

FORT WILLIAM HEALTH CENTRE PUBLIC ART PROJECT

ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE ISSUED TO THOSE INVOLVED WITH THE PROJECT, MAY 2008

Question 1:

What was the nature of your principal involvement with the Fort William Health Centre Public Art Project?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Steering Committee	15.4%	2
Artist	53.8%	7
Building - Developer / Construction	7.7%	1
Architect / Building Design	0.0%	0
Client / User (i.e. member of GP practice)	23.1%	3
Funder	0.0%	0

Other:

- Apollo Capital Projects (t/a PMP Plus in Scotland) are the Developer and Landlord/Owner (and substantial funder of the art project).

Question 2:

How did you find the experience of being involved in the project?

- Very rewarding. It was great to be able to contribute to the enhancement of the building, to provide opportunities for artists to contribute and to get to view and decide on the proposals.
- It was brilliant, a dream commission, with the freedom to create work for a new build, to be site specific which is my main interest in Ceramics and the timescale and budget just right for my work and circumstances.
- Mostly I enjoyed it.
- Initially worried about limitless cost but was won over.
- Not directly involved but have seen the artwork around the building.
- Frustrating at times initially but very rewarding once the project started to come together. It was very difficult deciding which works would look well and appeal to the public who would be using the building.
- It was an enjoyable and stimulating process in the round. Having been involved in smaller scale art projects, the scale and programme of this one created additional challenges.
- It was fantastic to be part of an exciting new build development in Fort William where Public Art was seen as a fundamental part of the whole project and I thoroughly enjoyed the experience. I have been involved in Public Art commissions in the central belt and England but in the Highlands opportunities for this type of work come up very rarely so it was a very special landmark project which was organised very well which made the whole experience very enjoyable and fulfilling as an Artist.

Question 3:

Which aspects of the project did you find most challenging?

- The funding. There was so much we wanted to do and were constrained by the costs.
- There were no challenging aspects really with only the installation of the work causing a few problems.
- Communication was a challenge.
- Trying to persuade my practice partners that they should support the project financially. Once they saw the finished product they were very impressed and realised how important the project had been.
- After proposing Public Art in the building, the process of scoping and fundraising began. Enabling works were required by way of specialist lighting and structural alterations, and the requirements had to be incorporated a substantial way through the project, whilst not compromising the basic functionality of the building. This was time consuming, expensive (at the late stage carried out) and it was difficult to get buy-in from the building contractor who was focussed on other matters.
- Choosing the images for the final work.
- The actual installation of the Ceramic pieces proved to be the most challenging with differing opinions to consider plus being aware of the relationship to other Artwork in the centre.
- Measuring the windows so that I could make the glass panels the correct size. This was because the contractor would not allow me to climb a ladder for insurance/liability reasons! However, the windows were measured for me, and while some of the panels were a tight squeeze, it was possible to fit them properly in the end (i.e. measuring was satisfactory). The fitting was physically challenging.

Question 4:

Which aspects of the project did you find most rewarding?

- Involving the local artists, discussing the main installation, deciding the artists to commission the main works.
- Being handed a wide brief with the Highland 2007 themes as a starting point and being given the freedom to design alternative proposals and budgets. I enjoyed creating and researching the work very much and learnt an awful lot about Sea Slugs along the way and the most rewarding aspect was on installation day seeing a wee girl, 2 minutes after I had put a Sea Creature up on the wall, coming along and touching it with curiosity and delight, which is what it was the Sea Creature Trail was all about!
- Working with the groups of disabled people.
- To see the therapeutic environment created by artwork, the feel good factor and the community involvement.
- Seeing people's faces when they saw the finished product. Though the artwork is very diverse it all seems to work well together - the steering group had a good mix of ages and tastes which is reflected in this.
- Engagement with local artists and art, discovering the wealth of local talent, and the quality and diversity of the final works. The enhancement of the building, and its beneficial effects on staff and patients, were the ultimate goals which have been very successfully achieved.
- Researching and developing ideas that would have significance to the project.
- The aim of the Ceramic Sea Creature Trail was to enable children to touch and feel the textures of the creatures and follow the trail through the Community wing of the Medical centre. The most rewarding aspect of the project was on the installation day watching a little girl come in and literally 2 minutes after I had put a piece on the wall, touching the piece with curiosity and delight.
- The positive response to my designs and especially to the finished panels.

Question 5:

What was your view of public art projects before becoming involved with Fort William Health Centre?

- I am married to an artist and strongly felt that not enough is done to create public art opportunities.
- I have been involved in many Public Art commissions before as a Public Town Artist in Fife and through various commissions so loved this opportunity in Lochaber.
- Sceptical about cost of project and benefits.
- In agreement.
- I was a supporter of them, having incorporated them in previous medical centre projects.
- Not always terribly impressed with some efforts I had seen, however when it was done well it could really enhance a building and the space within it.
- Some public arts projects can be too difficult for people to grasp leaving them confused and the work misunderstood.
- I was a Public Artist in Glenrothes in Fife for 4 years and have done Public Art commissions in Middlesborough, plus Community workshops with Schools on Murals etc over the past ten years so I was really delighted to be involved in a Public Art project in Lochaber where I now live.
- Great opportunities for artists.

Question 6:

Did your views change as a result of your involvement? If so, please tell us how:

- No, having seen what a fantastic contribution this has made to this building, I think we should be doing more and more of it. I did realise that a lot of public art is very serious and I am very pleased that we have been able to include some less serious pieces that children love.
- Yes, the end result enhances the building so much, I think it is worth the money.
- Still in agreement - more so.
- No - I remain a strong supporter of the benefits of art within a Primary Care setting, this project has strengthened my belief in their value.
- Definitely, there was a great deal more to it than just picking out a few pictures. I now actively look at any building with a new eye and consider how or what we would have done differently. Having seen the patient response to the artwork I realise that it is an integral part of the building and one of the reasons the space works so well.
- I think this project kept things clear and simple.

Question 7:

What do you consider to be the main benefits of the public art in Fort William Health Centre?

- They contribute to the calm ambience but enrich it as well. It gives people something to look at and think about instead of worrying about why they are in the Health Centre.
- It enables the Public to experience and be stimulated by Art that they may otherwise never encounter in their day-to-day lives and to encourage the idea within everyone that Art is a part of everyday life and not an exclusive or unattainable concept and that every human is creative in nature.
- Makes art accessible to those who wouldn't think to seek it out. Lovely ambience to wait for those in a stressful situation at times.
- The people involved in my pieces are still talking about it and remember it when they see me, it also allowed every one to participate.
- Feel good factor for users, staff, clients, patients etc.

- Hopefully the Health Centre will have periodic changes of artwork so we don't become fed up looking at the same dull pictures in waiting areas!
- The art brings a sense of place/community/belonging to the building. Patients' experience of using the facility is materially enhanced; staff experience of working in the facility is materially enhanced. As a business it creates a high quality reference project for prospective clients. It has been a very useful learning process for us.
- The atmosphere of calm and peace within the main waiting areas. Patients actively enjoy the areas and seem to be more relaxed when they finally see the health professional. The outreach part of the project was a very good idea and has given local school children and students a sense of ownership of the building. As a practice we have continued with this theme and have a display of work from the High School on our surgery corridor walls. One of our GP's is to attend a conference on Art and Health and we hope to have a photo of the schoolwork with the artists as part of his presentation.
- I think the main benefits of this project are that the public have received art in many styles that can be easily enjoyed. Appreciating the work in the health centre makes the experience there better.
- Something wonderful for patients, staff and visitors to enjoy. It enhances the visit in so many ways.

Question 8:

Is there anything you would consider doing differently? If so, please tell us what:

- I would insist on knowing more about what is planned for commissioned pieces. I am personally very disappointed in the aluminium centre piece which I (and everybody else) think looks plastic.
- Allow more time for the installation and decision making process of this element of the project.
- When entering into the creation of facilities such as this, the most important issue is to ensure there is a viable Development Project and to get this to site. Then a myriad of technical detail requires to be resolved to deliver a first class facility. It is not until this point usually when the scheme is substantially on site that a budget for art can be set. Notwithstanding, I have learned that in terms of enabling works, an assessment should be made early as to potential sites for art. Wiring for lighting etc should be instructed early. Even if some of this is redundant, it will still be less expensive than waiting until later for firm proposals. Whilst it would be good to think Art can be incorporated from day one, projects such as these have strictly limited budgets, and it is difficult to commit fully until the basic project is secure.
- Probably not, though it would have been beneficial if we had been able to raise more money as there are still a lot of empty walls.
- Doing the project over I think I might consider a different position for the work or perhaps something on a larger scale.
- Making the panels slightly smaller!

Question 9:

Would you like to maintain an involvement with this and/or future similar projects?

	Yes	No	Response Count
This project	90.0% (9)	10.0% (1)	10
Future projects	88.9% (8)	11.1% (1)	9

Question 10:

The project has been known until now as the Fort William Health Centre Public Art Project, but we would be grateful for your thoughts about a new name for the project and website. Please select your favourite from the following, or make your own suggestion:

	Response Percent	Response Count
A Design for Health	42.9%	3
Health by Design	14.3%	1
Designer Health	0.0%	0
A Healthy Attitude to Art	42.9%	3
Art-u-Well	0.0%	0

- Public Art for Public Health
- Compassion and healing through science with art
- art better health...centre-on-art although a bit long winded maybe the original is fine
- Public Art for Public Health
- Art Health; Health Art

Question 11:

Please use this space to let us know of any online resources (research; information; examples of good practice) you are aware of that you think the new website should direct people to:

- The Dementia Services Development Centre at the Iris Murdoch Centre, Stirling University have great design resources that encourage thought to go into maximising the benefit for people with sensory impairment and people with Dementia.
- David Cobley.
- Arts & Business Scotland.