

Jennie Lee's White Paper

A Policy for the Arts First Steps

**a 50th Anniversary Response
to be widely shared on 25th February 2015**

How to use this document on 25th February, 2015 :

Read it to your audience before a performance; flyer the bus/train/tube/plane with hundreds of copies to remind the passengers that they too are the arts; declaim it from the Town Hall steps; turn it into a dance, spoken word, sculpture, score; shout it in fields; perform it as circus in shopping malls; roll it through classrooms; parade it in universities; cross-stitch it into tapestry; play it with a brass band; print it on the front page; read it on the news; debate and dissect it, disagree with it. Share it however you will, but please, share it widely and indiscriminately.

The 25th February is 70 days until the election – for arts and culture to be in the discussion, WE need to put them there.

The idea came into being at a Devoted and Disgruntled session, calling to do something about/for/around the anniversary.

This is not the definitive response, it is one response. Many more are welcome.

Please share whatever you do/plan to do here :

A google doc : <http://bit.ly/1z3ArNy>

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This document has been edited and compiled by Alexandra Birchfield, Hugh Chapman, Stella Duffy, Mary Halton, Amie Taylor, Fiona Whitelaw.

The black font is material from the White Paper, the blue is from current thinkers/commentators. There is a bibliography of quote sources on the back page.

Only yesterday it was the fight for a free health service. The day before it was the struggle to win education for all ... In any civilised community the arts and associated amenities, serious or comic, light or demanding, must occupy a central place. Their enjoyment should not be regarded as something remote from everyday life.

In the zero-sum economy of austerity Britain, the arts are increasingly required to couch their case in terms appropriate to those basic services - social care, education, policing - with which they're in competition for dwindling public funds. David Edgar, 2012

It has been an incredible life-changing opportunity for the town/community. We loved being able to give opportunities to young people. We also discovered so many local charities and companies that we can give a boost to. Luton Fun Palace, 2014

But if a high level of artistic achievement is to be sustained and the best in the arts made more widely available, more generous and discriminating help is urgently needed, locally, regionally, and nationally.

Arts Council England has revealed plans for implementing the 29.6% cut to its budget announced as part of the Government's Spending Review.

the Entertainment and Media Group News, October 2010

Too many working people have been conditioned by their education and environment to consider the best in the arts outside their reach.

The lack of opportunity is not simply limiting the people coming in, it's restricting what's being written. Working-class kids aren't represented. Working-class life is not referred to. It's really sad.

Julie Walters, 2014

If a sane balance of population between north and south, east and west, is to be achieved, this kind of development is just as essential as any movement of industry or provision of public utility service. If the eager and gifted, to whom we must look for leadership in every field, are to feel as much at home in the north and west as in and near London, each region will require high points of artistic excellence.

2012/13 found that Londoners benefited from £69 a year spending per head, compared with just £4.50 in the rest of England. Overall, a balance in London's favour of 4.1:1.

Rebalancing our Cultural Capital; David Powell, Christopher Gordon, Peter Stark, 2014

The concept of the arts centre is most valuable since such a centre can be of almost any size and cover any range of activities. A single hall can provide a place where local people can meet, perform an amateur play, hold an exhibition of their own or of professional work, put on a film show, lecture or recital and generally act as focal point for cultural activities and amenities.

We felt it was really important to hand over the venue to the local community; local individuals and organisations were invited to take part. This ensured a wholly accessible approach, with new audiences in a family friendly setting.

ARC Stockton Fun Palace

Certain sections of the press, by constantly sniping at cultural expenditure, made philistinism appear patriotic.

The wicked Tories will be blamed for 'vandalising' the arts, just you see. Yet how bad are the arts cuts? Or is much of this merely special pleading by an over-indulged quango?

Quentin Letts, Daily Mail, 2011

If children at an early age become accustomed to the idea of the arts as a part of everyday life, they are more likely in maturity first to accept and then to demand them.

I am prepared to fight to give children independence and autonomy, and the psychological space to respond in the way they want – and that sometimes means the right to respond and process privately and without adults around or the need for any measurable outcomes.

Purni Morrell 2014, Artistic Director, Unicorn Theatre

But too often, as boys and girls grow up, the impetus seems to weaken, so that as adults we are more vulnerable than we should be to criticisms of our inadequate uses of literacy, of our failure to appreciate poetry, of our limited tastes in music and drama, of our ignorance of the visual arts and of our blindness to good design.

What is clear now is that young people, especially those in the less affluent regions, are not getting any opportunities at all, because arts ... access for young people has been swept away. And I think it will only get worse. Paul Collard, Chief Executive at CCE (Creative Culture and Education.)

Nor can we ignore the growing revolt, especially among the young.

I don't doubt that many of the rioters out last week have no father at home. Perhaps they come from one of the neighbourhoods where it's standard for children to have a mum and not a dad ... Many people have long thought that the answer to these questions of social behaviour is to bring back national service. In many ways I agree. David Cameron, 2011

The crafts also have an important contribution to make in the field of education and leisure pursuits as well as in their influence on good design.

Where else could a knitting fan, a bread-maker, a psychologist, a toy shop owner, a jewellery maker, a storyteller, a poetry fan, a book group, a drama teacher, a scientist, a museum, a library, a fish and chip shop, and a bored marketing manager be involved in creating a day of free entertainment for our town? Whitstable Fun Palace

Nor must Government support be given only to established institutions. New ideas, new values, the involvement of large sections of the community hitherto given little or no opportunity to appreciate the arts, all have their place.

We've come a long way since Jennie Lee and yet...there is still a significant engagement gap, with education and affluence the major factors influencing likelihood and levels of engagement.

Deborah Bull, Young People and The Arts: Lessons from 50 years of Arts Policy. 2015

At present, the artist, having finished their schooling, has still to gain experience and has difficulty in obtaining employment. Many turn aside to other types of employment because the life of the artist is too precarious.

The so-called golden age of arts funding has given way to debilitating austerity, particularly for artists who find themselves at the end of a long food chain, divorced from arts funding and policy decision making. Susan Jones, 2013

Many well qualified, talented and passionate young people lack the resources to pay their own way through an unpaid internship. Institute for Public Policy Research, 2010

In order to bring the arts within reach of a wider public, greater use might be made of the subsidised travel for special occasions which the Arts Council already operate and the practice of giving specially reduced theatre prices to students and to special groups should be more widely adopted.

It's great to have a £10 a ticket system, but if all the £10 tickets are being sold to people who were buying them for £50 the week before, then that's no great gain. Chris Bryant MP

Between February 2009 and March 2011, A Night Less Ordinary gave 393,657 free theatre tickets to people under 26. Arts Council England

The exclusion of so many for so long from ... our cultural heritage can become as damaging to the privileged minority as to the under-privileged majority.

This is something worth fighting for. It's not just about showbusiness – everywhere you go people are discriminated against. And if by having an organised voice against inequality and a lack of diversity we might be able to push that down – how brilliant would it be?"

Lenny Henry (Actor, Writer, Comedian, TV Presenter)

Some local authorities will need a good deal of persuading before they are convinced that the money it is in their power to spend on arts and amenities is money well spent and deserving a much higher priority than hitherto.

For every £1 spent by local authorities in England, less than half a penny is spent on culture. The average net spend by local authorities is only 16p per person per week.

National Campaign For The Arts

If one side of life is highly mechanised, another side must provide for diversity, adventure, opportunities both to appreciate and to participate in a wide range of individual pursuits. An enlightened government has a duty to respond to these needs.

A new social as well as artistic climate is essential.

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