ArtWorks initiatives being trialled across the UK, and looking at the issues that need particular attention from a Welsh perspective.

Research Phase Three

As part of the final research period, ArtWorks Cymru ran a conference on 3rd and 4th April 2014. The conference had the following objectives:

- to disseminate the research that ArtWorks has created, and begin to make it tangible by opening out the issues to the wider arts participation sector in Wales
- to focus on participatory art practice and the contexts in which it is undertaken
- to create links across the sector through networking opportunities
- to engage with delegates in a very active way
- to create space for people to explore the way forward for Wales

2. LOGISTICS

Team

ArtWorks Cymru employed Louise Maddy-Jones as Conference Manager to manage the planning of the event. Louise worked closely with Rhian Hutchings, ArtWorks Cymru Project Lead, to book speakers, produce print, organise catering, plan recruitment and liaise with eventbrite.

For the delivery of the event, Louise was joined by three assistants – Erin Mathias, Ruby Shoubridge and Jim Elliott, who manned the check in desk, led delegates to breakout rooms, provided technical assistance, and were on hand to deal with any issues.

Venue

The venue chosen was The Metropole Hotel in Llandrindod Wells. This venue had a large space for the main conference session, as well as good breakout spaces. It was well placed, being equally accessible from either south, west or north wales. The hotel provided lunch on the Thursday and Friday, and dinner on the Friday evening. AV equipment was provided for powerpoint and project presentations.

Delegate Recruitment

A potential delegate list was drawn up between the ArtWorks Cymru partners at the beginning of January 2014, and invites were sent out in late February once the conference was open for booking. The partnership targeted a wide range of organisations and artists. The conference was also advertised on the ArtWorks Cymru facebook page, the Welsh National Opera and Head for Arts websites, and regular mentions were made on the ArtWorks Cymru twitter feed. An advert was also put on the Arts Professional Conference website, and the conference was flagged up on the Arts Wales website.

Ticketing and Booking

The conference was ticketed and several different ticket prices were offered:

Organisations 2 day ticket	£135
Freelancers 2 day ticket	£110
Bring an artist offer for artists booking with organisations	£65
Organisation 1 day ticket	£75.21
Freelancer 1 day ticket	£61
Bursary tickets (released a week before the conference)	Free

Bookings were made through Eventbrite. Some delegates were unable to use this booking method as they did not have access to company credit cards. In the main, these delegates were booking from within a local authority, and were invoiced for their tickets from Welsh National Opera.

Translation and Bilingualism

Simultaneous translation was provided for the duration of the conference by translator Steffan Wiliam. A keynote session, a breakout session and a feedback session were conducted in Welsh on the second day. Delegates were encouraged to speak Welsh at all points.

Materials

Printed materials provided for the conference included the conference agenda, practical information for booking, biographies of speakers and facilitators, and information about the breakout sessions. They were produced through the marketing department at Welsh National Opera. Each delegate was given a delegate pack on arrival at the conference.

Recording

LightTrap Films attended the conference across the two days, recording the keynote speakers, the project presentations and making a short documentary about the conference. These videos were uploaded to You Tube after the conference and also posted on a wordpress site where all conference material was gathered after the conference. www.artworkscymru.wordpress.com

3. PROGRAMME

The programme for the conference was carefully designed to allow as much space as possible for discussion and exploration (see appendix 1). It was clear that the delegates who attended would be experienced in the field we were exploring, so it was important to create a programme in which they could influence and lead the debate.

The days were themed, with day one exploring the current context, and day two looking at mapping our way to the future. Both days began with brief keynote presentations and moved swiftly on to discussion and debate. Opportunities to feed back to the whole conference were structured in to both days, as well as opportunities to feedback in a personal way through a graffiti wall and a promise tree. Overall the structure worked well, although some schedule changes were made last minute on the day to allow for speakers and presenters who were running late. One presenter – Mary Schwarz – was unable to attend due to a family bereavement and her presentation was undertaken by Rhian Hutchings.

It was important to get a sense of the practice - both days had project presentations at their heart, and on Thursday night delegates were treated to a surprise performance by Powys Dance group Senior Momentum. Networking was also an important part of the conference, and so meal breaks were ample and dinner was offered on the Thursday evening.

4. BUDGET

A final budget for the event is attached (see appendix 2).

The total cost of the conference was £17,603.

The cost was covered by the following funding and income:

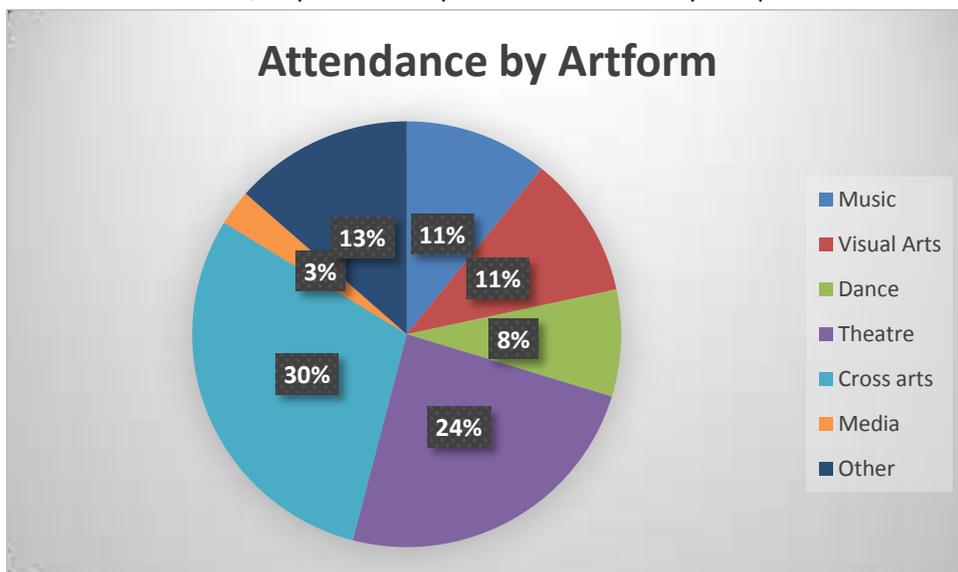
Arts Council of Wales grant	£7,500
PHF ArtWorks funding	£5,113
Ticket Sales	£4,990

The main costs incurred were the hire of the venue, catering, project management, video documentation, printed materials and translation. Project management costs were higher than expected due to the amount of work done around recruitment. Guest speaker costs were lower than expected, as speakers were happy to attend for accommodation costs only, and one speaker dropped out due to a bereavement. Venue hire and catering costs were less than expected, but this has a direct correlation to the amount of delegates attending. We had originally budgeted for 150 delegates, but did not achieve this number.

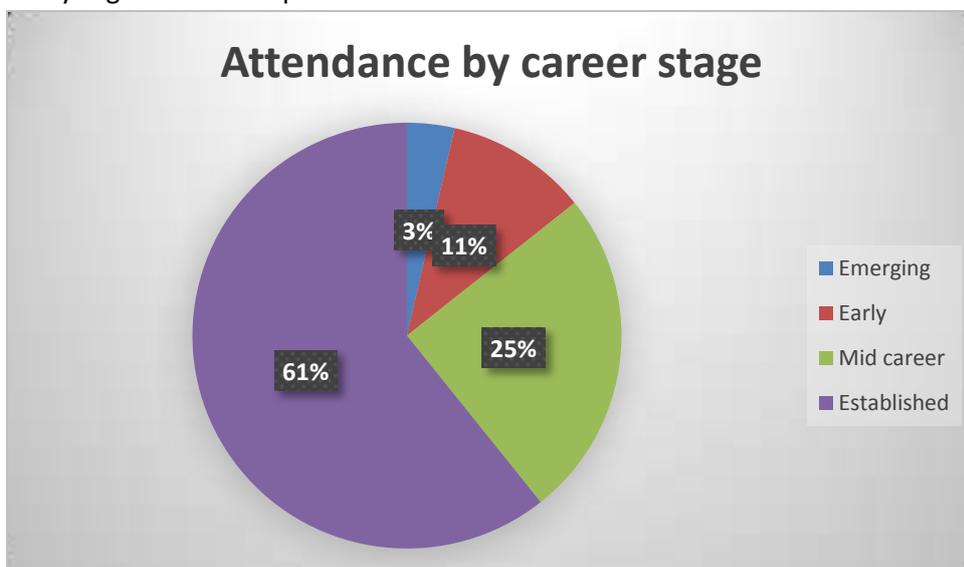
5. EVALUATION

63 people attended the conference across the two days. 44 delegates were new to ArtWorks Cymru. A survey was distributed at the end of the conference in hard copy format and then also as an online survey with the conference papers. The survey was available in Welsh and English. 39 delegates filled in the survey.

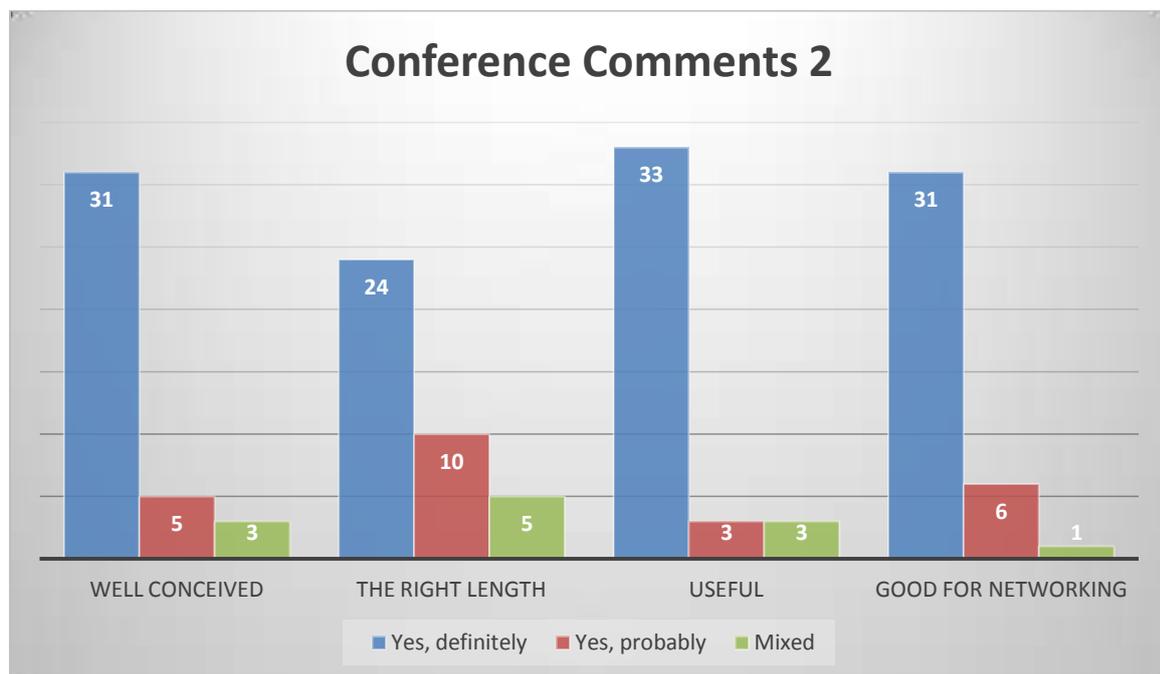
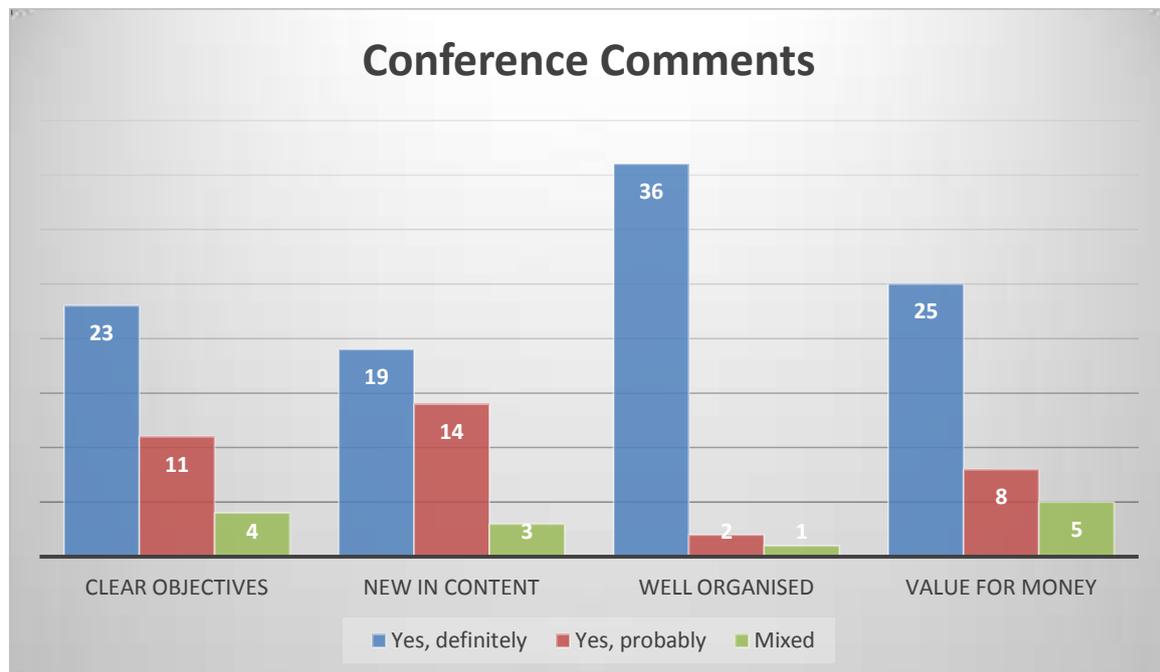
Delegates attended from a wide range of organisations and spanned many different art forms. There was also attendance from non-arts organisations including a communities first partnership, a General Practitioner, a speech therapist and a retired Estyn inspector.



Delegates were asked how they would describe their career stage. Only 28 respondents answered this question, and this could be because there was high attendance from organisations, and not every organisational representative was also an artist.

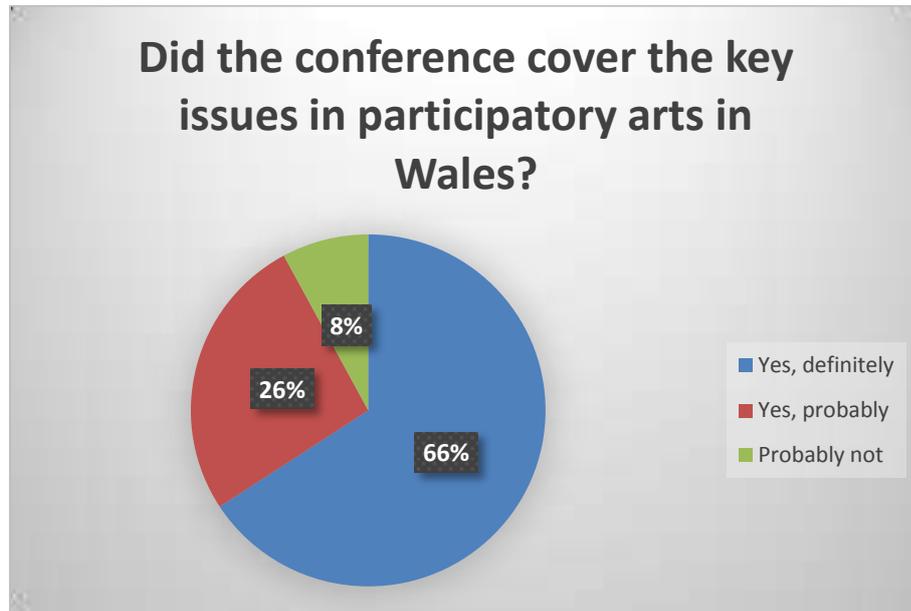


Delegates were asked various questions about the conference overall.



The feedback was extremely positive, with over 75% of respondents affirming that the conference was definitely well organised, well-conceived, useful and good for networking. Over 50% of respondents told us the conference was definitely the right length, value for money and clear in its objectives.

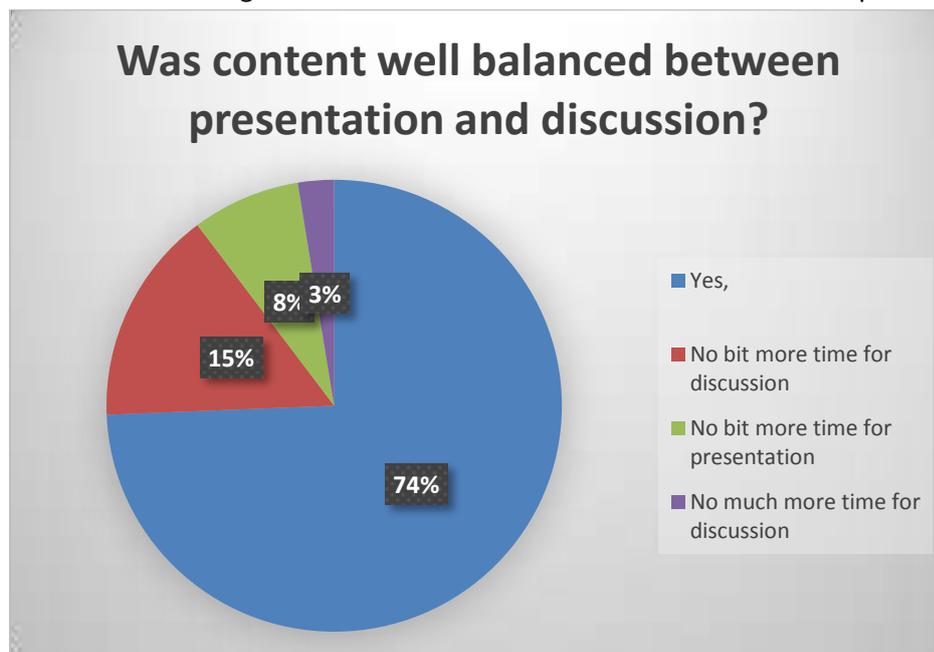
Only 48% of respondents definitely thought the conference was new in content, and the response to this question definitely varied depending on experience. This was also born out in the response to questions about whether the conference covered the key issues in participatory arts in Wales.



There was clearly a small group of people who attended who did not feel that the conference covered all the issues. Delegates were articulate about what they thought had been missed out, and they cited the participants perspective as the main issue missed, but also mentioned welsh language practice, social media, links to strategies and opportunities versus threats.

“I feel the view of the participant was often missed out throughout the conference – they are the reason we do what we do.”

We also asked delegates if the conference was well balanced between presentation and discussion.



Again, despite a large number of positive responses, there was also a differing range of opinions from a section of the delegates who would have liked more time for discussion. The discussion sections of the conference were generous, but it's clear that delegates valued this opportunity and wanted more. There were some interesting comments on potential improvements for the future:

- "A conference on participation must involve participation"
- "Perhaps a way for weaker voices to shine through would be good?"
- "Maybe we could use artists to facilitate the breakout sessions in a creative and interactive way"
- "more doing – frame the discussion physically"

We asked delegates if they got any ideas from the conference that they planned to use in their practice. 79% of respondents said yes. Comments on what the ideas were included ideas for collaborations, projects, training, mentoring, core values, ideas around practice, and CPD. "Open minded, open suitcased, open collaboration."

Delegates also commented on Eventbrite and the venue. Eventbrite was user friendly, and most of the bookings were made using it. It did not work for people who did not have access to a company credit card or needed an invoice. This mainly applied to people working with local authorities or government departments. In terms of the venue, delegates were very pleased with the Metropole Hotel and there were positive comments about its staff and location. Negative comments related to individual food needs, such as vegetarian options and salad, and broadband access.

6. CONCLUSIONS

Overall the conference did achieve its objectives and was an extremely positive event. There was clearly passion and excitement around the ArtWorks agenda, and this is something that ArtWorks Cymru can feed into the next phase of its programme going forward. Given that 69% of delegates had not attended an ArtWorks Cymru event before, the conference definitely succeeded in disseminating the research to the wider participatory arts sector in Wales.

The quality of the discussion and debate was extremely high, and the material from the sessions will feed directly into the next ArtWorks Cymru application, helping to create future practice for Wales. The conference finished with a commitment from both Paul Hamlyn Foundation and Arts Council Wales to help further the agenda of ArtWorks Cymru.

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