

<p><b>Institution:</b> Writtle College</p>
<p><b>Unit of Assessment:</b> UoA 34: Art and Design: History, Practice and Theory</p>
<p><b>Title of case study:</b> Furtherfield: international platforms for collaborative practice in networked media arts 2009-13</p>
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b></p> <p>Furtherfield has inspired and supported new forms of collaborative practice and expression at the intersection of arts and technology cultures to co-create critical, contemporary public platforms and contexts for arts in networked society.</p> <p>Furtherfield's innovative programmes have advanced practices and theories of collaboration, remix, and openness; inspiring and informing thinking in the UK Arts sector and international digital arts culture. This work has worldwide cultural and social impact. It reaches and engages new audiences through public gallery programmes, online collections, websites, and other award-winning virtual platforms, acknowledged by artists, curators and critics for their contribution to emerging digital art contexts.</p>
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b></p> <p>The research combines practice based and more formal research into a question about whether people can be inspired and enabled through creative and critical engagement with practices in art and technology to become active co-creators of their cultures and societies. This question informed Furtherfield's renewed vision statement in 2009.</p> <p>Details of what research was undertaken and by whom: The Furtherfield website for arts, technology and social change was created by artists Ruth Catlow and Marc Garrett in 1996 at <i>Backspace</i>, London's first cyberlounge. It set out to provide an alternative, open, platform for artistic production and exchange in the context of the established London BritArt scene.</p> <p>Catlow and Garrett took the socio-technical context of the mid-90s Internet as their medium and site, drawing on art and anti-art traditions of Dada, Fluxus and Situationism. The Internet was a public space that anyone with a computer, telephone line and modem could shape. Catlow and Garrett connected with other artists, technologists, activists and institutions around the world and the Furtherfield website became a hub for experimentation with production (to remix images, text, code), distribution (ownership and exchange) review, and critique. Participants co-created their own international art context to transform the relationship between artists, artworks, audiences and artworld systems.</p> <p>Early projects directed by Catlow and Garrett were precursors to today's social media forms such as blogs and file-sharing platforms: <i>Day In Day Out</i>, was a networked journal project that engaged international artists online and in an exhibition at Watermans Art Gallery (London 2000), and <i>Skin/Strip Online</i>, a <i>Shooting Live Artists</i> commission with the BBC (2003), was the first BBC online project to feature content uploaded by the public to a webpage without pre-moderation. (Developed in collaboration with Completely Naked)</p> <p>In 2003 Furtherfield created two new pieces of ground breaking artware (software platforms for generating art) that facilitated interaction and co-creation between artists and audiences together, live online. One of these, <i>VisitorsStudio</i> allowed anyone (with a 56k modem or faster) to collage audiovisual loops in a shared browser-page, in real-time. Furtherfield curated a series of live collaborative performances around the world from this platform.</p> <p>In 2004 Furtherfield opened London's first gallery for networked media arts called <i>HTTP Gallery</i> co-curated by Catlow and Garrett. By 2011 the gallery had hosted 20 exhibitions of work created in 6 continents, exploring aesthetic, ethical and social effects of network technologies. The</p>

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programme featured work by leading artists including: solo shows such as *The Future is Not What it Used to Be* by Finish artist and inventor Erki Kurenemi and *Abuse of the Public Domain* about the aesthetics of surveillance technologies by Stanza (UK); *DIWO Email Art*, an experimental open curation and mail art exhibition with 90 contributors; *HTML Embroidery* by Ele Carpenter that explored networked knowledge-sharing and the crossovers between code and craft cultures; and the commission of a large scale interactive sculpture, [*giantJoystick*] by Mary Flanagan(US) that went on to be toured internationally and sited long term at the leading international centre for media arts in Germany ZKM.

In 2006 Furtherfield joined the voluntary organisers group for NODE.London (Networked Open Distributed Events London). Designed to be an open, participatory season supporting and stimulating media arts the London, this festival inspired by networked production cultures featured 150 media arts projects which took place in over 40 London locations and inspired international offshoots such as Node.Stockholm

### 3. References to the research

#1 Authors/creators: Ruth Catlow, Marc Garrett

Title: *Furtherfield*, 1996 -2009, <http://www.furtherfield.org>

In 2009 the Furtherfield website an online platforms received approx. 90,000 unique visits

#2 Authors/creators: Ruth Catlow, Marc Garrett and Neil Jenkins for Furtherfield

Title: *Visitors Studio*, 2003, collaborative real-time remix artware <http://visitorsstudio.org>

Funded by Regional Lottery Fund: £12K

*Dissension Convention*, Postmasters Gallery, New York, US. 29/8-2/9/04 archive of 30 hrs of performance by 26 artists <http://www.furtherfield.org/dissensionconvention/>

Catlow was involved as an organiser and an artist. Archive of performance by Ruth Catlow & Michael Szpakowski 2/9/04 <http://www.furtherfield.org/dissensionconvention/dc9.htm>

Award: 2009 Grand Netart Prize, The Machida City Museum of Graphic Arts, Japan.

#3 Authors/co-curators: Ruth Catlow and Marc Garrett

Title: *HTTP Gallery* exhibition programme (2005-2009)

<http://www.furtherfield.org/programmes/exhibitions> (pages 1-3)

Award: Furtherfield was appointed an Arts Council England Regular Funded Organisation April 2005- March 2008 on the strength of its artistic programmes. The grant was for £40K p/a for 3 years. This was raised to £80k p/a for a further 3 year period 2008-11. During this time gallery visitor numbers ranged from 1000 to 2000 per year.

#4 Catlow, R., Garrett, M. (2006) 'NODE.London States of Interdependence' in *Media Mutandis: a NODE.London Reader, Surveying Art, Technologies and Politics* NODE.London, Mute, London. Vishmidt, M., Francis, M.A., Walsh, J. and Sykes, L. ed. [Peer reviewed book chapter]

#5 Catlow, R., Garrett, M. (2008) 'NODE.London: Getting Organised Openly?' *European Institute for Progressive Cultural Policies*, Raunig, G. ed. <http://eipcp.net/policies/catlowgarrett/en>

Also published in *The NODE.London Reader II*, Mute, London. (2008). Colin, A., Jankowicz, M., Hadzi, A., and Andersson, J. ed.

#6 Initiators/co-curators: Ruth Catlow and Marc Garrett

Title: *Do It With Others (DIWO)*

Open call and exhibition online and at HTTP Gallery, London Feb – April 2007

Catlow, R., Garrett, M. (2008) 'Do It With Others (DIWO) - E-Mail Art in Context'. *Crediting: Translational Online Work*. Vague Terrain, Journal 11, by Hochrieser, S., Kargl, M., & Thalmair, F., eds.

#### 4. Details of the impact

The renewal of the Furtherfield programmes, website and organisation was led by Co-directors Ruth Catlow and Marc Garrett, between 2009 and 2013 with a focus on collaboration, openness and environmental responsibility. Furtherfield is now acknowledged, by practitioners and audiences, as a leading, international hub for arts, technology and social change.

Underpinning of impact:

The development of participatory and collaborative processes and infrastructures are informed by earlier work on Furtherfield web platforms, VisitorsStudio artware, DIWO programmes and involvement in and reflection on Node.London as well as ongoing discussions and reviews hosted on Furtherfield website and the growing network of international artists, curators and partner organisations.

Extent of the impact:

1) Furtherfield develops engaging web platforms and critical arts content with an international reach:

In 2009 Furtherfield's digital offer was rated in the top 3% of Arts Council England Regularly Funded Organisations (RFO). This rating is an indication of high quality production values, distinctive, original and challenging content and high levels of user engagement and participation. (MTM London, 2009).

2009-10 the Furtherfield website was re-developed using Drupal (a free and open source, community content management system). The work was undertaken as part of *WeShare*, a project led by Ruth Catlow, funded by Arts Council England (strategic funding of £15K) to develop a model for arts organisations to improve their sustainability by collaborating on the development of digital infrastructure.

Furtherfield publishes annually online between 45 and 70 features, reviews and critiques of artworks, artists, exhibitions, books, festivals, emerging cultures in arts and technology worldwide (editor Marc Garrett). Furtherfield received 187,574 visits to its website between 1 April 2012 and 31 March 2013

Discussion and knowledge exchange between artists, writers, technologists and activists is supported via Furtherfield's email discussion list, *Netbehaviour* (2005-ongoing) and archived online. Its membership in 2012/13 varies between 850 and 900 people with an average of 700 posts by approximately 80 individuals in any 3 month period. Since 2011 this discussion is also extended to Twitter where Furtherfield has 4000 followers.

2) Audiences for Furtherfield Gallery programmes 2008-13

Furtherfield's work is highly regarded and valued nationally and internationally. "Furtherfield has enhanced the public's relationship to media art through their ongoing support of artistic practices that engage with new technologies and critical thinking; with a sound commitment to both local and remote (through the website) audience and community development." Kelli Dipple, Intermedia Curator, Tate Modern, 2010. In Spring 2012 the Furtherfield Gallery relocated to the McKenzie Pavilion in the middle of Finsbury Park, North London, supported by Haringey Council. The gallery programme attracts excellent reviews and has seen a fivefold increase in its visitor numbers since 2011. Furtherfield is now an "internationally leading platform" (Christiane Paul, Whitney Museum Curator) and is acknowledged as a "pioneer of this emerging practice that offers a physical space where artists and local communities can discover, create and be part of the debate around digital art" (Moirá Sinclair, London Executive Director of Arts Council England). Ongoing feedback from audiences demonstrates that the general public value our gallery programmes and show a high interest in our programming (48% high; 34% very high).

London Wall (N4) (2010) by Thomson and Craighead (UK) was installed for the inaugural exhibition of the new Furtherfield Gallery in Finsbury Park, London in an exhibition called Being Social. This exemplary work was selected for its ability to reveal the hidden poetry of exchanges

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between local inhabitants. <http://www.furtherfield.org/programmes/exhibition/being-social> The exhibition attracted wide coverage and good reviews. "Furtherfield points at ways people can access the shifts in territory culturally and with artistic use of technology or new media" - Jon Thomson, Artist

3) Programmes have been commissioned for international audiences by external bodies. *Collaboration and Freedom – The World of Free and Open Source Art*, (2011), was a collection commissioned by Arts Council England to reveal how artistic practices have developed in parallel with global technological cultures. It was mirrored by the international network Foundation for P2P Alternatives where it has received approximately 15000 visitors For this project Catlow and Garrett commissioned over 35 new texts and interviews and oversaw the selection and presentation of a selection of artworks. [http://p2pfoundation.net/World\\_of\\_Free\\_and\\_Open\\_Source\\_Art](http://p2pfoundation.net/World_of_Free_and_Open_Source_Art)

Free Yourself? (2011) a collection of 5 works, curated for Electronic Village Gallery, a touring exhibition designed to reach audiences new to digital arts in non-standard arts venues in Cornwall. <http://evg.dematerial.org/collection/free-yourself>

Do It With Others – D.I.W.O is the new D.I.Y! Camp Pixelache festival 2012 Helsinki, Finland. Marc Garret was an invited speaker. <http://muistio.tieke.fi/pixelache-2012-camp-open-diwo>

#### 4) Public commissions, partnership and funding

Since 2008 Ruth Catlow has produced and co-directed a number of public arts and outreach projects with and for diverse participants and audiences with budgets ranging from £2K to £20K commissioned by institutional partners including: Science Museum, A New Direction/Creative Partnerships, Drake Music, V&A, St Mungo's charity for homeless people.

<http://www.furtherfield.org/programmes/outreach>

2012- 2015 Furtherfield continues to receive core funding from Arts Council England as a National Portfolio Organisation. It receives approximately £80K p/a

### 5. Sources to corroborate the impact

#1 MTM London, 2009. Arts Council England – Digital Content Snapshot

<http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/media/uploads/downloads/MTM-snapshot.pdf>

#2 Wired reviews Furtherfield Gallery exhibition, Being Social (2012)

<http://www.wired.co.uk/news/archive/2012-03/12/being-social-at-furtherfield-gallery>

#3 We Make Money Not Art review of Furtherfield Gallery exhibition, Glitch Momentums (2013)

<http://we-make-money-not-art.com/archives/2013/07/glitch-momentums.php>

#4 Furtherfield general press listings <http://www.furtherfield.org/about/press>

#5 Head of Visual Arts, Arts Council England or Furtherfield Relationship Manager, Arts Council England

#6 Director, A New Direction

#7 Director of The Culture Capital Exchange.

#8 Cultural Officer, Haringey Council

#9 Director of Foundation for P2P Alternatives