Navigating difference

cultural diversity and audience development

ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND

Cover: *Secrets of Macbeth* – Emotional visualisation of Shakespeare's Macbeth

Cultural influences and personal experiences affect how we feel about colour. For Chinese people, red is associated with royalty and happiness and purple with poison and danger. But people of English origin associate red with danger and purple with royalty. I've been exploring these links between emotion, colour and shape. The artwork on the cover of this book is just one of the results. A visual representation of the emotions expressed by Shakespeare's Macbeth, it uses my colour kit based on psychologist R Plutchikf's emotional theory. He identified eight primary emotional states and I have linked them to the colour wheel. The warmer colours tend to represent positive emotions and the more intense the colour, the stronger the emotion. I added further layers so I could map the complexity of Macbeth's emotions from moment to moment. The patterns moving across the paper from left to right reveal the dramatic changes in emotional flow that an audience might experience as the play unfolds.

Fang Liu, 2005

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Introduction

Type 'cultural diversity + arts' into Google and you'll get 75,700 links to UK websites embracing local authorities, universities, arts agencies and networks, funding bodies and even newspapers – but very few arts organisations or museums. Why? Some cultural organisations have diversity so deeply embedded in their values, policies and practices that they don't feel the need to mention it as something separate. For others, it is not a priority. The number of links, though, is an indication of just how much pressure they are under to produce and present more 'culturally diverse' work and develop more 'culturally diverse' audiences.

But does the cultural sector fully understand what it is trying to achieve? *The United Nations Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity* defines it as 'the uniqueness and plurality of the identities of the groups and societies making up humankind'. But in our sector we often, but not always, use the term in a much more specific way. So, what is a 'culturally diverse' artist? Or audience?

Forty arts managers, policy makers, practising artists, academics, audience members and commentators have come together in this book to examine the relevance of cultural diversity and cultural identity to the arts. They set out to unpick the arguments for cultural diversity used by the organisations that fund, support and research the arts. They explore what, if any, shared understanding we have about cultural diversity and question whether the ideas behind it stand up to scrutiny. They propose new ways of thinking they believe will enable more policy makers and arts organisations to respond coherently, wholeheartedly and effectively to demands for equality of access to the arts. They explore practice in other sectors and ask how well the cultural sector measures up, before looking back over the past 10 years and setting out the approaches proven to be effective in management, programming and audience development.

They don't all agree, though. This book is a debate about wider issues that are at the heart of what it means to be British today. Their views certainly shouldn't be seen as a reflection of the current policy of Arts Council England, the book's publisher, but they are a contribution to the discussion that will help shape future policy and practice throughout the cultural sector.

Navigating Difference was commissioned by four audience development agencies, Arts About Manchester, Audiences Central, Audiences London and Audiences Yorkshire. Arts Council England's work on diversity made it an ideal partner in the project. None of the partners wanted to produce a simplistic guide to 'best practice'

because their work over the past 10 years has shown them that there is no single blueprint that will be effective in every organisation. Different artists, organisations, communities and contexts will always need different solutions. And those solutions are never simple. Neither can they be left to marketing or education. Cultural diversity can only come from a commitment to changing values throughout an organisation. So read on to find out what thinking you and your colleagues need to do to develop a blueprint that's right for your organisation, right for the art and right for the communities you seek to serve.

How to use this book

You can, of course, read the articles in this book in order from cover to cover. You might, though, want to start with an article that chimes with your own organisation's thinking about diversity and audience development and then follow the links to other views and other topics. Chapter One presents arguments for focusing on cultural diversity; Chapter Two explores the complex ideas behind diversity; Chapter Three examines just how diverse the UK's cultural organisations really are; Chapter Four looks at practice in other sectors and the contributors in Chapter Five offer practical guidance on the implications of cultural identity and diversity for management, programming, marketing and audience development.

If you want to think more broadly about the issues at the heart of diversity, then you could trace the recurring themes as they thread their way through the book.

Five themes seem to dominate the discussions: the way that imbalance of power is at the root of inequality within the cultural sector and beyond; the complexities of representation; the importance of the way we use language; how the internal dynamics of an organisation impact on its ability to develop audiences; and how diversity brings creativity and innovation.

Power

Gary Younge (page 13) and Olu Alake (page 31) argue that power dynamics are invisible barriers to race equality that have not been challenged, let alone dismantled. Madani Younis describes the impact of these power dynamics on his work (page 84) while Nadine Andrews offers an explanation and some possible solutions (page 62). Jorella Andrews looks at how collectiveness around ethnic identity empowered some Black visual artists to challenge the resulting institutionalised racism and also the drawbacks of such a stance (page 144) and Alda Terracciano argues that there is a triangular power relationship between artists, audiences and critics that enables – or stifles –

the development of new artistic languages (page 101). Ziauddin Sardar describes the origin and implications of these power relationships (page 37) and Bernadette Lynch shows how they still exist in museums today (page 150). Venu Dhupa believes that people can empower themselves so suggests that diversity comes from a focus on the art and the individual. Mel Larsen argues that the only way we can check whether power imbalances are shifting is to collect information about ethnicity that will enable us to measure equality of opportunity (page 168).

Representation

Sandra Kerr (page 27), Maddy Morton (page 131) and Caroline Griffin (page 177) show the importance of recruiting a workforce that reflects the communities in which your organisation works but Nadine Andrews cautions that the benefits are limited if everyone thinks in the same ways. Tony Graves (page 154), Madani Younis (page 84) and Marie Gillespie and Anita Sharma (page 88) discuss the need for audiences to see their realities reflected in the work produced by cultural organisations. The latter go on to look at the way that images, storylines and characters have huge symbolic power to represent a cultural group so come under close scrutiny – a scrutiny that Gabriel Gbadamosi says now amounts to surveillance (page 17). Some artists choose not to use their cultural heritage in order to shake off this burden of representation, says Jorella Andrews (page 141) who goes on to describe a perceived gap between Black artists and the Black audiences on whose behalf they were working, while Kodwo Eshun explores a world in which we all escape from identity (page 50).

Language and meaning

Nadine Andrews describes how language doesn't just reflect meaning but creates it (page 62) and Kodwo Eshun extends the argument to suggest that cultural politics is about a struggle over words that stand for values and beliefs (page 50). Ranjit Sondhi focuses on two different meanings for 'the arts' and makes a plea for a balance between them (page 46). Marie Gillespie and Anita Sharma show how language used by the media shapes public attitudes (page 88) while Maddy Morton argues that the language organisations use internally shapes its attitudes and activities (page 131). Ziauddin Sardar discusses how ethnic cultural identity is a way of expressing ideas and that the diversity within cultural groups means that we must accept the need for, not a dialogue, but a polylogue (page 37). Bernadette Lynch discusses the implications of this by showing how museums need to share the responsibility for constructing meaning by involving multiple voices (page 150) while Jorella Andrews focuses

on new ways of interpreting the visual arts that move beyond categories. A 'glossary' on pages 221-223 looks at the different meanings of key words.

Organisational dynamics

Nadine Andrews explains how an organisation's culture determines how it deals with cultural diversity and that we need to change its values, attitudes, systems and behaviour in a holistic way (page 62), Rita Kottasz shows us the evidence for this (page 71) and Caroline Griffin relates this to audience development (page 177). Maddy Morton sets out a blueprint for creating this holistic change in an organisation (page 131) and Heather Maitland (page 181), Anne Torreggiani (page 199) and John E McGrath discuss how this has worked in a series of successful organisations. Naseem Khan looks at how recent Arts Council England policies have focussed on changing organisational dynamics (page 21) and Venu Dhupa describes how she is working to change her own organisation's culture (page 79).

Creativity and innovation

Gary Younge (page 13) and Lia Ghilardi (page 54) make the case for diversity leading to greater creativity, Nadine Andrews also proposes that there is a critical range with diversity and a balance is needed (page 62). Ranjit Sondhi suggests that this creativity happens where cultures cross over (page 46) and Alistair Spalding describes this in practice (page 158). Venu Dhupa suggests that we need equality at every level of every decision-making forum if we are to keep creative managers, artists and audiences from opting out of the cultural sector (page 79) and Maddy Morton identifies ways we can achieve this level playing field in our organisation (page 131).

Preface: a great place to start?

A great place to start?

Gary Younge explores the potential for creativity offered by our complex identities – and their limitations

When asked whether it bothered her to be described as a Black, woman writer, Nobel laureate, Toni Morrison, replied: 'I'm already discredited, I'm already politicised, before I get out of the gate. I can accept the labels because being a Black woman writer is not a shallow place but a rich place to write from. It doesn't limit my imagination; it expands it.'

Being a racial, religious or minority ethnic in Britain also has its potential depths. Those who do not see themselves or their experiences reflected in the broader sphere have little choice but to both relentlessly examine themselves and be interrogated by others.

In a world where 'mainstream' serves as a synonym for white, Christian and straight, those who end up on the margins, not because of what they have done but simply because of who they are, inevitably ask themselves how they got there.

To them 'What does it mean to be British?'; 'How is that meaning changing?' and 'Where do I fit into those changes?' are not abstractions but navigational tools to steer them through their lives.

These questions are not the preserve of minorities any more than being a Black, Muslim or Asian Briton is a sub-genre of being a 'regular Briton'. Indeed if only those white, Christian people who regard themselves as 'regular' asked them more often we might all be in better shape and the heavy lifting would not be left to the embattled few.

Madani Younis says that his peers will not become theatre-goers until they see accurate reflections of their communities on stage (page 84).

For we all have labels, many of which we never asked for and cannot help. But only once we recognise them for what they are can we capitalise on their potential to unleash an unpredictable and fruitful creative response to the world around us.

This does not necessarily mean that potential will always be realised. Identities describe, they do not define; they are a great place to start and an awful place to end up. Melanin content, religious affiliation or any other identity confers neither knowledge nor insight – only a particular experience that might lead to both.

But while neither race nor religion can expand the imagination they can also limit opportunities to do anything with it. Far from being neutral, these identities are rooted in material conditions that confer power and privilege in relation to one another. These power relations, however, are not fixed, static or straightforward. They are fluid in character, dynamic by nature and, therefore, complex in practice.

With high levels of unemployment and low levels of educational attainment in most ethnic minorities – but by no means all – many never make it out of the gate.

When one director told Oscar-nominated actress, Marianne Jean-Baptiste that she really had to 'find (her) audience' Baptiste replied: 'I know my audience. The trouble is they just can't afford £22.50.'

But this is compounded by the lack of social and cultural capital – the absence of connections, the

exclusion from the canon, the sins not just of omission but thoughtless commission.

'We are the sum of the things we pretend to be,' wrote the novelist Kurt Vonnegut. 'So we should be careful who we pretend to be.'

Britain pretends to be a multicultural society. The extent to which we are a country in which many cultures live that is true. But the extent to which those cultures mix and the value and nature of that mixture we still have a long way to go.

The most obvious successes – the Notting Hill carnival, *Goodness Gracious Me*, Andrea Levy, Chris Offili – emerged not out of goodwill but struggle.

The physical, cultural and professional spaces they occupy, which are now trumpeted by the 'mainstream', were fought for by those on the margins. If we want to see them not just survive but thrive they will have to be not only defended but extended. They benefit not just Black people, but Britain as a whole.

Marie Gillespie and **Anita Sharma** take a close look at the struggle for cultural space in 'mainstream' broadcasting on page 88.

Chapter One: the case for more diversity

Publicly funded cultural organisations are under increasing pressure to produce and present more 'culturally diverse' work and develop more 'culturally diverse' audiences. So what are the arguments being used to drive this change and do they stand up to scrutiny?

Key ideas

1 We still don't have enough art that reflects the society we live in because we focus on over-specific, sectional interests when we create, fund and market the arts

2 As the UK's population changes, cultural organisations need to stay relevant to avoid redundancy

3 Diversity sparks creative innovation

4 Minority ethnic customers make up huge untapped markets that businesses cannot afford to ignore. Diversity can make a measurable impact on the bottom line

5 It is unlawful for any arts organisation, even those that don't get any public money, to discriminate on the grounds of race, colour, nationality or ethnic or national origin in the provision of goods, facilities and services

I was born by a river

Gabriel Gbadamosi wants theatre to reflect the society we live in

I grew up in London, within the sound of Big Ben, a short walk to the Houses of Parliament. Before the area was slum-cleared in the 70s, it was a lively, crowded place of poor, largely immigrant families and bomb-damaged houses. Our first playgrounds were bombsites, but the war was something about which we knew nothing. We were living on the ruins of a city our parents came to rebuild. We thought everyone was like us – listening to the sound of Big Ben on the 10 o'clock news and then, slightly later, and fainter, the sound coming across the river to tell us it was time for bed.

We didn't have Trevor MacDonald in those days, we had Reginald Bosanquet. Black people were absent from the box which represented a world just to one side of the real world of people like us – the Irish, Nigerian, English, Indian, Maltese, Jamaican people we lived with. In fact, families like mine seemed to be in the majority at our local school because there were six children in our family and of the Akinyeles, also Irish-Nigerian but from Dublin, there were 10. I've never been able to quite shake that idea of being in the majority in our community. Foreigners were the middle class people we occasionally came into contact with at school or the hospital. But then our slum was cleared and we were scattered. Only far enough to walk our furniture through the streets – to beside the Oval cricket ground. Summers in the 70s were interspersed with the roar of crowds when another wicket fell to the West Indies.

Then the trouble began. I went to the local grammar school and suddenly everyone was white.

'My efforts were to make a theatre that reflected the society I knew, as opposed to assert a Black identity'.

Black and white for me had been the same as mum and dad. Now they were being prised apart. By the time I went to University – Cambridge, where I never met another Black British person – I knew I was in trouble. 'But you're not Black' was entirely beside the point. I'd go back to Brixton, or down to the Notting Hill Carnival, and realise there were worlds I had to negotiate and people I wouldn't do without. After a year teaching English in North Africa, where suddenly everyone looked like me, I was persuaded by the injustice I couldn't fight that I would have to go back to my own society to find a voice.

I decided to write for the fledgling Black theatre scene which at that time was mainly focused on people from the Caribbean, only to find that our concerns were not the same. My efforts were to make a theatre that reflected the society I knew, as opposed to assert a Black identity and secure an opportunity to work that was, in my view, insufficiently critical of mainstream theatre and not at all critical of the funding policies that subsidised and curated it. By the end of the 1980s, the Arts Council of England considered that its experiment with Black theatre had failed to produce work of quality and most of those theatres were cut. From now on, people would have to find their way into the mainstream of British theatre with the help of such strategies as integrated, or colour-blind, casting. Not something that has ever worked on television, a major source of income and career development for people working in theatre, and certainly not a strategy for the kind of play I wanted to write.

I left the country to work in Europe and Africa, convinced that a stagnant ghetto had been created and culled by a policy that had failed to grasp the reality of our diversity. The *Eclipse* report in 2002 – effectively a census of Arts Council mainstreaming policy – revealed the return to the effective disappearance of Black people from the British theatre scene, aside from the occasional spear-carrier, minstrel show or star newsreader. We still do not have a theatre that reflects the society we live in. That is as poor as I think theatre gets.

Now let's look at this from another angle. Who cares? Plays get written. Theatres get filled. The arts go on. Society doesn't fall apart. What's changed? We no longer face the Powellite spectre of 'rivers of blood' flowing from the social unrest sparked by post-war immigration. Previously immigrant populations – in Brixton, Bradford, Toxteth, Handsworth, anywhere – are now indigenous. And our native differences are as decisive as those of the Ulster Scots, the Geordies and the Welsh. We are now a Balkanised nation, tolerant of difference. But that don't mean we get along when difference is tested. Take the example of Gurpreet Kaur Bhatti's play, *Behzti* at the Birmingham Repertory Theatre in 2004. There were some early negotiations between the theatre and the Sikh community, but in the end the theatre was stormed by a mob that should have been an audience for the play. The values of art and religious identity found no common space. What went wrong?

You could say it's a shame people don't know the difference between a gudwara, or Sikh

'The essentialising of communities inevitably leads to the view that traditional mushaira will be of interest to people of South Asian origin, and in doing so treats them as a homogenous group, whilst also assuming that it appeals to them alone.' **Tony Graves** (page 154).

Naz Koser looks at how arts organisations can work with faith groups on page 191.

holy place, and a theatre, but I think you'd be missing the point. We don't know it ourselves. We take a fundamentally mercantilist approach to funding, generating and marketing the arts to sectional interests. You're Sikhs, here's your play. We know nothing about you, and tomorrow is gay or Black or rural or OAPs. We have failed to grasp the reality of our diversity. We still make art in boxes, and the movement within our society escapes us.

Until we recognise it as a threat. The 'war on terror' – which currently concentrates minds on our diversity, and aside from turning the critical gaze of audiences into a form of surveillance – proposes a potential enemy-within that neatly dove-tails with the folding of the war on Irish terrorism. A war into which I woke as a teenager with the arrest of relatives and the scattering of cousins. It's worth reflecting that the same thing happened to Shakespeare's cousins, the Ardens, as part of the anti-Catholic terror that swept Elizabethan England. But that was a society that made a theatre people still talk about.

Arts Council England and diversity: striving for change

Naseem Khan traces the Arts Council's engagement with cultural diversity over the past 30 years and asks why hasn't more changed

In the past 10 years or so, survey after survey of the UK arts sector has provided evidence of inequality: Black and Asian potential audiences report alienation from major arts centres (2000), only one top manager in 17 arts centres is Black or Asian (1998), less than 0.5 per cent of the first Arts Capital Lottery funding for buildings goes to Black and Asian arts buildings (1997).

But the year 2006 marks the 30th anniversary of the Arts Council's engagement with cultural diversity with the publication in 1976 of *The Arts Britain Ignores,* the first commissioned report into what was then called 'ethnic minorities' arts'. So why hasn't more changed?

Contrary to expectations, *The Arts Britain Ignores* revealed a vast amount of cultural work taking place within 'ethnic minority communities'. Then known as the Arts Council of Great Britain, it did not intend the project to line the organisation up behind anti-racism. Nevertheless, it concluded in essence (if not overtly) that it saw 'ethnic minorities' as part of its overall remit. Until then, local race equality and community relations councils had been responsible for what little funding there was.

But where in the Arts Council's rigidly compartmentalised structure would these new arrivals fit? The immediate answer was to place them within the remit of the new Community Arts panel rather than the artform departments. The belief was that 'ethnic minority arts' were the province of the communities from which they had sprung and not of any wider significance.

Alda Terracciano explores the impact of the decision not to place the responsibility for cultural work from 'ethnic minority communities' within the artform departments on page 199.

The concept that a British-based artist of ethnic minority origin might feature on the international scene was alien.

Artists put pressure on the Arts Council to deliver. MAAS (Minorities Arts Advisory Service) was established as a result of the report and speedily acquired a large membership that spawned five new regional branches. Growing discontent among artists also fuelled the actions of the Greater London Council in the 1980s which, under Ken Livingstone, espoused the cause of Black Arts with enthusiasm. The Arts Council, however, was still questioning the status and quality of Black arts, failing to see that these were value judgements not absolutes.

In consequence, progress was painfully slow. In 1984-5, for instance, only 0.03 per cent of the Arts Council's music budget and 0.8 per cent of its drama budget went on 'Black Arts'. Stung by the general torpor, Council member, Usha Prashar, instigated a new monitoring exercise resulting in an Ethnic Minority Arts Action Plan in 1986 that took a highly controversial step: the adoption of a quota. Since ethnic minorities made up 4 per cent of the population, within two years 4 per cent of the Arts Council's budget should be spent on 'Afro-Caribbean and Asian arts, the employment of Afro-Caribbean people and the encouragement through marketing of audiences from those communities'. Organisations funded by the Arts Council would be asked to show how they too would allocate 4 per cent in a similar way.

The general consensus is that the quota exercise did not work. Although it resulted in some new

money going to neglected areas, too many artists – both Black and white – disliked it and it was never wholeheartedly carried out. Imposed from above, it encouraged both tokenism and short-term thinking. It also revealed dilemmas that still exist today: is art always ethnically tied, or does it transcend race; and is 'Black Arts' anything created by a Black person?

As a result of this, and a series of hard-hitting reports that identified continuing inequality and lack of opportunity, a new initiative was put in place in 1989. It based itself firmly on race, calling for a policy that would set up Black-run centres, training for top jobs and an effective monitoring system. The initiative adopted the term 'cultural diversity' and for the first time identified the causes of inequality as not just inequalities of funding, but also organisational culture, tradition and privilege that restricted entry.

In response, the Arts Council, now the Arts Council of England, set up a dedicated Access Unit with a remit that covered all the 'marginalised' areas: disability, ethnicity and gender and its own staff and budget. Its stance was energetic and confrontational, and it regularly took up cudgels against the ethos of other Arts Council departments.

As a result, the proportion of the visual arts budget for Black arts increased from 0.03 per cent to 15.6 per cent over 10 years; in drama it rose from 0.8 per cent to 2.5 per cent in 1994-5; and in music from 0.03 per cent to 1.4 per cent. Major organisations founded then, such as inIVA

Madani Younis on page 84 claims that tokenism and short-term thinking are still rife.

Jorella Andrews (page 141) and **Kodwo Eshun** (page 50) look more closely at the shifting relationship between artists and their collective ethnic identities while **Ranjit Sondhi** (page 46) and **Ziauddin Sardar** (page 37) explore the space 'in between'.

and Autograph, are still in existence. But it was rather as if the Arts Council proper had attached an outboard motor to give it the power to get to a destination that it did not have the capacity to reach on its own. The initiative perpetuated a type of apartheid that painted art and artists into an ethnic corner and it absolved Arts Council departments of the duty to integrate those arts and artists fully into their own thinking.

In the 1990s, the concept of multiculturalism, in which people were confined behind their racial identities and divisions were institutionalised, began to lose ground. The walls between cultures were being decisively dismantled. Artists were claiming a freedom to stay with their ethnic identity, to abandon it, to parody, evolve, deconstruct and reconstruct it – as they chose.

To its credit, the Arts Council was up to speed with this notable shift. In 1997 it liaised with the British Council and staged a conference called *Re-Inventing Britain* that focused on ideas that were common parlance in cultural studies departments but new to the mass of arts administrators, policy makers and many artists who attended. Discussions focused on the space 'in between' – between races, between traditions and cultures – as a dynamic point of transition and one that generates a rush of fresh creativity. In this way of thinking, the Black artist becomes hero rather than victim, pioneer rather than preserver, visionary rather than traditionalist. It presaged debates over globalisation that again saw the artist as forerunner and that formed the subject of the last collaborative conference between Arts

Council England and the British Council: *Connecting Flights: New Cultures of the Diaspora* in 2002.

Back in 1976, the Arts Council had assumed that opening the door would be enough to ensure equal access. But events have shown that it is not the door that matters, but the position of the walls. Some walls are so constructed that they keep newcomers inadvertently out, but they are so familiar that they are hardly noticed. The idea of institutional racism galvanised both the Arts Council of England and the Commission for Racial Equality with the realisation that in order to counter such racism, thorough-going change is needed from top to bottom of organisations and within the Arts Council as well as outside it.

The Arts Council, now known as Arts Council England, has come to recognise that it can no longer be passive but needs to analyse barriers and take corrective action, sometimes with other partners. This goes against the grain for people who believe that it should not involve itself in 'social action'. But the results of collaborations like the Roots programme that involves partnerships with the BBC's regional centres have shown how careful strategic intervention can open out areas that were not previously on the cultural map. Intervention has also ensured 26% from Capital Lottery was allocated to culturally diverse projects since 2000.

The BRIT Touring and Eclipse initiatives focus practically on the way local theatre managers

Olu Alake discusses how the cultural sector can tackle institutional racism on page 31 while **Maddy Morton** looks at how arts organisations can achieve 'thorough-going change' on page 131.

You'll find an article by **Tony Panayiotou** on Arts Council England's future approach to diversity on page 207 – including a commitment to dropping the phrase 'cultural diversity'.

deal with today's multiracial society, artists and audiences. They work to give them more product and more understanding of how to work with it. The diversity strand of the New Audiences programme aimed to take down the fences between arts activity located in specific Black and minority ethnic communities and so-called mainstream institutions, so that each can converse with and nourish the other. The Race Equality Scheme, launched in 2005, is part of the national response to new legislation. It provides guidance to arts organisations on how they can start to rethink the historic patterns that have made it difficult for new-comers to get a foothold within the arts. If the arts are to become a genuinely shared space, it must be used to challenge established power – a radical goal.

The distance travelled from the benevolent paternalism of a mere 30 years ago to today's more considered, informed and proactive approach is considerable. But many questions now need answers: What role should ethnicity play within the broader concept of 'cultural diversity'? What is the right balance between policy that responds and policy that leads? How can the relationship between equality and quality be monitored? To what extent has Arts Council England's multimillion pound decibel programme succeeded in opening up the 'mainstream'? And, above all, when can we drop the term 'cultural diversity'?

The competitive edge

Race equality makes good business sense says

Sandra Kerr, Director of Race for Opportunity

The business world seems to be opening its eyes to the benefits of initiating positive action plans to tackle race diversity issues in the workplace. The result of this change of attitude is borne out on the bottom line and the business case for a racially diverse workforce has never been stronger. In today's competitive economy, organisations failing to embed strategies on race risk suffering both commercially and in terms of brand reputation.

The Race for Opportunity Campaign (RfO), part of Business in the Community (BitC), carries out a benchmarking exercise on an annual basis to find out how organisations are progressing with the race agenda. Organisations from both the private and public sectors participate. In 2005 70 private and 43 public sector organisations, representing over 1.6 million employees, took up the challenge. Ninety-one per cent of these organisations reported having a clear business case for focusing on race – which is over double the figure for 2001 (38 per cent) and up from 78 per cent in 2004.

The message coming through in our report[1] was clear. Companies need to recognise the communities in which they are operating from board level down. Those communities are the lifeblood of organisations: a talent pool to recruit from, and customers to market to. In today's environment it is no longer enough to rely on traditional perceptions of who your community or customer is.

Changing demographics are not just important in terms of future employees. The finance sector

How can cultural organisations 'recognise the communities in which they are operating from board level down'? **Maddy Morton** offers some answers on page 131 while **John E McGrath** looks at his own organisation's efforts on page 138.

Ahmad Jamal explores how the retail sector is responding to these opportunities on page 112.

has been leading the way with research to understand the needs of potential minority ethnic customers, leading to more targeted, relevant marketing. These are huge untapped markets that businesses cannot afford to ignore:

- the minority ethnic population grew by 48 per cent between 1991 and 2001, from 3.1 million to 4.6 million. By 2009 ethnic minority communities will rise from 6.7 per cent to 8 per cent of the total working age population, half of its growth
- there are approximately 250,000 minority ethnic enterprises in the UK, contributing approximately £13 billion a year to the British economy
- the collective wealth of the richest 300 Asians in Britain in 2004 totalled £14.3 billion
- research by the Bank of England in 1997 gave the annual income after tax of people from minority ethnic backgrounds as £15 billion, contributing to £36 billion UK GDP. Figures now being quoted in other sources assert that this figure has risen dramatically. One publication estimates that Black and Asian consumers earn £156 billion after tax
- ETHNOS, a leading researcher into the minority ethnic population stated that in 1997, minority ethnic groups in London alone, generated £7.2 billion, the equivalent of 15 per cent of the capital's disposable income
- research by the Institute of Practitioners of Advertising (IPA) shows that young Asian and Black men are big spenders – £32 million every year

The finance sector is the largest in RfO and shows

a clear understanding of the factors that are key to successful race diversity strategies. In the 2004 RfO Benchmarking exercise, Lloyds Group were ranked second, West Bromwich Building Society third, HSBC fifth, HBOS seventh and Barclays Bank tenth, reflecting many years of investment in and commitment to race diversity. These businesses are all seeing how these factors can make a measurable impact on the bottom line.

By ensuring that their workforce reflects the communities in which they operate, successful finance sector organisations are able to use this internal expertise to ensure that they are accurately meeting the needs of existing and future communities.

The most proactive organisations don't just make sure they 'know their market' better than ever before, they also reflect it in their product development and corporate imaging.

HBOS and West Bromwich Building Society are two examples of organisations that have both invested significantly in the targeting of Asian communities. Extensive research carried out by both has shown quite clearly that Asian communities want specialist products and services delivered by people who reflect their culture and understand their needs.

In 2003 HBOS undertook a number of highly targeted marketing activities, ranging from sponsorship of Asian events and festivals to the production of marketing literature in Urdu, Punjabi, Hindi and Gujarati. The impact on the bottom line has been clear: the volume of

'Successful organisations model internally what they wish to express externally. On this basis, logic tells us that to have the best chance of achieving a culturally diverse audience you need first to achieve this with your own team.'
Maddy Morton, page 131.

Saad Saraf's agency has developed many advertising campaigns targeted at particular communities, including the BT project to win new business from minority ethnic communities described here. You'll find the case studies on page 120.

international payments in the West Midlands area grew by an average of 150 per cent in the last quarter of 2003 and 60 per cent of those customers were Asian.

West Bromwich Building Society estimates that around 10 per cent of its income is attributable to the minority ethnic communities that are prevalent within its Heartland operating area including Birmingham and Leicester. These potential customers prefer face to face interviews with a member of staff of their choice. In responding, the Society has identified clear financial benefits: an increase in customers, higher mortgage balances and a good return on investment.

BT also reports higher productivity levels and sales as a result of focusing on race equality issues with their share of the minority ethnic market in 2005 standing at an estimated £500 million. Using the Asian Helpline, BT hopes to attract new business worth in excess of £100 million with an estimated profit of £16 million attributed to minority ethnic customers alone.

The business case for organisations to engage with consumers from minority ethnic communities has never been clearer or more immediate. Those organisations that act now, and lay inclusive foundations, will become the future employers of choice, thus gaining a competitive edge and ultimately generate more profit and value for all stakeholders.

Measure for measure: discrimination law and the arts sector

Olu Alake of the Commission for Racial Equality points out the obligations and responsibilities of arts organisations to promote racial equality

The Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) has always recognised that arts and culture have a central place in the everyday lives of all UK citizens, fostering a sense of well-being and belonging. In 1976, the Community Relations Commission (later to become the CRE) collaborated with the Arts Council of Great Britain and the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation to commission Naseem Khan's seminal report *The Arts Britain Ignores*. Early in 1978, the CRE set up an Advisory Committee on Ethnic Minority Arts, a declaration of intent which boosted the argument for giving financial, logistical and social support to what was then known as 'ethnic arts'.

And times changed. The discourse on racism shifted to more esoteric arguments about culture and identity. The label changed too, with art by people from minority ethnic communities categorised at various times as Black arts, ethnic arts, Black and Asian arts, Black and minority ethnic or BME arts, multicultural arts and now culturally diverse arts. Along with rapid changes in terminology came confusion about the agenda and so the underlying sense of purpose has inevitably become compromised. But we shouldn't let discussions about labels obscure the problem – racism is still racism.

The Race Relations Act 1976, as amended by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, imposes certain specific and general duties to promote racial equality on the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA), Arts Council England and

On page 21, **Naseem Khan** looks at what has changed since she wrote her report.

'It is through cultural dimensions that racism is perpetuated and made most real.'

the other 61 arts and culture-related public authorities listed in the Act. Different bodies are bound by the racial equality duty in different ways, mainly proportionate to their size and influence, but their responsibilities cascade through the funding system to every organisation that gets a grant from them. The message is simple: no racial discrimination will be tolerated in any cultural organisation in receipt of public funding. But the Acts also make it unlawful for any arts organisation, even those that don't get any public money, to discriminate on the grounds of race, colour, nationality or ethnic or national origin in the areas of employment, training, housing, education and the provision of goods, facilities and services.

So every cultural organisation has a responsibility to examine and monitor all aspects of their operations to ensure that they are not directly or indirectly racially discriminating. That includes everything from recruitment to retention, from public relations to board membership, from programming to audience development and outreach work – everything. Where organisations discover real or potential discriminatory practices and activities, they need to take the necessary corrective action immediately. Failure to do so is an abdication of responsibility. For publicly funded organisations it should also result in censure and sanctions from the relevant funder.

But promoting racial equality is not just about preventing racial discrimination. Cultural organisations have great potential to advance the racial equality agenda. While racism might be conditioned by economic imperatives, it is

through cultural dimensions – religion, literature, art, science, the media – that it is perpetuated and made most real. Minority communities have changed significantly in the past 30 years, and so have the arts in the UK yet some things stay the same. The debate about the marginalisation of arts from 'other' communities is as valid now as when Naseem finished her report 30 years ago. The power dynamic in the institutions that serve as gatekeepers for the arts has not been effectively challenged let alone dismantled. These power-dynamics are invisible barriers to the effectiveness of even the most well-intentioned racial equality policy. The strategic role of the CRE makes it a crucial body in this battle.

Due to wider sociopolitical developments and the concentration on other priorities that were deemed more pressing, the working partnership between artists from minority ethnic communities, cultural institutions and the CRE has lost momentum.

As a result several artists from ethnic minority backgrounds, having spent years fighting losing battles with cultural institutions, have entirely retreated from the system. Instead, they produce and disseminate work themselves, finding their own ingenious ways of evading institutional and structural limitations. No-one has been putting real pressure on the sector from outside so little has changed. A refusal to engage actively with the system has meant that no-one has been negotiating entry points into the gatekeeper organisations, especially in the context of funding. This has eternalised the

Why is the debate about the marginalisation of arts from artists of Black and Asian origin still valid now? **Lia Ghilardi** argues that the concept of multiculturalism has led to structures and practices that prevent genuine communication and left most of the main public institutions untouched (page 54).

inequalities of the system and so had profound effects especially on a younger generation of artists. The result is entrenched marginalisation.

The CRE has a general power to investigate any organisation if it believes there is sufficient evidence of unlawful racial discrimination. To fight this entrenched marginalisation, the people most affected – Black and minority ethnic artists – need to work with the CRE to highlight the issues. This would result in a more informed overview of the arts funding system, ensuring the necessary corrective action is taken. This requires a re-engagement with the sector which, while not palatable to all Black and minority ethnic artists, needs to be recognised as a necessary tool for ending discrimination on grounds of race or ethnic origin.

It would be ironic if the one area of society which could not find effective yet creative means of dismantling racism was to be the cultural sector. If we use the legal framework currently in place, if we work together with intelligence, goodwill yet relentless determination, we will overcome the intractable elements of the system. Together we will create and sustain an environment where the creativity of every person in the UK, regardless of race, colour or creed, will be enabled to their utmost potential.

Tamasha's production of Ghostdancing**.**
Photographer: Charlie Carter

Notes and references

The competitive edge: Sandra Kerr

1 *Taking Action – Measuring Impact*, Race for Opportunity, 2005

Chapter Two: the complexities of diversity

The arguments for increasing diversity within the cultural sector are compelling. So why aren't more organisations responding more effectively?

Key ideas

1 The ways of working widely accepted within the cultural sector are based on outdated philosophies of multiculturalism

2 We need policies and ways of working that abandon conventions and stereotypes in favour of an inter-cultural space that both reflects and trancends minority and majority cultural identities

3 We need cultural policies that respond not to multicultural-ism but to local diversity and changing needs and that are created in the context of broad local develop-ment priorities

4 Arts managers need to question the 'common sense' thinking behind their working practice and check the accuracy of their assumptions

5 Achieving diversity requires change in organisational culture and managers with the skills to bring about that change and respond to the challenges of complexity

Transmodernity: art beyond modernity and multiculturalism

Where did multiculturalism come from? **Ziauddin Sardar** unpicks its origins and implications and proposes an alternative model

Questions do not arise in a vacuum. They emerge within a framework and have a context. Often the framework itself directs us towards an answer – an answer that confirms the unquestioned assumptions of the framework.[1] Art policies for a pluralistic Britain have become problematic because we have been asking the wrong questions that emerge from a framework that is not conducive to pluralism. That is why we are unable to answer the biggest policy question of them all: how are art and tolerance, founded on the principle of freedom of expression, to coexist with sensitivity to the sensitivities of minority communities in a pluralistic, modern Britain?

The framework within which we ask questions and that guides us towards answers is that of modernity. Modernity should not be confused with modernism (which is a movement in art). Modernity is the world view that emerged during the Renaissance and the Reformation – when 'new worlds' were being discovered – and has its roots in the Enlightenment. Modernity means much more than the 'here and now'; it refers to the ideological, social and cultural patterns that shape the outlook of western societies.

Modernity not only colours all our perceptions about ethnic minorities, it is also the bedrock on which art is produced and policies formulated. Indeed, multiculturalism itself is deeply embedded in modernity – its terms of reference and basic assumptions are constructed out of a particular history of modernity. And modernity intrinsically frames ethnic identity as an unchanging monolith and therefore problematic. It can

The biggest cultural policy question of all is: how can the principle of freedom of expression coexist with sensitivity to the sensitivities of minority communities in a pluralistic, modern Britain?

Ziauddin Sardar argues here that our western view of other cultures leads us to assume that individual identity is subordinate to ethnic identity. See page 141 for **Jorella Andrews'** response – an approach to programming the visual arts that focuses on the individuality behind the labels.

promote no other attitude towards minorities except that of paternalism.

Modernity is western civilisation writ large.[2] It is a construct of the historic experience and problems of western societies and especially their exercise of power over other peoples in other parts of the globe. Modernity was forged not just in the crucible of colonial experience, it was also invested with a special mission – to modernise all 'others'. It continues to be perceived as the future for all other cultures.

Modernity comes with an inbuilt critique of all ethnic minorities. In its framework, non–western cultures have not made the great imaginative leap of emancipated conscience. That emancipation can only come if they embrace modernity. Therefore modernity must find all traditional and non-western ethnic forms inferior, un-free, illiberal and restricted by their ways of knowing, being and doing. And yet the ethic of choice and equality, the agenda of social justice and inclusion, cannot be denied to minorities. Modernity tolerates minority rights, traditions and lifestyles because it assumes that under its tutelage all cultures will eventually become modern and join the dominant order.

The singular fact about all 'others', from the perspective of modernity, is their membership of a group, a larger social and cultural entity defined by its beliefs and traditional forms. Modernity has even questioned whether other cultures actually have a concept of the self, so embedded and subordinate – it is argued – is individual identity to membership of the

collective. It is not surprising that ethnicity is so problematic for art.

Modernity has endowed art with a privileged role: the individuation of the self. Individuation is the process of liberation of individual conscience from which all the civil liberties and civic institutions of modernity derive. The contemplation and mediation of the meaning of self is the business of art – the cultural media that refine modernity's concepts of civilisation. To further the historic process of self realisation, art has been granted a special licence: the licence to be radical, to be critical, to challenge, to defy, to mortify and outrage as it reflects on the images and ideas of what it is to be a self in the context of time and society and so bring transcendence into the experience of its audience.

Culture considers and defines what it means to be a civilised, modern person and art as individual expression is its high medium. But culture in another sense is the concepts, ideas, history and present circumstances of human society that provide the themes, forms, myths, rituals and conventions out of which art is fashioned. Art cannot avoid the premises of modernity that has privileged its existence. It may pretend to scrutinise these premises; and perhaps the best art succeeds in doing so. But art itself can be a routine, in which easy assumptions sustain conventions and stereotypes. When modern western art comes to consider ethnicity it encounters particular problems. It can deal only with ethnicity because it does not know how to find the individual – its sovereign subject and object – within this tightly woven construct.

Is arts marketing 'a routine in which easy assumptions sustain conventions and stereotypes'? **Mel Larsen** discusses the problems associated with market segmentation on page 168.

If cultures are constantly changing and evolving, as Sardar suggests, wouldn't our programming and marketing be more effective if they were less concerned with reflecting difference and instead focused on the interactions between cultures that create new and exciting artistic experiences. **Alistair Spalding** discusses how this is happening in dance on page 158.

I would like to suggest that we need a totally new framework both for interrogating art and asking relevant questions and seeking viable answers to the issues of cultural identity. That framework – indeed, the big idea of our time – is transmodernity.[3]

Transmodernity, as the term suggests, not only takes us beyond modernity but also that other great 'ism' of our time, postmodernism.

The difference comes in the form of two major shifts. First, transmodernity sees identities, ethnicities, traditions, cultures, faiths, communities and groups as complex and dynamic, constantly and continuously changing. It sees them as capable and eager to change with the potential to transcend the dominant model of modernity. Second, transmodernity shifts the notions of modernity from being the given and exclusive preserve of the West, to a participatory negotiation of a plethora of (trans)modernities each answering to different histories. Just as there are different ways to be human, there are different ways to be modern. So each ethnic community, cultural identity, or faith group is capable of producing its own form of (trans)modernity based on its own norms, values and worldviews.

These shifts bring parity to questions of cultural diversity and issues of cultural relations. The conventional idea that only 'the West' modernises 'the East' is turned upside down. Ethnic communities can (trans)modernise Britain just as much as the dominant modern culture can modernise the ethnic communities.

Trans means 'going beyond' the present situation; it is a dynamic term, rooted in the idea of constant change. Cultures are always changing, always in a state of becoming something else. Cultures do not exist in splendid isolation, but are always interacting, synthesising into new forms, evolving into new orders. Thus all future actions are located in the interactions of cultures. And the future belongs not to a given model of modernity but to a plethora of transmodernities; and always exists as futures.

Under transmodernity cultures are not a fixed and inflexible tool kit. Culture is the flexibility to expand tradition to make place for newness and domesticate the unfamiliar, to be altered in the process without losing one's sense of identity and connectedness to the past.

In short, transmodernity aims to open up knowledge and cultural spaces where difference can exist as difference in terms of its own ideas, where cultures can be seen not just in terms of difference but also in terms of common ground.

How would this relate to multiculturalism? As it is constructed and operates in society, multiculturalism is incapable of delivering these goals. Although multiculturalism is a great idea, it is still yesterday's idea: too deeply embedded in modernity and too fixated with containing and managing difference. This is why multiculturalism is in crisis.

Multiculturalism is an equation of power. And the power it manipulates is the power to select, reflect and dramatise what it must be like to be an 'ethnic community'. Under multiculturalism,

'Although multiculturalism is a great idea, it is still yesterday's idea: too deeply embedded in modernity and too fixated with containing and managing difference.'

minorities are always ethnics, they must justify their presence in the art world almost exclusively through their ethnicity and, as such, they can never be truly modern and an equal part of the mainstream. Minority communities within Britain are doubly included and doubly disadvantaged by their dependent status as non–modern forms of existence. They are included on the expectation that they will operate as part of the generality of modern British society. They are included also as special categories, subject to the special toleration that is a particular gift of modernity. But they are excluded from the corridors of power. And they are excluded from defining what it is to be modern.

The very questions we ask about minorities in multiculturalism reflect this balance of power. We ask 'how can we celebrate difference?' instead of 'how can we empower difference?' We ask 'how can we represent minority cultures' instead of 'how can minority cultures represent themselves?' We ask 'what does it means to be a minority ethnic?' instead of 'what does it mean to be human from your perspective?'

These fatal questions constantly require ethnic minorities to justify themselves as ethnic minorities. They are never allowed to be themselves; let alone raise the wider issues that are of concern to all. In having to perennially justify themselves, they have to speak through and so reaffirm the stereotypes and flame the prejudices of the majority community. To be included, it is sufficient for minority groups to perform their heritage and retrace their past, for that is all they have. The performance is limited to

those sets of private, elective rituals and festivals that sustain group identity and entertain non–members of the group, but do not engage with the lives, ideas or meanings of the wider modern society.

Ethnicity is the butterfly collection of multiculturalism. It is the display case of multiple difference. But Britain as a multicultural society has another opposing way of responding to its minority communities, that of broad generalisation. It lumps all ethnicities together under the grand definition of their underlying difference from modernity, however distinct and different they may be. They can easily be sketched as Blacks or Asians for these terms indicate the most important things to know: they are not western, nor modern, but only conditional citizens of the cultural domain of western civilisation.

Within multiculturalism, what makes art, what is selected as expressive of the condition of ethnic existence, is the tragedy of being torn in various directions by the contradictions of living in a modern society. The stereotype is portrayed as an endless hall of mirrors where distorted imaginings of what it is to be different, what it is to be ethnic, what it is to have a traditional heritage, are rudely juxtaposed with the possibilities, freedoms and choices offered by modernity. To be ethnic is to censor the self, to be modern is to realise whatever self one chooses. It is this irreducible difference minority communities are asked to endorse by the generalising questions imposed upon them. This is why I constantly hear murmurs of 'paternalism' from members of minority communities – it is a paternalistic framework that will always be resisted.

Sardar suggests that members of ethnic minority communities reject multiculturalism's emphasis on ethnic existence as 'the tragedy of being torn in various directions by the contradictions of living in a modern society' as paternalistic. But this is so often the way we try and make our events 'relevant' the them. No wonder our marketing doesn't work.

Urban marketing seeks to create just the kind of multiple, two-way relationships that Sardar describes. See page 125 for **Yinka Adegoke's** overview.

The emphasis on the trans aspect of transmodernity means that it cannot privilege any cultural standpoint. That is why historically constructed multiculturalism, where assumptions of equality exist within a hierarchy, has no place in this framework.

If every culture is characterised by a sense of mobility than everything is de-centred and we can only scrutinise an amalgam of cultural interactions and transactions. Multiculturalism cannot understand why the more a community is faced with change and is undergoing change, it holds more passionately and defensively to the question of identity. This is why transmodernity replaces multiculturalism with the notion of Mutually Assured Diversity (MAD).

MAD proposes not just that we have diverse cultural groups but that there is also intrinsic and changing diversity within groups. It follows that internally individual cultures are complex and speak with multiple voices; and externally they engage not in a dialogue with other cultures but rather polylogue, where a number of different voices speak simultaneously. The objective of MAD is to ensure that this diversity is recognised and negotiated on a mutual basis.

But MAD is much more than mutuality. It is explicitly a definition of what we are being mutual about. It is the proposition that ethnicity is about relationships and that relationships are multiple, changing two ways. It is about perspectives and empowers people to articulate not only what it means to be a member of a minority with a historically different heritage but also what it is to be British.

Art should be the arena where MAD gets a platform. But the transition can only happen when the battlelines are redrawn. The starting point is acceptance of cultural identity, its empowerment to speak for itself without addressing the agenda of required questions, to make new allusions drawn from a diversity of sources and experiences brought into relationship.

We have to drop the expectation that ethnic cultural identity is about explaining oneself and accept it as a way of expressing ideas and images, allowing the unfamiliar to become the medium through which familiarity is acquired. Diversity means there are no limits to what a minority community and its voices can be interested in or have an opinion upon or about which they have a pertinent story to relate.

In the final analysis, transmodernity and MAD are all about power. Transmodernity seeks to undermine the sources of control and subordination, as they are enacted in political, social and cultural structures. It aims at nothing less than transforming the world, moving it to a new level, where mutual diversity and cultural equality are the norms.

When we commission work from artists of Black and Asian backgrounds, do we really set no limits to the stories they tell or do we insist that they address the 'required agenda' of multiculturalism?

Margins at the centre

Multiculturalism is about parallel lines that never meet, says **Ranjit Sondhi.** So how can arts organisations balance universality and diversity?

Should the arts be about universal truths or confrontation, experimentation and debate?

Over the past few years, I have become increasingly preoccupied with reconciling tensions and balancing opposites. Life seems to be wholly constructed on pairs of principles that pull in opposite directions. Individual liberty is set against social justice, self-determination against equal participation, security against risk, choice against constraint, social cohesion against cultural diversity. Elaborate arguments are constructed to establish the supremacy of one position over another, and the public is coerced into coming down heavily on one side or the other. Nowhere is this more of an issue than in the concept and delivery of the arts in a culturally diverse society that struggles to be open, inclusive and democratic.

This particular debate, in the words of Cameron, is between two distinct stances – the traditional one of the arts as a temple, and a newer one of the arts as a *forum*.[5] As temple, art plays a 'timeless and universal function involving the use of a structured sample of reality, not just a reference but as an objective model against which to compare individual perceptions'. In contrast, as forum, art is a place for 'confrontation, experimentation, and debate'.

What I propose is a significant departure from conceiving and doing things in the way in which we have always done. It is about investigating the uncharted space between polar opposites, the complex shades of grey between Black and white. It goes to the very heart of why and how an intercultural society might be conceived and constructed. In the past, out of a perfectly understandable and well intentioned

but somewhat misguided liberalism we have tinkered with the idea of multiculturalism as an aggregate, a simple arithmetic sum, of self-contained cultures existing in splendid isolation, side by side in parallel worlds. But the whole point about parallel lines is that they never meet.

I believe with a quiet passion that the future must lie in creative connections and crossovers. Some see this as cultural contamination, dilution, leakage – the death of heritage. I do not. However, before this debate about both defining and breaching cultural boundaries can take place, I believe there has to be a much greater understanding of the richness and complexity of cultural traditions that pre-date the West.

Consider, for example, how the public – white, Black or Asian – remains deeply uninformed about the long, highly complex and refined traditions of South Asian music and dance, the key texts, poets and novelists, of great civilisations, and the extra-ordinarily varied cultural history of the Indian sub-continent. This knowledge remains beyond the reach of even the best-educated.

At the same time, there has to be a recognition that our cultural identities have never been fixed and unalterable, nor have they been wholly fluid and subjected to unlimited reconstruction. So the role of major cultural providers should be to both reflect minority and majority cultural identities and to transcend them. This means finding novel ways of balancing the demands for both universality and diversity in the arts.

Lia Ghilardi believes that a focus on 'creative connections and crossovers' will lead to a more 'productive' understanding of diversity within cultural policy making. See page 54.

How can we achieve programming that reflects 'a rich and plural collective culture'? **Tony Graves** discusses some possible approaches on page 154.

But since both are important, each limits the other. We do not wish to strive for a universality that is so extensive and deep that it leaves no space for diversity, nor should we tolerate so wide and deep a diversity that our communities remain fragmented and cannot effectively enjoy a common interest. As Bhikhu Parekh says, unity should not be formal, abstract and devoid of energy, but should possess great moral, political and cultural depth. Diversity should not be passive, mute and ghettoised but expansive, interactive and capable of creating a rich and plural collective culture.

Part of this purpose is achieved by programmes and programming. But it is also fulfilled through the creation of a climate in which both 'traditional' and 'contemporary' artforms carry respect without the risk of being saturated in either. What we want are innovative solutions for our intellectual and aesthetic needs. We want to create distinctive spaces clearly signposted across boundaries, both fixed and movable, that are like semi-permeable membranes. We want to ensure that our fragile ethnicities are neither obliterated, erased from memory nor, as Stuart Hall observes, 'doomed to survive forever', locked away, shut up, sectioned off, armour plated against other ethnicities.

We need to construct an intercultural space – mental and physical – where inter and intra group tensions are constantly being played out between Black and white artforms, between South Asian and Caribbean groups, between Panjabi and Bengali traditions,

between bourgeois and proletarian cultures, between folk and classical dance, between tradition and modernity, between preservation and experimentation.

This approach is at once both creative and dynamic, as it is elusive and defying a precise definition. Yet it is deeply symbolic of a new way of re-imagining and rethinking a plural 21st century Britain. It is physically demanding, intellectually challenging, deeply satisfying. But that, after all, is what good art is all about.

Scenario for a non-identitarian culture

It's important to think about the complex theories behind common sense ideas, says **Kodwo Eshun**

'There will never be agreement or transparency as to what the terms cultural diversity or cultural difference or cultural identity or ethnicity or cultural hybridity mean and how they should be interpreted. And that is no bad thing.' See page 221 for a discussion of key words and their various meanings.

Working in the art sector, it doesn't take long to realise that art professionals tend to understand and articulate the notion of diversity in strikingly diverse ways. This state of dissensus, rather than consensus, around the idea of cultural difference is almost certainly permanent. There will never be agreement or transparency as to what the terms cultural diversity or cultural difference or cultural identity or ethnicity or cultural hybridity mean and how they should be interpreted. And that is no bad thing. That's what cultural politics is largely about; the struggle over words which stand for values, beliefs, and passions that are in no way as rational as they initially appear.

What is clear though is that these ideas now appear common sense. As deeply familiar notions, which often steer, if not outright predetermine, the thoughts of those who use them. Whether you disagree violently with them or champion them with ardour and verve, chances are that these concepts tend to encourage a certain shared style of argument, a certain form of thinking, a certain kind of attention. Bitter enemies and steadfast allies share the same assumptions, because their guiding ideas emerge from and are formed by a shared vocabulary.

Over time, these patterns of thinking and arguing become habitual, to the point that it becomes easy to forget that these ideas were once theories. Theories formed by philosophers and political sociologists, cultural studies and visual culture critics to open up a space in which new thought, new ideas and new visions might flourish. Theories designed to help articulate

unspoken, unheard, overlooked and undervalued aspects of reality.

How do these theories travel around society? How do they circulate between the distinct yet overlapping spaces of the seminar room and the blog, of the gallery and the politician's office, the magazine editorial meeting and the phone conversation? If we look at theories formed in philosophy and cultural theory, we find a number of deeply unfamiliar notions. Notions that have a popularity within academic and art circles but in no way have moved outside.

Consequently the concept of, for example, the rhizome as developed by the Italian philosopher Felix Guattari and the French philosopher Gilles Deleuze, singularity as developed by the French philosopher Jean Luc Nancy and the Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben, the multitude by the Italian political philosopher Antonio Negri and the American theorist Michael Hardt, performativity as developed by the American queer theorist Judith Butler, opacity by the Martiniquan theorist Edouard Glissant, the Big Other by Slovenian theorist Slavoj Zizek, the post-media condition by the American art historian Rosalind Krauss, relational aesthetics by the French art critic Nicholas Bourriaud or radical evil as developed by the French philosopher Alain Badiou, have all the intractability of ideas designed to crack open the veneer of habit.

These ideas are still deeply, vividly, intensely media-unfriendly. Concepts like these and many more besides have not begun their journey through

'Theories are designed to help articulate unspoken, unheard, overlooked and undervalued aspects of reality.'

See page 141 for **Jorella Andrews'** discussion of how we might programme without pigeonholing artists according to their collective ethnic identities.

culture, their translation across media and between disciplines, over fields and terrains, through ears, mouths, hands, pages, screens and keyboards.

But they will. As strange as it might seem to a curious reader who opens a page of Agamben's *The Coming Community,* or reaches for Nancy's *The Inoperable Community*, or Glissant's *The Poetics of Relation* or Butler's *Bodies that Matter* or Zizek's *Organs without Bodies* and struggles to the bottom of a page, one day, probably less than a decade from now, these ideas will be operational. Functional. Practical. Feasible. People will do things with them. Argue with them. Use them as tools, glasses, microscopes, hammers.

It's not that all these theories are right. It's more that they help you get to different places. Think about what's in front of you a slightly different way. But that slight difference can mean a lot when so many differences have more in common than not.

Let's look at just one of these ideas and run a scenario with it. Imagine that the arts sector has adopted this one idea to the extent that it has become the new common sense. Accepted wisdom. Best practice. In Giorgio Agamben's *The Coming Community* (1993) he argues that:

In the final instance the State can recognise any claim for identity – even that of a State identity within the State (the recent history of relations between the State and terrorism is an eloquent confirmation of this fact). What the State cannot tolerate, however, is that individuals – singularities – form a community without affirming an identity,

that humans co-belong without any representable condition of belonging (even in the form of a simple presupposition).

In a society in which identity is systemically racialised, the desire to change the terms of identity or to escape from identity, whether benign or hostile, into another non-identitarian space is entirely understandable. Such a desire collides with the demand from the State to identify yourself at every time; and in the years since Agamben wrote this we would have to add that the market only reinforces this demand.

At an individual level, it's easy to see how the State and the market abhor a vacuum and rush to fill it as soon as possible. Don't want an identity? Fine! We'll supply one for you. Just sign here. At a collective level something different occurs. The desire to form a community without affirming an identity is perplexing. We are so used to people gathering in the name of an identity, in defence of an identity, a cause, a stance, a difference that it's difficult to comprehend what form that community would take and how in fact it would become a community at all.

What would it, that is we, have in common, if not an identity? This puzzlement, this cognitive interruption of a well-established way of thinking about the nature of agreement, identity, community, politics, commonality, even belief itself is the discomfort provoked by a new concept. Now. Imagine an entire culture that takes this discomfort for granted. How would it behave? What would it believe? What would its art consist of? What would they think of us?

'The desire to form a community without affirming an identity is perplexing. We are so used to people gathering in the name of an identity that it's difficult to comprehend what form that community would take and how in fact it would become a community at all.'

Cultural planning: thinking culturally about diversity

Lia Ghilardi argues that multiculturalism is not the best starting point for the development of cultural policy

The tension between the responsibilities of recognising diversity and yet sustaining social cohesion are the starting points of articles by **Ziauddin Sardar** on page 37 and **Ranjit Sondhi** on page 46.

Introduction

At the Second Informal Meeting of the International Network on Cultural Policy (INCP) in September 1999 in Oaxaca, Mexico, ministers of several countries agreed to undertake specialised work on cultural diversity and globalisation. The research developed following the meeting showed that many countries now face the task of recognizing diversity and protecting the interests and rights of minorities, while at the same time sustaining social cohesion and national solidarity in a global environment.

These tensions are by no means new. They had already been recognised in a 1995 UNESCO report published on behalf of the World Commission on Culture and Development. This focused in particular on two fundamental aspects of globalisation – the increased transnational flow of people, and an internationalisation of the economy with its accompanying global media flows – as the key challenges for policies.

Building on this, Tony Bennett argues in his introduction to the Council of Europe's report *Differing Diversities* that:
Cultural diversity, in all its forms, is posing a profound challenge to traditional formulations of cultural policy, and to our understanding of the public interests served by this policy.

Bennett's argument is that this shift from homogeneity to diversity requires a rethinking of the processes, mechanisms and relationships needed for democratic policy development.

So, taking for granted that we live in an age characterised by the expansion of global migration, the forms of diversity focused on in this paper are those ethnically marked cultural differences produced by the international movement of peoples across the contemporary urban landscape. In particular, the notion of diversity I will be using is that of a dynamic and fluid patchwork of cultures, all of which make a great contribution towards the development of societies and cities in late modernity.

As Leonie Sandercock suggests, cultures grow through the everyday practices of social interaction and all contain multiple differences within themselves that are continually being re-negotiated and recognised.[8] It is through this interpretation of diversity that I will critically comment on current multicultural policies in Europe and Britain, and by using the notion of 'cultural planning', I will attempt to put forward a more 'productive' way of legislating over diversity.

Are multicultural policies a solution?

Cultural diversity has been a prominent theme in cultural policy for several years. A number of influential reports cite cultural diversity as central to the future of cultural policy and cultural policy formulation.[9,10,11] All these documents have a common tendency to assume a connection between diversity and other social, cultural and political agendas. All implicitly recognise diversity as a means of celebrating differentiated identities while simultaneously forging a new sense of belonging in culturally diverse societies. All are indebted to the multicultural paradigm.

'The shift from homogeneity to diversity requires a rethinking of the processes, mechanisms and relationships needed for democratic policy development.'

'Multiculturalism tends to recognise cultural boundaries as fixed and not in a state of flux and remaking as they are in reality.' See **Ziauddin Sardar** on page 37 for a full exploration of the shifting nature of cultural identities.

Multiculturalism, argues Yasmin Alibhai-Brown, was originally invented as a progressive project to promote and to equalise opportunities.[12] However, in Britain, she observes, a distorted form of multiculturalism has increasingly become a banner under which differentiated groups each pursue their own case for attention and resources, while jealously protecting their rights not to be criticised by others. Alibhai-Brown's view is backed by a consensus among commentators and policy makers that multiculturalism has failed to deliver a true intercultural mixing and understanding, sharing and exchange in the public sphere. Multiculturalism, they observe, tends to recognise cultural boundaries as fixed, not in a state of flux and remaking as they are in reality. Crucially, multiculturalism does not allow cross-fertilisation between 'majority' and 'minorities', 'dominant' and 'sub' cultures or between localities, classes and faiths.[13]

In essence, the criticism is that multiculturalism has failed to create the conditions for genuine communication, and that it has been damaging for all groups because it has encouraged identity politics while insufficiently addressing the social inequalities and injustices that generally lie beneath claims for recognition. This being the case, one effect of emphasising respect for minority cultures and celebrating difference has been to leave most of the main public institutions untouched and unchallenged by the reality of a multicultural society.

So far, in the multicultural model of policy making, funding is directed within well-defined boundaries of recognised cultural communities and the issues

tackled by policy are in the main those of access and participation. An illustration is provided by the Arts Council of England which, back in 1997, set out to review policy, taking soundings from artists and arts funders across the country. The result was the production of a five-year cultural diversity action plan.

The plan broadened the scope of cultural diversity in that, for the first time, it did not consider artists in isolation: it not only recognised that diversity needed sound support and administration, but it also acknowledged that would-be administrators needed to feel that they had real career ladders to climb.

Overall, although each of the schemes launched within the plan left their legacy in new funding schemes, networks and partnerships, the most important outcome has been the gradual shift from a perception of cultural diversity as an issue about problematical ethnicity to one that relates to the character of a whole society. This increased awareness, however, has not been followed by a reassessment of policy principles in respect to diversity. Broad aims such as the achievement of greater equality and opportunity continue to be used, but often without a clear understanding of the potential offered by diversity, for example, in relation to cultural innovation.

Diversity can be a catalyst for creativity and innovation, and it's vital that we make the most of the talent available across all sections of the population. The 'policy for diversity' endorsed by Arts Council England (and, on a broader scale, by institutions such as the Council of Europe) has, at

Naseem Khan discusses the impact of the Arts Council of England's policies on diversity on page 21.

See page 112 for **Ahmad Jamal's** analysis of how the market affects enterprises that seek minority ethnic customers.

times, generated a feeling that funding was there to reward people for their ethnic origins rather than for their talents. Cultural innovation, on the other hand, is the result of the need of individuals and groups to profile themselves in the various marketplaces of society, and as such, it can act as a cohesive force.

On this point, it is interesting to see how modest the contribution of arts policy has been to the contemporary British cultural market. If we look back at the 1990s, it was hardly the subsidised arts that generated innovative forms of cultural diversity. More often than not it has been the market that has successfully delivered cultural mixing in the arts. As writer and commentator on creative industries, James Heartfield, observes, there is something quaintly old-fashioned about the demands for special support for Black Arts when novelists such as Zadie Smith and Monica Ali top the bestsellers' lists, and agents are avidly hunting for Asian talent.[14]

The point I wish to make is that the spontaneous mixing of cultures to be found everywhere in large British cities is a resource – not a problem to be corrected by 'access' policies. Hybrid identities are increasingly the preferred way of showing allegiance. People live through layers of affiliation and in doing so, they are creating entirely new forms of intercultural mixes.[15] Thus, in the urban policy sphere, valuing diversity is increasingly seen as being about enabling everybody to succeed and not just about special treatment for favoured minorities. I call this understanding of diversity 'productive' because I see a direct link between

social and economic development and cultural innovation. In particular, I see this 'mongrel' model of diversity as a strategic resource for a country, and one that, if successfully nurtured, could create prosperity for all.

The issue now is to identify appropriate tools to deal with the many policy areas involved in this new understanding of diversity. This is where the cultural planning approach could make a contribution.

Cultural planning – fostering innovation

The 1995 UNESCO report already cited highlighted the recognition and importance of cultural diversity to social and economic development. This was a departure from previous views that, at times, held that culture could be an obstacle to development. The same document also urged policy makers to look for ways of recognising and celebrating specific culturally diverse communities while also fostering practical interaction among these communities.

In Europe, it can be argued that the cultural planning approach has emerged through the 1990s in response to this particular need to deliver development in an increasingly diverse society. In addition, cultural planning also responded to the policy makers' realisation that cultural development could not be imposed from above, but needed to emerge out of specific local or community circumstances and needs. This is because the cultural planning approach assumes a connection between diversity and other social, cultural and political agendas, and it implies that these are mutually achievable and mutually enabling objectives.

See page 207 for **Tony Panayiotou's** overview of Arts Council England's new, broader approach to developing policy on diversity.

In cultural planning, the arts are seen as contributing to a broader set of planning and policy concerns in a particular locality. But is this the kind of approach that **Alda Terracciano** believes denied Black theatre any recognition of its intrinsic artistic merits in the 70s and 80s? (page 101).

More concretely, within cultural planning, diversity is believed to be: a means of celebrating differentiated identities while at the same time fostering a new sense of belonging in culturally hybrid societies; and a means of enriching cultural capital in the cultural industries and knowledge economy, and, as a result, it is instrumental in achieving true citizenship. Cultural planning argues in favour of a greater responsiveness to local diversity, greater capacity to respond to local changing needs and for a better understanding of local development priorities.

The central characteristics of cultural planning are a broad, anthropological definition of 'culture' as 'a way of life', along with the integration of the arts into other aspects of local culture, and into the texture and routines of daily life in the city.[16,17]

Thus, it can be said that cultural planning can help local governments to identify the cultural resources of a city or locality and to apply them in a strategic way to achieve key objectives in areas such as community development, place marketing or economic development.

Unlike traditional cultural policies that continue to be dominated by 'aesthetic' definitions of culture, often drawn from European high culture traditions, cultural planning adopts a broad definition of cultural resources as its basis, and while cultural policies tend to have a sectoral focus, cultural planning adopts a territorial remit. Thus, cultural planning does not reject 'the arts', but rather sees these forms of expression as one aspect of a larger planning and policy domain. The second advantage of this approach is its

territorial focus and, here too, cultural planning does not abandon a sectoral approach but integrates sectoral concerns with more holistic strategies for local development.

As far as the practical applications of this model are concerned, it is worth mentioning the activity of the many Cultural Industries Development Agencies set up in the past five years across the UK. While the remit of the support services operating within those agencies is mainly that of tackling aspects of access, social inclusion and participation, there is also a focus within their actions on business generation aimed at cultural innovation. Social inclusion is here understood as an incentive to active cultural production and as a way of fostering civic pride, and a sense of local identity and ownership.

Even though they don't explicitly acknowledge their debt to the cultural planning approach, the agencies (and the partnerships supporting them) merit some attention. This is because, in my opinion, they are moving towards a 'productive' use of diversity aimed at creating a locally sustainable skills base and a culture of innovation capable of yielding economic rewards for everybody. This is an approach that sees cultural diversity not as a problem to be regulated by top-down policies, but as an asset for local community development. These kinds of mechanisms are piloting new, more integrated and flexible policy-making structures, which could turn out to be the way of dealing with diversity in highly hybridised societies.

'This is an approach that sees cultural diversity not as a problem to be regulated by top-down policies, but as an asset for local community development.'

Key words for the 21st century: complexity, diversity, uncertainty, unpredictability. And anxiety

Nadine Andrews explores how cultural managers can respond to new ways of thinking about diversity

Mel Larsen examines the challenges of segmenting people on page 168.

We can't be sure of much, but what we can be certain of is that with globalisation and the increasing movement of people and ideas our world is becoming more connected and consequently more complex. Simple identities, if they ever existed, are a thing of the past; the traditional categories for segmenting people by ethnic background are becoming less and less useful in describing and understanding something as subjectively meaningful as identity.

And identity, like the future, is a process of becoming; it is under perpetual construction, shaped by our interactions.

But these multidimensional and shifting identities bring with them anxiety - uncertainty about individual, group or national identity is very threatening to a lot of people. Not everyone is in an environment where such instability can be a source of creativity rather than crisis. The big question is how we deal with it.

Birds of a feather flock together

We have a tendency to polarise our experience: us and them, in and out. We unconsciously obliterate the differences within categories and highlight the differences between them. It has been argued that the reason for this is our basic social impulse to maintain power differences. This unconscious act of categorizing into binary opposites becomes entrenched in our minds as ideologies that justify our behaviour, making it seem right and natural. It has even been suggested[18] that our brains have an inbuilt potential capacity for racism[19]: cognitive fluidity of the mind is where experience gained in

one behavioural domain can influence another, and this creates the potential for dehumanising people and treating them as physical objects without rights or emotions, as inferior.

This, then, is our current messy situation. We are aware of racial and social inequality, prejudice and discrimination, and want to rid ourselves of that, and yet our relationships with others are inherently concerned with power. Since the first part of the last century we have known from relativity theory that we live in a decentred world with no fixed points, no universal norms. And yet white western values are treated as the standard against which everything else is defined. We know the fundamental nature of the universe is change and unpredictability, and yet we seek equilibrium and certainty and control.

We know our old ways of thinking are becoming less useful and the world is changing ever faster, but where to next?

A forest cannot be cut with a broken axe

To deal with this and move forward we have to think differently. Let's start with the purpose of cultural diversity. I suggest that there are two agendas that are commonly confused.

One agenda is concerned with equality, overcoming prejudice and discrimination. Here we monitor the profile of our workforce, our output and our audience. How representative are we of our constituency? Are we consciously or unconsciously allowing our prejudice to taint our decision-making? The other agenda is to do with diversity and the benefits it brings to our organisations in relation to

For an in-depth analysis of how our prejudices affect our decision-making, see **Rita Kottasz's** article on page 71.

'Having a workforce that statistically matches the ethnic profile of your catchment area does not necessarily mean you are enjoying the benefits of a diverse workface. Not if you all think in a similar way.'

creativity and innovation, and to productivity and sales due to a wider repertoire of actions at our disposal. Diversity makes us better able to respond effectively to changes in the environment. We can ask: Do we all think the same in our organisation? Where are our new ideas coming from? What types of people do we interact with? But although having a workforce that statistically matches the ethnic profile of your catchment area may make you an equal opportunities employer, it does not necessarily mean you are enjoying the benefits of a diverse workforce. Not if you all think in a similar way.

And it's all too easy to fall into the trap of thinking that just because you have 9.1 per cent of your staff from minority ethnic groups, those groups are therefore represented in your workforce. (There's that tendency to homogenise and polarise again). The advantages of difference lie not between groups but between individuals. It's people that are different.

The kick of a fly can spill the food

This is diversity in a decentred, unpredictable world. There is no fixed arts 'mainstream'. What is generally called the mainstream is a construction of those who have the power – the dominant culture if you like.[20] Diversity – deviance – brings ways of contesting this, of subverting it, of creating new mainstreams. Who would have thought 10 years ago that hip-hop and R&B would be the new pop?

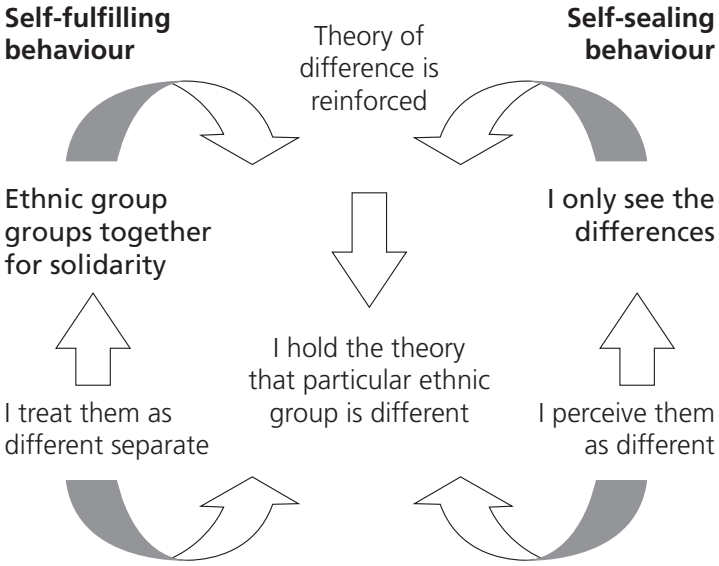
We have to understand ourselves as active participants in all this. We (and our organisations) are not passive objective observers of

something 'out there'[21] – we shape culture not merely reflect it. What we see is coloured by our internal mental models of how the world works, so if we think that white western culture is the norm, then everything else is consciously or unconsciously judged in those terms.

There is more than one way to skin a cat

This all has implications for strategic management. There is no overall blueprint, no 'best' practice or set of simple rules that if followed will guarantee success to all. The long-term future is not under our control, we can plan and strategise all we like but we cannot predict the outcome of our actions beyond a certain point in time. We have little control, if any, over the way that people will respond or that external factors come into play.

Many consequences of our actions are quite unintended.



Context is critical, small fluctuations in one place can lead to big consequences elsewhere. What may seem like just a tactical activity at the time may later be revealed to have been actually pretty strategic. And, god knows, the opposite is true. The same cultural diversity strategy will, over time, play out quite differently and have different effects in different organisations.

This is why managing organisational culture is so important. It determines how an organisation deals with cultural diversity because the ideas and beliefs we have about other people tend strongly to

Maddy Morton discusses ways of embedding diversity in the heart of an organisation on page 131 and **Anne Torreggiani** gives examples of organisations that have achieved it on page 199.

influence how we relate to them. This can lead to traps in thinking such as self-sealing and self-fulfilling behaviour where we hold a single perspective and are not open to being challenged by other evidence (see diagram on page 65).

One finger cannot lift a pebble

Discrimination, inequality and under-representation are big issues. To address them we need to look at all aspects of organisational life: structures, processes, meaning, knowledge and power. Changing values, attitudes and even behaviour are not enough, changes in organisational systems are also required. This calls for a much more holistic approach, not the ones we are more familiar with that look at only part of the situation. Resistance by some to organisational culture change is inevitable, however, it is a challenge to their desire for a stable fixed identity.

Diversity is a fact of life; it belongs to us all. It should not be a big deal. To benefit from it we need to embed it right into the heart of an organisation, where it is embraced as a defining feature of British culture and so is integral to core business. Cultural diversity, like audience development, should be more than a strategy, it should be a philosophy that is integrated in a coherent way with other key policies and agendas.

The wind does not break a tree that can bend

Change, uncertainty and unpredictability are also facts of life. To cope, we need to accept change, to be more flexible and adapt and change in response to changes in our environment. Our organisations

need to be able to contain our anxieties, so we can live with uncertainty without the stress getting to us. No more arbitrary targets! No more fear of failure! People and organisations respond to the challenges of complexity and uncertainty according to their own capacity to respond, but there is no blueprint to follow and success is not guaranteed. However, there are things that managers can do to create a greater potential for success.

Managers will have to create a supportive, open, learning climate in their organisations, where diversity is valued as a prerequisite for creativity and emergence of the new. Deviance and subversion will be recognised as important for the way they challenge the dominant ideologies. Managers will give permission to innovate and take risks (within acceptable limits) and specify no more than is necessary for an activity to occur. They will look out for blockages like 'blame culture' or 'group think' that hinder the flow of information and hold back learning. They will have an awareness of the power relations, the prejudices and unconscious factors that impact on the nature and quality of our interactions. They will have an awareness of the anxiety that employees feel, and have an understanding of what enables and disables people to live with this anxiety.

All sunshine makes a desert

There is a critical range with diversity though: too little and you have a boringly safe organisation that caters for a certain loyal audience (and probably depends on large amounts of public subsidy to sustain itself). It's ok for the time being but eventually its

'There is a critical range with diversity though: too little and you have a boringly safe organisation that caters for a certain loyal audience. Too much diversity and the organisation gets too fragmented and doesn't have a distinct coherent identity with which to sell itself.'

See page 138 for **John E McGrath's** overview of his organisation's work to reinvent its internal culture and set up organisational systems which promote diversity and flexibility.

audience will die off. Too much diversity and the organisation gets too fragmented and doesn't have a distinct coherent identity with which to sell itself. Somewhere in between, with a dynamic balance of both stability and instability, is the natural home of creativity and innovation. Complexity theory calls this rather dramatically the 'edge of chaos'.

Diversity is not easy. But the advantages are too great to reject if we want to create viable, relevant organisations that are flexible enough to adapt and change in response to changes in its environment.

Little strokes fell great oaks

Changing organisational culture involves continual incremental improvement. We will have clarity of purpose but a variety of actions. We will reflect on our experience and try to get effective feedback on the results of our actions. We will draw conclusions and make decisions about what to do next. We will learn in a cyclical (and most likely inconsistent) way what works. We don't want to waste time and energy looking for the elusive 'best' way of doing things, instead we settle for a choice that meets our core requirements – one that is 'good enough'. Interventions to influence changes in culture will be most effective at specific points in time and space, for example where it will set off a chain of events, break a trap in thinking (see diagram), or alter the nature of a feedback loop from a vicious circle to a virtuous one.[25]

Culture change may involve replacing and re-educating staff, and re-designing organisational systems, which may require considerable internal

and external resources. It has a major political dimension to it too, and so demands the full and active support of key people in the organisation.

Many arts managers feel they have little time for anything other than coping with emerging events, but reflective practice is not a luxury, it is a priority. The motto for the coming years: reflect more – do less – accomplish more.

Talk is cheap

Running through all this are themes of language, power and control. Reality is shaped through language. Language produces meaning, it does not just reflect it. Our language reveals how we feel about other people. Simply thinking differently and talking differently can bring about change.

To get specific, museums engage with visitors through their collections which all tell a story. But whose story is it? And how is that story selected and told? Museums are not neutral spaces, passively reflecting an external objective reality but are highly political institutions that reinforce or subvert dominant ideologies. What version of British history are we telling? A challenge for museums is to talk about, for example, Black history as British history, to show the interconnections between us all so people can properly appreciate how this country, the world even, has come to be what it is today and how it's made us what we are.

According to a 2005 MORI poll, racial and religious prejudice is on the rise in Britain. We in the arts have to take much more responsibility for the messages we give out with our programming policy, in our

To find out how museums in Manchester are responding to the challenge of showing 'the interconnections between us all', see **Bernadette Lynch's** article on page 150.

promotional and interpretative material. If you walk into an arts venue, what does it say about contemporary Britain? Far more often than not, it tells a one-dimensional story.

And it's not just about visibility, either. We assume that just because, say, there are a number of black footballers and musicians with high media profile, things are therefore looking up for the rest of us. Just because people like eating curry does not mean they like Asian people. If only it were that simple.

Many people in the arts seem uncomfortable talking about power but we co-create power relations in an often unconscious social process.

We are not as in control of things as we'd like, but it seems that people can develop more effective decisions if they have illusions of control – the illusion leads to more proactive and self-fulfilling behaviour. However, illusion of control is also linked to the tendency to see patterns where none exist, and we can end up with mistaken confidence in judgements by underestimating the amount of uncertainty in a situation.

This is where you'd think knowledge management and market intelligence could help out. Unfort-unately, more information does not necessarily increase predictive accuracy. Like proverbs, we can select whatever information suits our purposes and use it (or twist it) to 'prove' whatever we wish. Our flawed assumptions are validated not challenged. So – a final question: does your data really say that there's no demand for diverse work?

Resistance to identity change in UK theatres

Rita Kottasz's research reveals some unexpected reasons why an arts organisation may be reluctant to adapt and change

The identities of arts organisations – in particular theatres – are powerful and perhaps easier to make out than those of purely commercial firms. An organisation's identity defines its character, personality and the reason for its existence, including the mix of ideologies it embraces. A theatre's identity is heavily associated with its artistic identity, or more specifically with the theatre owners, artistic directors and other stakeholders' views about its cultural and educational mission.[28,29]

Changes in market conditions and other environmental circumstances can create the need for a theatre to vary its organisational identity and, over the years, market conditions have certainly changed. Although some arts establishments have been quick to adapt to their new environments, it is certainly not the case that all theatres have found it easy to accept change. Indeed, many have resisted it.

Psychological congruency theory[30] can partially explain why this may happen. Often a theatre will seek a balance between:

- how it sees its own core identity
- how it interprets its own behaviour in the context of that self-identity
- how it assumes 'significant others' see it

Congruence exists when management sees its own definition of the theatre's identity and those of outsiders as being essentially the same. This implies that top managers and key stakeholders share a set of beliefs about its central, distinctive and enduring characteristics. Feelings of

John Williams gives an overview of how three football clubs have changed their identity to tackle racism and reflect the diversity of their local communities on page 107.

Venu Dhupa argues that resistance to change is an important issue that affects marginalised artists as well as audiences because theatre managers, like other leaders of our cultural organisations, have control of the available resources (page 79).

congruence enhance the management's feeling of self-worth, and so hold back change by encouraging them to believe that 'what we are doing must be right'. As a result management are less likely to change the mission even though objectively they realise that this may be the appropriate thing to do.

When the theatre management gets feedback from stakeholders about their interpretations of the organisation's identity, the feedback becomes embodied in management's self-assessment of the organisation's external image. Often this 'construed external image' is compared with management's own sense of what the organisation is.[31] A match between management's internal perception of the theatre's identity and that construed external image will maintain or strengthen the existing identity and encourage resistance to change.[32]

This resistance is further strengthened because organisations, like individuals, come to believe that they are seen by others in certain ways. As a result, they act and feel in ways that mirror these outside perceptions that the person assumes others hold about him or herself. If the outside perceptions believed to be held by several valued external audiences are essentially similar, then the individual forms a deep and enduring self-identity. After that, actual behaviour tries to live up to the expectations attached to the identity assumed, and the identity itself becomes highly resistant to change.

The research

We wanted to test the idea that if a theatre manager's sense of their organisation's identity largely matched their interpretation of how important stakeholders saw it, then they would be reluctant to make changes to artistic policy.

We mailed a questionnaire to the Directors of 500 state-subsidised theatres and got 126 replies. Analysis confirmed that the greater the degree of congruence between a Director's own opinion of his or her theatre's identity and that person's assumptions about how valued stakeholders interpreted the theatre's identity, then the lower the likelihood that the theatre's identity would be altered, even if the objective need for an identity change was acknowledged.

Competitive intensity and financial difficulties significantly encouraged identity changes, but perceived stakeholder resistance to change (notably among Boards of Trustees, supporters' groups and commercial sponsors) acted as a major barrier. The frequency with which a theatre reviewed its artistic identity was heavily associated with the amount of competition it faced, financial pressures, and the level of its marketing orientation.

These results have important implications for theatre managers. It is essential that a theatre does not allow congruence between self and construed stakeholder perceptions of identity to become a straightjacket on its ability to respond when an identity change is objectively required. Managers need to understand their

Maddy Morton looks at how cultural organisations can make connections with a broad audience on page 131.

potential susceptibility to being influenced (perhaps inappropriately) by their own subjective interpretations of how stakeholders see the identity of an organisation.

The way that a theatre's management looks at itself through other people's eyes is crucial to the development of an appropriate organisational identity. Theatre managers need to recognise that their assumptions are influenced by significant others, think about who is influencing them and check that their assumptions are accurate. Only then can a theatre achieve an artistic identity that is compatible with the needs of more ethnically and culturally diverse audiences (ie stakeholders not always regarded as 'significant others' in the past).

Off-centred Flower (detail) by Halima Cassell, 2002, ceramic dish, 24" diameter.
Photographer:
Daniel Walmsley for the exhibtion *Carved Earth* initiated by Shisha

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Chapter Three: how diverse are the UK's cultural organisations?

Five contributors from inside the cultural sector assess how far it has progressed towards diversity.

Key ideas

1 The cultural sector has made progress on many levels but true equality is a long way off

2 Inequalities are linked to lack of access to resources. The organisations that control those resources must ensure the work they produce reflects the diversity of life in Britain

3 Many Black artists are nurtured through social or community arts projects run by mainstream organisations. But this work is devalued and under-resourced

4 The key to change in broadcasting, and many other areas, is a proliferation of multi-ethnic creative teams

5 In contrast, artists who feel excluded from the development and delivery of arts policy argue for the independent development of Black artists

6 Artists from the African diaspora are successfully using new media to challenge standard narratives on race

Diversity – is it colourless?

A call to action from **Venu Dhupa**

Thirty years on from *The Arts Britain Ignores*[1] and there are 83 publications in Arts Council England's library at Great Peter Street, London under the category 'Cultural Diversity'. So why have we failed to fully engage with diversity and ensure as a profession there is representation at every level in line with demographics? This question is begged by headlines such as, 'White blokes rule the British film industry' or 'Report discovers obstacles for minority led companies'. Why is it that initiatives that begin with an unashamedly anti-racist agenda, like Eclipse[2] (that was conceived by seven Black practitioners backed by the Nottingham Playhouse board in response to the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry), become appropriated to celebrate cultural diversity and audience development?

Are we so coy that we have to disguise our collective failure?

By continuing to think about diversity in audience development terms or viewing ethnic minorities as training fodder we will never see real progress towards equal opportunities in the arts or make serious inroads into the bastions of artistic power. The truth is creativity is a lifelong lesson that our white leaders substitute for formal training but our ethnic minorities are not permitted to take part in. It would indeed be interesting to see the training records of our arts moguls, particularly since learning is now accepted as a pre-requisite for effective leadership. As long as our leaders exempt themselves from formal equal opportunities training and debate they will only ever pay lip service to the diversity agenda.

'Why is it that initiatives that begin with an unashamedly anti-racist agenda become appropriated to celebrate cultural diversity and audience development?'

Eclipse Theatre Initiative together with the Eclipse programme, under the banner of BRIT has influenced a change – by creating a more equitable Black and Asian theatre in England (Steven Luckie, Eclipse Producer).

On page 101 **Alda Terracciano** looks at some of the ways in which the contribution of artists of Black and Asian origin has been devalued and the impact of this on programming and marketing policies today.

We need to do better at forging partnerships between those holding diverse views. Culture has an advantage over other mechanisms available because we can see and explore 'other' views as a way of reflecting on our own and so build bridges towards a cohesive society, with shared values. The holy grail that our political leaders seek. However, if we constantly endorse high art made by important white people in landmark buildings, then we implicitly devalue the contribution of ethnic groups who are seen more often in other spaces. This in turn reduces the appetite for a stake in society. Leaders who say they value both should be engaging in both, moving on and making way for fresh talent.

By 2010 less than 20 per cent of the working population will be white, male and under 45. We will need to live with an aging population. There will be an intolerable struggle over resources, power and British identity if we continue to inhibit particular groups. Here we can look to statistics from outside our sector for graphic illustrations, if it's too painful to examine ourselves. Bangladeshi men earn on average half that of their white counterparts. In 2005 *The Guardian* exposed the 'massive inequalities' faced by minority ethnic women. Since 1997 we have seen boardrooms sourced from an increasingly elite group. It was revealing that Blair's recently published dinner guest list, drawn from those who could assist with policy making, contained only two Black or Asian individuals who were present in their own right, and not as donors or spouses. Does 'Look Who Came for Supper' bear any resemblance to *'Guess Who's Coming to Dinner?'* (the 1967

film in which Spencer Tracey and Katharine Hepburn play a couple whose daughter brings home her Black fiancé).

I believe in an individual's ability to empower themselves and shape their own destiny through the release and application of their talent and creativity. The clues they leave behind and the doors they open mark the way for others to follow and go further.

Diversity then becomes about how art can reach people in an individual and visceral way.

We have new and flexible platforms now available, some fantastically intelligent curating and staggering new technologies. But do we have the relevant structures to enable interaction and experimentation with them in a fair way? Are we willing to nurture and respect a new range of critique through new voices and new mediums or are we forever condemned to read the same reviewers writing about endless versions of corporate art? Are our cultural leaders equipped and willing to conceive new visions that include cultural equity? Until individuals can play on a level playing field throughout the hierarchy of every decision making forum, we will not reflect our communities. And, try as we might, we will struggle to release the diversity of potential and talent. Whether as makers, managers or audiences, the talent will just keep opting out. Where have all those individuals nurtured through the admirable range of equality programmes run by Arts Council England gone?

Kodwo Eshun explores how artists are using new technologies to challenge ideas about race on page 50.

If everyone agrees change is required, are we given the support to make the business case for the carrying out of coherent diversity policies? That is: reduced costs; new markets; new talent pools; greater efficiency; reputation enhancement; being more interesting places to work; becoming the employer of choice – let alone the moral and social case.

Those who continue to raise the issue, be encouraged by those of us who are working alongside you. I am trying to champion the case for my own employer to embrace diversity as one of its core values. Despite both risk and an integrated view being implicit in my organisation's existing core values, I currently get the message that I will have to do this in my own time with access to few organisational resources. I am the only non-white individual at senior management level so, though I am willing, I may not be the best person to drive this as I am left open to accusations of partiality. But if we are serious about change we need to drive it from the top.

What I am developing is an award initiative that will encourage a wider perspective on internationalism and diversity at leadership level. So leaders of the future can better balance their personal aspirations and wider imperatives and better prepare their workforce for the future they face. Not by what they say but by what they do. I want to challenge art to build respect and cohesion by supporting talent first as a complement to those valuable photo opportunities that prove we are supporting ethnically led projects.

In the arts I prefer not to talk about social exclusion. It is the arts organisations and leaders that are, in fact, ignoring what is happening in the society around them. They just happen to hold resources. So let's talk about denial of access to resources. Debate is good. 'Issues moving steadily up the agenda' is good, 'no doubt we have made progress,' is good and 'principles that underpin positive change' are good. But will it take another 500 years to reach true equality? I, for one, don't want to wait that long.

A personal view of the changing perceptions and receptions of Black Arts in the UK

Madani Younis believes that short-term cultural diversity strategies marginalise Black Arts

Ziauddin Sardar argues that Black work is under-represented because organisations ask themselves the wrong questions when they think about diversity (page 37).

As an artist, I attempt to create a world of words on an empty page that one day, soon I hope, will be brought to life on a stage. If not, these words will sit patiently on a book-shelf until it is their time to be heard. As an artist, I know that revolution, political inconsistencies, fears of a new age of terrorism and nature's cruel reminder of the fragility of the human condition challenge artists the world over to make sense of a global society at odds with itself. As a second generation artist whose ancestry stretches beyond the shores of the UK, I endeavour to grapple with not only my art, but also 'my place' within an arts funding structure that attempts to enable people like me to exist as artists.

In 2004, Sir Christopher Frayling, Chair of Arts Council England, remarked that 'the last ten years will be seen as a golden age when the whole artistic ecology of the UK changed'. Few could argue against his notion of change, which came about through New Labour's new money, but to what extent has the artistic ecology of the UK changed from the perspective of the artist?

Vast sums of money were invested in new and existing theatre buildings to enable them to become more receptive to culturally diverse audiences and work. Strategic development throughout this period led a host of Black-led initiatives. They were intended as models of good practice to engender a culture within buildings that would diversify artistic output and audiences. But to what extent has the writer been enabled by these 'changes'?

We have become tired of seasons of Black work that are platforms for new artists and hooks for new audiences in this 'golden age of change'. The intentions are admirable but the strategy creates a culture of short-term tokenism. Can these showcases survive if they are dependent on current funding streams? Don't they continue to marginalise the work of Black artists?

Instead, theatres must be more proactive in enabling the work of Black artists to be seen, and not just react to funding strands. Objectively, we can accept that regional theatres have limited resources. But for how many more years can this be the only excuse given to artists and audiences for the under-representation of Black work on their stages? Demographic and social change mean that theatres must begin truly to accommodate the changing face of our society, if they are not to become redundant. Audience development should have at its heart a resolute belief that these buildings are shared spaces.

As a second generation South Asian artist, I'm not surprised that most of my peers are not avid theatregoers. Why would or should they be, when so many of our programmers, artistic directors, producers are predisposed to work that reflects exotic Bollywoodesque notions of our communities? Derek Walcott describes these enablers as: *being trapped in the state's concept of the folk form, for they preserve the colonial demeanour and threaten nothing. The folk arts have become a carefree accommodating culture, an adjunct to tourism, since the state is impatient with anything it cannot trade.*[3]

Although Madani Younis suggests here that 'social art' has been important in nurturing a new generation of artists, **Alda Terracciano** believes that the label has held back the development of Black theatre (page 101).

'Don't seasons of Black work that are platforms for new artists continue to marginalise the work of Black artists?

This exotic notion of immigrant populations could not be further from the realities of the people the work portrays and the audience its promoters hope to attract.

For many years theatre has been seen as the last bastion of the middle classes, yet even through this golden age of change, we can see the ugly head of elitism. Elitism is now described as a philosophical divide between 'pure art' and 'social art'. And social art has been treated by some as the distant cousin who has arrived late, uninvited and unwelcome to Christmas dinner. Supporters of this notion of a 'pure art' have become obsessed by a vain attempt to hold on to a cultural and artistic superiority and this hinders the progress of Black artists. Why? Because the development of Black artists in the UK is, to a large degree, rooted in a community consciousness, in this notion of 'social art'. Many successful Black writers and actors will describe their entry onto repertory theatre stages around the country 'through the back door'. We must not underestimate the value of 'social art' as the nurturing ground of a new generation of writers and artists who create their work outside the walls of traditional venue spaces. And as such, it needs resourcing.

Max Stafford-Clark, founder of touring theatre company, Out of Joint, believes that the Labour government's increased funding of the arts sector has created, 'a kind of imperative of political correctness that lies behind them, they don't really believe in the artists'.[4] You can, like him, choose to question the sincerity of the

Labour government's investment. But isn't it ironic that, although art, by its very definition, should enable the self-expression of all artists, the recent raft of initiatives have been enabled principally through government money. If this money, with all its many strings attached, had not appeared, where would we as Black artists be today? Why was it impossible to create this change from within?

The once African American slave Fredrick E Douglass wrote 'without struggle there is no progress'.[5] The struggle should be for theatres to adopt long term programming strategies that openly embrace the changing landscape of the contemporary artist. They need to give writers a space to explore their craft and develop work that reflects the real lives of Britons today.

'If the Labour government's money, with all its many strings attached, had not appeared, where would we as Black artists be today? Why was it impossible to create this change from within?'

‘Keeping it real?’: visible minorities in mainstream broadcasting

Marie Gillespie and **Anita Sharma** assess how far broadcasters have achieved a better representation of cultural differences as part of British life

‘ “Keeping it real” for audiences is therefore crucial but difficult to achieve without the input of a culturally diverse creative workforce that knows what it’s like to live in a multi-ethnic society.’

With the increasing globalisation of the media and the proliferation of digital and satellite stations and at a time of Charter Renewal for the BBC in 2006, public service broadcasting is under immense pressure to assert its ongoing relevance and importance to Black and ethnic minority groups who may find their tastes and interests better catered for by more specialist niche channels.

A major criticism often aimed at mainstream television by Black and minority ethnic viewers is the perceived lack of ‘authentic’ or realistic representations of themselves: images they can relate to and with which they can identify.[6] ‘Keeping it real’ for audiences is therefore crucial but difficult to achieve without the input of a culturally diverse creative workforce that knows what it’s like to live in a multi-ethnic society. Although seeing and hearing more Black and minority ethnic people in mainstream broadcasting signifies progress, this does not necessarily mean that institutional racism in the broadcasting world has gone away. In order for this to happen, some deeper problems need to be tackled. Visibility is not enough – it does not, in itself, address issues to do with the politics of representation or the historically forged repertoire of limited and limiting discourses that racialise as well as exoticise migrant ‘others’.

Historically, images of Black communities have been constructed from a white perspective, and consequently from a position of domination. Broadcasting has long been implicated in processes

of racialisation. Television portrayals of Black and minority ethnic groups can be treated as a kind of barometer of changing public attitudes, policies and discourses on 'race'. As such images of Black and minority ethnic people do not so much represent the actuality of being 'Black' but rather reference a particular way of thinking about 'race'.

In the 1950s and 1960s, programming aimed at recently arrived minority ethnic groups was both paternalistic and patronising. Programmes depicting 'race relations' focused on the problems of being an immigrant and on countering hostility. Early Asian radio and television programmes such as *Apna Hi Ghar Samjhiye* (Consider This Your Home) and *Nai Jeevan Naya Zindagi* (New Life) were seen to provide a service rather than allowing Black and minority ethnic groups to speak for themselves; helping the 'foreigner' integrate into British society and internalise some of the indigenous values.

In the 1970s, following the introduction of the Race Relations Acts, British comedies were used to tackle presumed cultural differences, which played on a variety of racial stereotypes and reflected the general mood of the majority population. Examples of such comedies include the now infamous *Till Death Us Do Part* (BBC1, 1966-1974) and *Love Thy Neighbour* (Thames Television 1972-5), *It Ain't Half Hot, Mum* (BBC1, 1973-1981) and *Mind Your Language* (LWT, 1977). These programmes were deemed racist by many commentators but, perhaps surprisingly, were watched and enjoyed not just by white audiences but also by many Black and minority ethnic audiences because they put minority faces on screen at the same time as raising

'Multiculturalism is an equation of power. And the power it manipulates is the power to select, reflect and dramatise what it must be like to be an 'ethnic community' **Ziauddin Sardar** (page 40).

a laugh. At that time, it seems, audiences did not have high expectations of broadcasting or its potential role in tackling racism. For some, visibility was enough. Images were judged as positive or negative. But we have to ask positive or negative for whom? It is apparent from research that audiences have quite complex interpretations and responses to racialised representations and that one should not assume certain effects or responses.[7]

Following more concerted efforts in the 1980s to enact Equal Opportunities policies and set up multicultural units within broadcasting, and the setting up of Channel 4 in 1982, with its official mandate on minority broadcasting, successful attempts were made to show minorities as integrated and not simply as outsiders or 'populations on the peripheries'. Magazine programmes mixing news and entertainment aimed at the South Asian and African Caribbean communities were produced in the 1980s. Although these programmes reflected an acknowledgement of the heterogeneity within and across different minority ethnic communities, the appeal of the 'masala mix', tokenistic approach to multicultural programming soon waned. Most important was the expressed need among audiences for 'authentic' and realistic portrayals of their very diverse experiences of living in multicultural Britain, not necessarily only positive ones: a need to appreciate that 'there is no one homogenous black community, no single black perspective, no single black story, nor one black storyteller'.[8]

Minority ethnic 'communities' are themselves constructions: neither unified, homogeneous nor

'all-good' and certainly not capable of being represented by self-proclaimed, usually elderly, male, fairly conservative, community 'leaders'. A constant demand for positive-only images by audiences would simply fail to acknowledge the problems, conflicts and contradictions of living in a multicultural society. Slowly it became apparent that identities, like communities and cultures, are not fixed or determined by blood or birth or territory but changing, fluid, dynamic entities.

In the late 1990s and early 2000s we have seen the 'mainstreaming of multiculturalism' in broadcasting: ranging from an abundance of Asian, African, and African Caribbean faces in newscasting and reporting to groundbreaking and highly successful cross-over comedy series, such as *Goodness Gracious Me* (BBC2, 1998-2001) and the *Kumars at No. 42* (BBC2, 2001-3).

Goodness Gracious Me explored the various mutual preconceptions and prejudices of British Asians and white British by subverting racist stereotypes. It attracted an 85 per cent white audience and was hailed as 'the oil of race relations… for when Blacks, whites and Asians can laugh together, the sting is taken from prejudice or crude generalisation' (*The Times* January 7, 1998). The BBC has used this programme as its flagship example of mainstreaming multiculturalism. But is it enough?

Perhaps one of the most important lessons we have to learn from the unexpected success of *Goodness Gracious Me* is that it was produced by a multi-ethnic (not all British Asian or white)

Compare this view of representation in broadcasting with **Madani Younis'** appeal on page 84 for more authentic representations of Asian people on stage.

team of excellent creative writers and comic performers, who felt unconstrained by the shackles of political correctness. They drew on their own life experiences and in so doing sought to ridicule, with unprecedented irreverence, all manner of pretentiousness, conceit, duplicity and ethnic assumptions, absolutism and determinism.

The comic sketch show succeeded because it had good – not ethnic – writers and performers who were in touch with multicultural living and thus the cultural diversity of audiences' experiences (not part of the 'hideously white' BBC, as Greg Dyke described it) who were able to 'keep it real'. This does not mean that they espoused some kind of slavish devotion to a spurious ethnic authenticity or embraced a particular aesthetic conception of realism. Rather, *Goodness Gracious Me* appealed to an emotional, political and moral realism – as does all successful popular culture – that resonated with audiences of the day.

Mainstreaming multiculturalism is also evident in soap operas such as *EastEnders* and *Coronation Street* and long-running series such as *The Bill*, *Casualty* and *Holby City*, have all incorporated South Asian and African Caribbean characters into the storylines. However, there is still a great deal of pressure from audiences on these characters and plots to 'represent' their putative 'communities'. They bear the 'burden of representation'. This refers to the way in which certain images and storylines come to carry enormous symbolic power in a society where institutional and interpersonal racism is still

endemic – often in more subtle, less overt ways than in previous years. Repeatedly research reveals that black and ethnic minority audiences find themselves scrutinising images and storylines with high levels of sensitivity – particularly with knowledge of the historical legacy of racialised representations that have helped to shape their self-perceptions and contributed to the internalising of 'racialised' thinking.[9,10]

The huge popularity of soaps and serials, reaching audiences across the board puts a great deal of pressure on scriptwriters to offer more realistic portrayals. But to what extent are the teams of scriptwriters of mainstream soap operas multi-ethnic? Research published in 2002[11] found that from the perspectives of the audiences and media practitioners, although significant progress had taken place in the last five years, there was still a need for better representation of minorities, both on screen and off screen in scriptwriting and other creative and decision-making roles. The audience sample of this study affirmed the role of main-stream broadcasters in their social duty to foster cosmopolitan values and combat racism. They urged broadcasters to abandon the templates that distort and dismiss, restrain and restrict images and stories of multi-ethnic living and to 'keep it real' – emotionally and socially, politically and morally.

Cultural differences need to be shown and explored not as a 'problem' or as 'exotica', but as a part of living in British society today. The BBC2 evening entitled *Pakistani Actually*[12] consisted of four programmes documenting different aspects of the lives of British Pakistanis and highlighted the huge

'Research reveals that Black and ethnic minority audiences find themselves scrutinising images and storylines with high levels of sensitivity.'

'Cultural differences need to be shown and explored not as a 'problem' or as 'exotica', but as a part of living in British society today.'

diversity masked by that unifying label 'British Pakistani' in an insightful, thought-provoking way.

In the current political climate of rising Islamaphobia in which images of Muslims are so often demonised or racialised, this series of short films underlined the impossibility of attributing fixed identities to particular groups or of making hard-and-fast assumptions about beliefs, customs, communities and cultures. More programmes like this need to be produced by multi-ethnic teams of producers, with inside knowledge of diversity. They should be encouraged to set their own creative and political agendas for making programmes – not be hampered by the timidity of ratings hungry commissioners or the protocols of politically correct white liberalism. Maybe then we might get more programmes which reflect more genuinely what living in multicultural Britain means for friendships, romance, work and other social and power relationships.

Although the blatant portrayal of racist images of blacks such as 'the slave', 'the native' and 'the clown' or entertainer may have disappeared, their traces can still be observed, reworked in many contemporary images, for example, the petty criminal/wheeler dealer Jules in *EastEnders* fits all the stereotypes of old. Such templates continue to frame perceptions and images and are difficult to dislodge – but this is exactly where broadcasters can play a hugely important role.

Sadly, despite some exemplary programming and outstanding examples, representations of asylum seekers and refugees in mainstream broadcasting so often bear all the hallmarks of tired old clichés

and eco-metaphors from floods and waves to influxes. This quite common use of language is case of history repeating itself.

Thoughtless commentary by insensitive programme makers, and a rabid tabloid and red top press, lies at the heart of public hostility and xenophobia towards these recent migrants. So, no more calls from programme researchers asking refugee support groups for 'asylum seekers with traumatic personal stories to tell' please!

Until broadcasting institutions tackle the root causes of the ways in which they routinely and regularly, even if unwittingly and unintentionally, ethnicises and racialises Black and minority ethnic creative workers, media professionals and actors, we will not make true progress. A person's race, ethnicity and cultural background should not predetermine what work they do. Why should an artist or actor or producer of minority ethnic background have to work on ethnic themes or play ethnic roles or ethnicise a plot or a joke in order to get funding? Of course there is always a trade-off between specialist provision – 'positive discrimination' and 'mainstreaming' approaches to tackling racism at the institutional level. But the aim should be multi-ethnic creative teams sparking each other off not confining people to ethnic ghettos. I once heard an anecdote that amused me: an advert appeared in a local paper for auditions for an Asian comedy writers and performers workshop. An Irish lad turned up to the audition. 'But you're not Asian', he was told. 'Ah I know that', he said, 'But I am funny'.

'Artists were generally required to "show their cultural identity cards" to get backing' **Jorella Andrews**, page 141.

New media

Kodwo Eshun explores how artists are using new media to challenge ideas about race

'Everyday encounters with race have consequences both inside and outside the computer monitor.'

In a world where genetic engineering and computer technology converge, a new understanding of the human as an invisible network of complex codes is emerging. Inside and outside the laboratory, however, the racialising gaze persists. Common sense perception informs us of racial differences even when science insists on our genetic similarity. In the digital age, these visual habits of racialisation have become infinitely repeatable. Moreover, as Harwood, founder member of the British new media collective Mongrel, pointed out in his 1997 statement *Ethnic Bleaching*:

Constructions of race in the form of mental images are much more than simple indexes of biological or cultural sameness. They are the constructs of the social imagination, mapped onto geographical regions and technological sites.

Today's artists can choose to continue these constructs, complicate them or transform them through new forms of storytelling, aesthetic expression and relational community. New media, whether understood as the internet or as virtual reality, immersive environment or as cyberspace is usually represented as a race-blind environment. It seems self evident however that everyday encounters with race have consequences both inside and outside the computer monitor. We can see the consequences in the technoculture emerging in the mid 1990s which assumed that Afrodiasporic cultural practices existed outside of digital culture and that Black Atlantic cultural expression was the antithesis of electronic media. At the same time race was reconfigured in cyberspace as an accessory to be acquired, discarded and changed

at will. A simple matter of changing your name and logging in.

The emergence of Afrodiasporic new media in the last decade can be seen as part of a larger technocultural project that seeks to intervene and challenge these standard narratives. Whether these artists are British (Keith Piper, Rokeby, the Mongrel collective), German (the Cybernomads) or American (Keith and Mendi Obadike, Tana Hargest, Paul D Miller aka DJ Spooky), they have highly divergent aesthetics and practices.

A decade before games like *Grand Theft Auto*, Keith Piper's *The Exploded City* (1994) reformatted computer game aesthetics into video installations that demonstrated how 'various aspects of black visibility' became 'characterised as an almost essential cipher in the recasting of a space into a site of dangerous and transgressive activities'. Piper speculated on the ways in which black visibility 'impacted upon the universe of Cyberspace' so that the 'growing sense of panic around the violent content of many computer games has also begun to recast Cyberspace itself as a domain as threatening and dangerous as any urban inner space'.

In the MEMEX project (2003), interactive artist Rokeby turned himself into a cyborg, equipped with a wearable computer, a digital camera, a portable brainwave monitor and a global positioning system tracking his precise geographical location. Starting at the Greenwich Meridian Line, Rokeby commenced a 40-day pilgrimage across London in search of traces of the spiritual in the everyday.

See **Jorella Andrew's** article on page 141 for an overview of how British artists have embraced or subverted collective racial identifications.

Mongrel's digital installation *National Heritage* (1998) brought them acclaim and notoriety for its revelation of the process of racialisation. In a media-scene dominated by white Austrians, Canadians, Germans and Eastern Europeans, Mongrel's demand of the user to hand over control of their self-image was and remains confrontational.

The digital artist Tana Hargest parodies corporate websites. *New Negrotopia* (2003) was an inter-active media project in the form of a virtual theme park where participants could visit historical environments like *Atlantic Adventure*, a 3D interactive experience of the slave ship route, the Middle Passage.

DJ Spooky works as an archaeologist of media, drawing upon the prehistory of 20th century collage for his multimedia mixes of artwork, musical compositions and most spectacularly films like *Rebirth of A Nation* (2004) his acclaimed remix of DW Griffith's 1915 white supremacist epic *Birth of A Nation*.

What links these widely differing projects is a sceptical scrutiny of the promises of increasingly global technoculture, producing work that ranges from the humorous to the confounding. The focus is not on providing access to technologically disenfranchised societies, since this would mean accepting the paradigm of what technoculture is, but instead on experimenting with and exploring the ways in which digital technologies are reshaping Black Atlantic cultural practices, and vice versa.

Analysing one of Keith Obadike's works in detail might help to illustrate this point further. In 2001, the Yale-trained conceptual artist and sound designer Keith Townsend Obadike presented *Keith Obadike's Blackness is for Sale*. As the title suggests, the artist proposed to sell his Blackness on the commercial auction website eBay from 8-18 August 2001. Using the eBay site as artistic medium was unprecedented; Obadike further interrupted business as usual by not including a photograph of himself, thereby separating the deliberately vague concept of blackness from a body. Instead, he described the idea of blackness auctioned on the eBay site as an 'heirloom' that 'has been in the possession of the seller for twenty-eight years'. He went on to itemise 10 benefits of the heirloom such as 'creating black art', 'dating a black person without fear of public scrutiny' and securing 'the right to use the terms 'sista', 'brotha' or 'nigga' in relation to black people'. He also gave 10 warnings against using the heirloom 'during legal proceedings of any sort', 'while making intellectual claims' or 'while voting in the United States or Florida'.

In response, eBay, the World's Online Marketplace, which had previously allowed people to bid on porn, firearms and Nazi, Ku Klux Klan and blackface memorabilia, shut down Obadike's auction after only four days, deeming it 'inappropriate', despite the fact that Obadike's auction did not violate eBay's hate and violence policy. Nonetheless Obadike's intervention into the digital domain of the internet auction became the most talked about artwork on the internet, generating hundreds of email responses.

'What links widely differing projects is a sceptical scrutiny of the promises of increasingly global techno culture.'

'Obadike's intervention into the digital domain of the internet auction became the most talked about artwork on the internet.'

A brilliant example of double consciousness in the age of normalised new media, Obadike had taken the idea of the commodity to its limits and made sardonic points about the commodification of black identity, online trading, white notions of cool, style culture, racial tourism and cultural passing in 20 elegant sentences.

Together we stand!

Alda Terracciano asks why so much Black theatre is ignored by the press

Both on stage and on the page, the rapport between the theatre practitioner and the critic is a crucial element for the development of new languages and artistic codes. The power of the exchange is in the geometry of the relationship, as the practitioner and the critic are equal sides of a triangle completed by the audience.

And yet, keeping the balance between the three is not only a matter of geometry but one of definitions: what is identified as art often reflects values rooted outside the dynamic of the triangle. The work produced by British artists of African and Asian backgrounds has been affected for decades by the labelling of their creativity according to public agendas that have little to do with the artistic process.

Like most artists producing work outside the commercial circuit, artists of African and Asian backgrounds have mainly relied on the support of public funding bodies to develop their ideas and practice, and so are subjected to a process which assesses aspirations against public benefit and national cultural representation. How shall we deal with historic labels that continue to impact on that assessment?

Since the Elizabethan period, British theatre progressively came to be identified with the middle classes, in both their roles as makers and as receivers. This trend means that artistic experiences from outside that class-specific milieu and those using techniques not necessarily bound to the performance of written texts have been disadvantaged.

‘The work produced by British artists of African and Asian backgrounds has been affected for decades by the labelling of their creativity according to public agendas that have little to do with the artistic process.’

Madani Younis sees 'social art' as the nurturing ground of a new generation of writers and artists and calls for it to be resourced properly (page 84).

During the 1970s and 1980s most innovation came from groups and individual artists opposing theatre as a form of bourgeois divertissement. Their theatre was site-specific and played in front of new, previously unidentified audiences. Because these experiments were labelled 'community theatre', their impact was diminished within the wider theatre community. This was particularly the case for the artists working with communities of African and Asian descent, who were confronted either by a funding system unable at the time to judge 'quality' outside its accustomed aesthetic parameters or mass media preoccupied with keeping the status quo.

BA Young wrote in the arts column of The *Financial Times* about Cy Grant's attempt in the late 70s to establish a centre for the training of Black actors. In discussing racial discrimination within the theatre industry he suggested that: *There are sad tales of drama-school students who leave before the end of their courses because they are never cast in proper parts… A possible solution is to be found in the establishment of a community like the Drum Arts Centre, which is to work at instilling knowledge of western culture into black society. (It must be western culture, for that is what flourishes here on a 1,000-year-old base.) … Out of it should grow a genuine interest in the theatre among the coloured communities, and cross fertilisation take place between the Black and the white cultures.*[13]

This view is emblematic. At the time, the Keskidee Centre had been operating for some years and a plethora of talents from African Caribbean

communities had been staging world premieres and cutting edge plays that attracted varied audiences – if not critics from The *Financial Times*.

In fact, few representatives from the press would venture into the community. One reason, according to the reviewer from the *Evening Standard*, was that the Keskidee 'usually stage plays for such short run that they're on and off before a review can come out.'[14] And yet the show programmes indicate that plays normally ran for an average of three weeks. Another reason could be that theatre produced by artists of African and Asian descent was labelled 'community theatre'. This meant that the funding bodies mainly perceived it in terms of a 'service' to the community rather than an artform of intrinsic merit. This was in spite of attempts to facilitate a rapprochement between professionals and amateurs, as testified by Naseem Khan's report *The Arts Britain Ignores* commissioned in 1976 by the Commission for Racial Equality. The label 'community theatre' contributed to the entrenchment of the media's sociological approach to the work which, in turn, impoverished the debate on its artistic contribution and minimised its impact on mainstream culture.

During the early 80s representatives of the white fringe theatre movement were progressively absorbed by mainstream theatre institutions. For theatre directors of African and Asian descent, the road to recognition was much harder to walk. Their artistic careers seemed impeded in particular by 'the burden of representation', by

'Theatre produced by artists of African and Asian descent was labelled 'community theatre'. This meant that the funding bodies mainly perceived it in terms of a 'service' to the community rather than an artform of intrinsic merit.'

having to stand for 'the totality of everything that could fall within the category of black art'.[15]

Those that were recognised discovered new stumbling blocks. In 1990, the National Theatre invited Jatinder Verma to direct *Tartuffe*. The production was highly successful and this was echoed in the national press. In response, Tory-controlled Wandsworth Borough Council threatened his company, Tara Arts, with a serious cut in funding as, in their view, national success implied the company was less relevant to local Asian communities.[16]

If we, the theatre community, are to bring audiences with us in the discovery of new artistic languages on stage we must take a more imaginative approach to 'cultural diversity'. Key to this is to detach ourselves from the mortifying touch of a sociological approach and fearlessly embrace diversity. Have we established an open dialogue with new communities of migrants and the artistic experiences they bring? If not, then we are simply re-inhabiting past attitudes, and those talents will once again be wasted.

Together we should stand for the space of one night – audiences, artists and critics – joining arms, re-telling the story in a thousand new ways.

Notes and references

Diversity – is it colourless? Venu Dhupa

1 See page 21 for an overview of *The Arts Britain Ignores* and subsequent Arts Council England policies

2 Following the Eclipse Conference and Report, Arts Council England, with the TMA, set up the *Eclipse* programme. Led by Credibility Limited, it was designed to manage the delivery of race equality, involving individual theatres and companies planning and being accountable for the delivery of race equality.

This programme became the basis for Arts Council England's Race Equality Scheme delivery to regularly funded organisations through RESPOND and RESPOND – Making It Real.

Eclipse Theatre developed by Nottingham Playhouse, Wolsey Theatre and Birmingham Repertory Theatre, was set up in response to the need for quality Black British theatre on the middle scale. Three critically acclaimed productions have seen a growing touring circuit, audiences and opportunities for professional development. 10 Black writers developed skills for writing for larger stages through the Writer's Lab, including commissions from five producing theatres.

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'Keeping it real?': Visible minorities in mainstream broadcasting, Marie Gillespie and Anita Sharma

6 Sharma, A, *Beyond Skin? Diasporic Youth, Television and Cultural Identity*, PhD thesis, Open University unpublished, 2005

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13 Young, BA, 'Black into White', *The Financial Times* July 16, 1975

14 'Where to Go', *Evening Standard* April 16, 1974

15 Mercer, Kobena, 'Black Art and the Burden of Representation', in *Third Text*, 10, 1990

16 Jatinder Verma was the first theatre director from the so-called immigrant communities to direct a touring production for the Royal National Theatre

Chapter Four: how other sectors engage with diversity

What can cultural organisations learn from organisations in other sectors? A collection of case studies show how organisations from the football, retail and public sectors engage with diverse customers and employees.

Key ideas

1 Some cultural organisations already use many of the approaches seen in other sectors: a commitment to fundamental change; a combination of education, outreach and marketing; an in-depth knowledge of the lifestyles and needs of customers; endorsements, whether they are from cultural heroes or community leaders; using specialised communication channels and relevant images and copy in publicity material

2 Effective communications are two-way and involve listening as well as talking

3 Although other sectors do not seem to have found any effective processes or approaches that are unfamiliar to us in the cultural sector, just like the sports sector we are not implementing them consistently and wholeheartedly

The engagement of football clubs with local minority ethnic communities

John Williams shows how three clubs have made holistic changes that go far beyond simply marketing football to minority ethnic communities

Public reaction in England to the televised racist abuse of England players by Spanish fans during an international match in Madrid December 2004 signalled some of the progress made here in recent years in addressing racism in football. But professional football in England has been dogged by its own problems of overt fan racism and institutional racist closure almost throughout its history. The public focus became much more intense, however, during the troubled 1970s and 1980s when neither the British government nor the game displayed the will or imagination to address issues including the involvement of political groups in co-ordinating and stimulating football racism and the open abuse of black England players by England fans. Indeed, racism in English football then was widely assumed to be subordinate to the apparently intractable problem of hooliganism and fan violence in English football.

When the English game was effectively re-launched following the establishment of the FA Premier League in 1992, a new national anti-racism initiative for football was soon inaugurated, later to become the important Kick it Out initiative. By 1997 the new Labour government had established a Football Task Force which published a wide-ranging report in 1998 on how racism affected both the professional game and local football in England. Sadly, it had no real legislative power. However it provided the impetus for more public support for the national anti-racism football campaign in England and for the extension of local initiatives aimed at reducing the impact of racism and

Compare this approach to the kind of change in fundamental values described by **Maddy Morton** on page 131.

better including people from minority ethnic backgrounds in the game as players, administrators, coaches and fans.

Progress in these areas has, paradoxically, been both patchy and impressive: a small number of football organisations and clubs in England have shown a real commitment to fundamental change, with others focusing on addressing only fan racism and others still happily sailing along assuming that wider social change will gradually impact on football – which means no need to address their own policies or approaches at all. Such divergent attitudes have been shaped by specific local administrations, local cultures and political responses and local experiences of living with, and among, minority ethnic communities. This is a complex and variable picture, but many professional clubs now work at developing their relations with local ethnic minorities and a number of larger English clubs – Arsenal, West Ham United and recently Everton and Manchester United, for example – are now doing very important work here. The FA itself also has an important new equity initiative aimed at lowering barriers into coaching and football administration for people from minority ethnic backgrounds. But where has progress in combating racism been most obvious and most sustainable, locally, in English football? Let me mention just three well-established club-related schemes of note.

The Charlton Athletic Race Equality (CARE) project probably leads the way here because since 1992 it has had social inclusion and anti-racism as integral features of a well-resourced wider regeneration

and community programme which involves the football club in a part of south-east London where racial violence has routinely scarred the social landscape. Charlton's determination to be both a successful and commercially well-run Premiership club and to address, directly and comprehensively, the wider demands of living in a globalised multi-cultural society is probably unique – as is its 50-plus full-time staff community programme.

Charlton Athletic has been enthusiastic and innovative in its marketing of the club to local ethnic minorities in Greenwich by regularly hosting coaching, arts and cultural events and by using extensive free ticket programmes as part of its anti-racism 'action days'. But its commitment to anti-racism is also global. In 2002, the club began work in the AIDS-hit South African township of Alexandra, where club staff have trained and equipped local volunteers to deliver football coaching to 12,000 boys and girls in the area from March 2004. Club chairman, Martin Simons, typically confirmed that this was no 'flash in the pan charity handout' but part of a wider plan for community development and long-term stability in a troubled area to which the club was completely committed.

The Football Unites Racism Divides (FURD) project in association with Sheffield United FC is also international in scope due to its European funding and its work with the FARE network of anti-racism football fan initiatives in Europe. But its activities since 1996 with local ethnic minorities in the Sharrow area of Sheffield, which hosts the club, have worked at:

This kind of approach combining education, outreach and marketing is familiar within the arts in projects like that described by **Kate Rodenhurst** on page 194.

Like Leicester City, the organisations described by **Anne Torreggiani** on page 199 have made diversity part of their brand identity.

- increasing the participation of minority ethnic young people in football in Sheffield as players, spectators and employees
- significantly increasing the participation and involvement of minority ethnic young women in football
- reducing racial abuse and harassment
- encouraging greater participation by minority ethnic groups in the activities of Sheffield United FC

FURD also challenges football racism through its many anti-racism educational initiatives and it has developed an impressive Resources and Information Centre for use by students and others inside and outside the city. Impressive too is the participation and training of volunteers in FURD's work, especially young people from minority ethnic backgrounds. In short, FURD has helped, fundamentally and positively, to reshape relations between local people and their local club. Its anti-racism and inclusion work stands comparison anywhere in England.

Finally, the Foxes Against Racism (FAR) campaign in Leicester was inspired by Labour's Task Force in 1998 to address problems of racism in football in Leicestershire by linking Leicester City FC, fan groups, the police, the local County FA, the City and County councils and local minority ethnic groups and educational bodies. By using publicity campaigns, organising local anti-racism events, setting up schools' initiatives and encouraging the involvement of Leicester City fans in collective public displays of anti-racism, FAR has succeeded in helping City supporters take

ownership of anti-racism as part of their own positive self-identity. As a result, regular fan surveys now show that the recruitment of minority ethnic fans is increasing at Leicester City and that public support for FAR and its work is extensive among the club's fans: they seem very proud of the recent public FAR/Leicester City 'branding'. FAR has also instigated a very successful multi-racial community day at the club's new stadium and has future plans for its own funded workers to deliver more anti-racism work in sport in the Leicester area.

Each of these projects goes well beyond the simple marketing of football to minority ethnic communities. But for each of them a positive public profile and attracting public support is hugely important. There is much work still to be done on combating racism in football in England: a Commission for Racial Equality report in 2004, for example, concluded that: 'the football industry has failed to address seriously racial equality issues.' But at the local and national levels there have also been some significant developments, especially over the past decade.

Cultural diversity and its impact on businesses

Ahmad Jamal assesses how enterprises have responded to consumers' changing self-identities

In recent decades, we have witnessed an ever-increasing interdependence and integration throughout the world, giving rise to a florescence of social changes at local, regional, and international levels.[1] Consequently, we now live in a market place that is characterised by market integration as well as persistent ethnic differentiation due to ethnic, racial, religious and national interests.[2] This is supported by a realisation that the minority ethnic subcultures are growing in size and have an increased purchasing power accompanied by heightened political and cultural awareness and ethnic pride.[3,4]

Cultural diversity affects both commercial and non-commercial enterprises (hereby termed as 'enterprises') alike by opening new domestic markets for a wide variety of goods and services, by creating new challenges in managing a diverse workforce and effectively seeking diverse consumers.[5,6] For instance, the steady growth in the UK's minority ethnic population along with a growing demand for ethnic products has provided some good entrepreneurial opportunities and a competitive advantage to those who know and share specific needs of minority ethnic customers to start and run a range of successful retail enterprises.[7] During the early 1970s, the survival of such enterprises was mainly based on the patronage behaviour of minority ethnic consumers who utilised their services. However, with the passage of time and as the tastes and preferences of mainstream consumers for ethnic products have developed, more and more ethnic retail enterprises find

opportunities outside their ethnic niche to serve a wider mainstream consumer market.[8]

Now the situation is that while some ethnic retail enterprises continue to target specifically minority ethnic consumers, others target the ethnic as well as the mainstream consumers.[9] This is backed up by a trend in our grocery-retailing sector whereby most of our leading supermarkets regularly carry ethnic and exotic merchandise to keep pace with changes in our tastes and preferences.

Cultural diversity in society dictates that most of the individual market transactions take place between enterprises and consumers who come from different ethnic backgrounds and who are positioned into multiple and traversing cultural spheres.[10]

In such a context, the clientele of most of the enterprises is likely to be multi-ethnic and as such they have to incorporate the needs of a variety of customer groups while developing and implementing their specific marketing programmes and practices. More importantly, the enterprises are likely to be confronted with issues that are related to the way consumers continuously identify and re-identify themselves and the way enterprises identify the market.[11,12] For instance, many argue that consumers can build their self-identities on the basis of heterogeneous elements taken from a diversity of cultural representations and practices.[13,14,15] In such a context, the enterprises are likely to act as bicultural brokers and intermediaries whose function is to facilitate self-identification and re-identifications through the provision of

Mel Larsen discusses the tension between the way organisations identify the market and customers' shifting identities on page 168, while **Lia Ghilardi** looks at the implications of 'hybrid' cultural identities for policy makers on page 54.

'Entrepreneurs acted as bicultural mediators… they consciously realised that their co-ethnic consumers were consumers of both ethnic as well as mainstream consumer cultures and facilitated consumption of both.'

a heterogeneous product range originating from a diversity of cultural backgrounds.[16,17]

For instance, a major multidisciplinary study of multi-ethnic entrepreneurs (of Latino, non-Latino, Asian and Middle Eastern ethnic origin) in the USA[18] found that the entrepreneurs acted as bicultural mediators who accommodated their consumers but also worked to change the consumption patterns of their consumers to bring them in line with their own ethnic as well as mainstream US consumer cultures.

Similarly, I investigated the marketing practices followed by Chinese, Pakistani and Bangladeshi retail entrepreneurs in Cardiff and London.[19] I found that a major focus of their marketing practices was the reinforcement of culture of origin, and the perpetuation and defence of ethnicity among their co-ethnic clients. However, at the same time, the entrepreneurs also consciously realised that their co-ethnic customers were consumers of both ethnic and mainstream consumer cultures; based on this realisation they facilitated consumption of both cultures among their co-ethnic consumers by providing them with both ethnic as well as mainstream brands at competitive prices. By doing so, they facilitated building and negotiation of self-identities by consumers on the basis of contrasting elements taken from two diverse cultural representations.[20,21] Also, they successfully adapted their marketing mixes to suit the needs of their co-ethnic consumers. This meant that they provided a full range of ethnic as well

as non-ethnic products according to the needs of their consumers and followed a differential pricing strategy offering special discounts to opinion leaders and opinion formers in the community. They also promoted themselves not only via traditional media (newspapers, radio) but also via the extensive use of word of mouth advertising and by participating in community events.

While cultural diversity brings some exciting marketing opportunities (eg we can think of targeting new segments with suitable products and services), it also presents some challenges particularly due to the fact that each ethnic subculture has its own cultural understanding, language, religion and other distinct requirements. One such challenge is to effectively target a specific ethnic subculture and yet not to alienate anyone from any other cultural group.

A possible solution is to develop a comprehensive understanding of the way different ethnic groups live their lives and conduct research into their specific buying patterns, preferences, responses to advertising and other marketing efforts. There are a number of ways in which ethnic minorities consumers can be targeted effectively using this understanding.

For instance, you can market services to them using some specialised communication tools (eg direct mail) and specialised media (eg minority ethnic magazines, newspapers and TV channels). In doing so, you can develop advertising and other sales promotional

Both this and **Saad Saraf's** article on the following page indicate that many cultural organisations are carrying out more complex marketing strategies than commonly found in the non-arts sector. See **Caroline Griffin** and **Anne Torreggiani's** articles on pages 177 and 199 for examples.

'Make sure that all those who are involved in targeting efforts do understand the cultural needs and aspirations of minority ethnic consumers… Consider internal education programmes to train employees to develop and reinforce relationships and enhance communications.'

materials in minority languages and use cultural symbols, objects and people that are relevant to minority ethnic consumer culture. However, make sure that all those who are involved in the targeting efforts do understand the cultural needs and aspirations of minority ethnic consumers.

You can also use multi-lingual point of sale displays and packaging materials to reinforce a liberal ethos and multi-ethnic images of the marketplace. An effective way to reach ethnic minorities is to target promotion and communicational efforts towards opinion leaders and opinion formers within the minority ethnic communities (eg through community centres, religious institutions and local political organisations).

Also, consider developing and implementing internal education programmes to train employees to develop and reinforce relationships and enhance communications, cultural awareness and cultural sensitivities. Furthermore, you can employ multi-ethnic staff capable of communicating different languages as an effective way of responding to the needs of ethnic minorities. Sponsorship of minority ethnic cultural and religious events such as major festivals and local conferences organised by professional and cultural groups is also an effective way to get closer to your target group. In doing so, one can make regular use of bulletin boards, particularly in mosques, churches, temples and other religious and cultural centres.

Silent Cry
by Madani Younis, 2003-4
Photographer: Tim Smith

NikeTown London

NikeTown is successful because it knows its customers so well, says their Marketing Manager, **Christine Werdinig**

Who are the iconic artists who can act as role models to young people?

Your first impressions of NikeTown are probably sport, performance and great athletes. This is an accurate reflection of our brand, but there are other reasons why people chose to go to NikeTown. According to a consumer survey 50 per cent of customers rate NikeTown as trendy and 40 per cent call it a 'fun experience'.

NikeTown London, owned by Nike, is different to other stores on the high street. It has been designed to allow the consumer to experience the brand personally and link it to a relaxed shopping experience. NikeTown has the reputation of a store where 'athletes' and peoples' passion for sport meet'. It is seen more today, though, as a place that appeals to everyone; not just athletes but also the fashion consumer, the urban kid, the sports-inspired consumer or youngsters who simply like to 'hang out'.

At NikeTown's core is youth - the 'lifeblood' of the brand – and its ultimate brand statement is to inspire and connect with a diversity of people, cultures and civilisations.

So how do we connect to different cultures?

First of all, NikeTown's philosophy evolves around iconic athletes who act as role models to youngsters, for example Michael Jordan, Thierry Henry, Serena Williams, Tiger Woods and Paula Radcliffe. All our athletes stem from different nations and cultures. Showcasing different heroes also means showcasing different cultures.

Secondly, youth respects innovation, authenticity and originality. Being part of Nike, we are always at the forefront of innovation so we create change. We also offer a huge variety of Nike products, a flexible mix of the lifestyle-oriented and the technical, in order to provide a fit with each customer's self-identity.

Thirdly, a significant part of NikeTown's offer is the continuous change of in-store displays to reflect current product, advertising and issue-based messages. Each month we execute a new campaign, in which all the elements of the marketing mix integrate with the rest of the corporation and communicate the same consistent message across the matrix. Our goal is to touch different target markets at different times. NikeTown events, part of the overall integrated marketing efforts of Nike, are a good example of 'underground marketing', which we use to connect with the urban 'London consumer'.

These are the reasons why our target markets see NikeTown as part of their own individual cultural identities: we ensure we speak to everyone – we know who our consumers are and we are continually in touch with them. Our mission is to offer the consumer an experience of the brand, a wide product range, and an environment that is fun, entertaining and relaxing. It is not surprising that NikeTown is seen as a great place to hang out and that kids feel as though they are coming home when they visit the store.

'Our goal is to touch different target markets at different times. We ensure we speak to everyone – we know who our consumers are and we are continually in touch with them.'

Communicating with the UK's diverse communities

Advice and case studies from **Saad Saraf** of Media Reach, the leading Black-led marketing agency

Saad Saraf uses the terminology current in the for-profit marketing sector. You'll find a discussion of the different ways key words are used on page 221.

If there is a challenge to business today, it is how to engage this increasingly diverse multicultural society of ours.

I am intrigued to see that ethnic events such as melas, carnivals and fashion and music events are able to attract tens of thousands of people ready to spend and be entertained while mainstream arts establishments draw just a handful.

So what are you doing wrong?

What seems to be lacking is an understanding of audiences: most marketers I speak to cannot tell where a minority ethnic person they meet in the street comes from, what languages they speak and what their religious background might be. Some confess that they describe every Black person as Caribbean and every brown one as Asian.

I am bemused by the insensitivity of some programmers and marketers to our needs and requirements. I am drawn to the Arabic media much more than the standard five terrestrial channels I am forced to pay for even when I spend very little time watching them. The editorial content does not cater for or represent me and at times offends my culture and traditions (and sometimes I shield my children from it – something I never thought I would do).

You need to listen to what we want to see and hear rather than imposing your thoughts on us. It is this that has driven us away from mainstream art and culture.

Dealing with complexity

In today's fragmented and increasingly turbulent markets, ethnic marketing offers a new strategic

focus for product and market development and, in many respects, companies which ignore this do so at their own competitive peril.

The ethnic population in Britain is very diverse, not only in the different nationalities and races they represent, but also in terms of culture, attitude, traditional values and beliefs, nationalistic feelings, political influences, religious sensitivities, lifestyle and behaviour and more. This makes the marketer's role tough.

Due to the language barriers, especially amongst women, older generations and some recent immigrants, these communities tend to rely on their own media, including ethnic media channels and community networks, for information and entertainment. This is clear from the plethora of ethnic TV stations, radio stations and print publications that have burgeoned over the last ten years in Britain.

So what do you need to do?

Companies wishing to do business with minority ethnic groups need to review the basic premises of their marketing plans to take account of the growing market pluralism and the multi-ethnic reality of modern Britain:

- most people from minority ethnic origins are religiously sensitive and culturally conscious. Therefore they respond to marketing communication messages very differently from the mainstream – the triggers and hooks have to be quite different
- conventional communication channels don't work with these 'hard to reach communities' You need to use other methods

See page 138 for **John E McGrath's** example of how an arts organisation listens effectively to consumers.

'Mainstream clients mostly seem obsessed with ticking boxes and paying lip service. Minority ethnic consumers desire a personalised message with cultural relevance so we pick up this lack of proper attention and reciprocate by simply not responding.'

- you need to plan how to overcome language barriers, especially among early settlers and new immigrants – Britain's major minority ethnic communities come from around 50 countries and people in London speak more than 120 languages and dialects

But when it comes to targeting our communities, mainstream clients mostly seem obsessed with ticking boxes and paying lip service. Minority ethnic consumers desire a personalised message with cultural relevance so we pick up this lack of proper attention and reciprocate by simply not responding.

The basic rule is to understand this diverse audience so you can address their needs and market to them, but not just with token gestures: the decoding of culture is so much more than language translation.

Case studies

Media Reach is an agency pioneering the communications revolution to ethnic audiences. In business for 18 years, it has carved a niche for itself as a full service advertising and communications agency reaching out to hard-to-reach ethnic communities, through above-the-line and below-the-line campaigns, as well as outreach and grassroot promotions.

We have run campaigns for the government, social organisations and multinationals including awareness campaigns for the Department of Health; brand building campaigns for BT and Rank Hovis (Elephant Atta); recruitment drives for the Royal Navy and RAF as well as leisure and lifestyle campaigns.

All campaigns are devised by our multicultural staff with culture and language in mind. We are specific about which group we are targeting, thinking through the implications of demographics, the triggers and hooks that will get the target market motivated and their ability to react positively to the campaigns we are launching.

Here are three case studies that illustrate how we work with our clients and what we do to ensure that our activities deliver measurable results.

BT

We were set the objectives of communicating with first and second generations as well as third and fourth, alongside minority ethnic-led small and medium enterprises. Our creative rationale used everyday situations familiar to the target groups which were treated with humour and exaggeration. The campaign covered regional ethnic radio, satellite television channels, minority language and local ethnic press, online marketing and outreach activities.

Over five years, the campaign changed the perception of the value-driven target audiences in a highly competitive industry and managed to bring people back to BT. The language helplines achieved record levels of calls with more than 18,000 over three months. In all, various campaigns targeted 18 different communities.

Learndirect

The campaign objectives were to raise awareness of the English courses offered by Learndirect and the benefits they can bring and to drive calls to the language helplines. The target audiences

were first, second and third generation Somali, Pakistani and Bangladeshi people. The creative element of the campaign centred on people in everyday situations. We used ethnic television, radio, press and PR and outreach that covered Asian melas and other events as well as targeting religious places of worship.

The campaign was a huge success and we reached our target within seven months of starting the campaign.

Department of Health

The campaign was to raise the awareness of the dangers of tobacco use within the South Asian community and drive calls to the language helplines. It was aimed at second and third generations.

The creative was straightforward, playing on emotions as well as being informative and educational. The campaign was launched in the press, on TV and radio and below-the-line. Outreach events involved Asian community organisations, religious places of worship, ethnic cinema and the use of Bollywood and music industry endorsements which helped get the messages across to a target group with an affinity with Asian film stars and musicians.

The campaign generated a very good response, with many smokers calling to say that the commercial added to the pressure they were getting at home, and helped them give up the habit.

Urban marketing

Yinka Adegoke explains how to develop relationships with the target audiences who make things 'cool'

To understand where the future of urban marketing lies you need to have some idea of the future of marketing overall. And it's a very fitting time to talk about where marketing is going. The way every kind of organisation, commercial or NGO[22] communicates with its public or consumers is in flux. Communication methods are evolving from the traditional model of broadcasting to as many people as possible and hoping the message sticks, to a new model of speaking to specific audiences in specific settings about what they want to know, when they want to know it.

This change has been driven by the convergence of media platforms following their digitisation. It means that marketers in any sphere must learn how to develop comprehensive two-way communications with their customers. So it's not just about moving from broadcast to 'narrowcast' but also expecting interactive input from your consumers.

Take the newspaper industry, where Rupert Murdoch, in a well-publicised speech this spring, fretted over the impact of digital media on the future of the newspaper business. Referring to the 18-34 year old market and its fast disappearing newspaper reading habits, he said: *They want their news on demand, when it works for them. They want control over their media, instead of being controlled by it. They want to question, to probe, to offer a different angle.*

In particular Murdoch pointed to blogs, a medium which not only allows every consumer to become

'Urban marketing is not just about moving from broadcast to 'narrowcast' but also expecting interactive input from your consumers.'

‘New products and services can be made or broken by ordinary consumers, usually early adopters of new ideas and technologies, who happily share their opinions with, potentially, millions of people online.’

a journalist, but to become his or her own niche medium complete with content and advertising. Blogs had a significant impact on last year’s US elections and many marketers are beginning to realise their new products and services can be made or broken by ordinary consumers, usually early adopters of new ideas and technologies, who happily share their opinions with, potentially, millions of people online.

Ironically, one of Mr Murdoch’s companies, Sky Digital, is pushing one of the tools that many traditional marketers are most concerned about: the personal video recorder known as Sky Plus in the UK and TiVo in the US. Combine their power to ‘timeshift’ programmes with the rapidly proliferating number of TV channels and you start to see why there will be fewer common televisual experiences in our society, just the odd live sports event or a royal funeral. The days of 20 million people tuning in to watch *EastEnders* on Christmas Day are behind us.

Third generation (3G) broadband networks have already started trialing television services in France and, more recently, here in the UK. Again, the most interesting thing about TV on mobile phones is the change to on-demand delivery of content. So you can watch *EastEnders* when you want to, perhaps on your way home on the train, rather than having to rush back to be in front of your TV when the schedulers decide to broadcast it.

There are many other examples: podcasting, search engine marketing (which has made

Google's founders very rich people), viral marketing via email and many more.

This isn't about technology or a digital geekdom. This is about a fundamental shift in how marketers build relationships with their customers. This need for brands to understand how to develop relationships with target audiences – particularly the opinion formers who make things 'cool' – is summed up with numerous examples in Malcolm Gladwell's seminal book T*he Tipping Point*.[23] His central thesis is that 'little things can make a big difference' through word of mouth spread by the right kinds of people, the right number of times and in the right context. This, Gladwell says, is how things get to the tipping point and go mainstream. Digital platforms simply make this so much simpler.

But what this does all mean for anyone trying to communicate with the urban market – here defined as urban-dwelling, diverse, young opinion formers who don't use mass communication channels.

For starters it means organisations should create forums for dialogue rather than one-way channels for delivery of their message. Right across the generations and range of cultural backgrounds, consumers have become much too savvy to have communications driven at them. They want to be able to ask questions and make suggestions, be part of the brand experience. A good example is Nike's ID site, which allows you to 'design' your own trainers. In truth it's nothing more than choosing colours from a palette for different parts of the trainer but it cleverly taps into the

idea that you can create your own individual look. Even car manufacturers are offering more bespoke vehicles via websites.

The other way marketers are trying to develop closer relationships with their consumers, particularly that elusive 18-34 year old urban market so coveted by brand-owners, is through branded content.

Marketers in the hip-hop sector of the music industry have been ahead in this game for some years, learning from the early 'free' endorsement days of Run DMC's 80s hit *My Adidas* to Sean Combs repeating his label name BadBoy on all his artists' records. Now those hip-hop brands have turned into 360-degree fashion brands, the best example being rapper 50 Cent. He has his own range of trainers, video games, ringtones, clothing and much more.

The key point is that the modern consumer of any product or service would prefer to talk with organisations rather have them talk at him or her. When you focus on niche markets this kind of relationship building becomes even more imperative. Done well, it brings better results far more easily than traditional 'safe' marketing.

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Chapter Five: achieving diversity

Practical guidance on the implications of cultural identity and diversity for management, programming, marketing and audience development.

Key ideas

1 Internal change is an essential precursor to developing more diverse audiences

2 Internal change should embrace the way staff, including leaders, work together and the perceived ethos

3 Let the individuality of artists and artworks take precedence over their ethnic origin

4 Know your communities and develop an ongoing relationship with them through dialogue about programming and marketing

5 There are no single 'Black British' or 'British Asian' identities, more a cluster of identities situated in and around these terms

6 There is no one-size-fits-all solution and each organisation must tailor its own production

Managing for success

Maddy Morton of Morton Smyth looks at the key factors that enable success in audience development

Anyone who thinks they can achieve a diverse audience by implementing whizzy schemes whilst leaving the core of the organisation and its people intact is on a hiding to nothing. The only really effective way to change the make-up of your audience is to first change yourselves.

Live the objective

This is what we found when we studied cultural organisations that are attracting a broader audience. Our core insight was that successful organisations model internally what they wish to express externally. On this basis, logic tells us that to have the best chance of achieving a culturally diverse audience you need first to achieve this with your own team. The key things to consider here are:

- who runs the organisation
- the way the leader behaves
- how staff are recruited
- the way staff work together
- the ethos and atmosphere you create.

Who's in charge

It hardly needs saying, but one of the shortest cuts to a culturally diverse organisation has got to be in appointing to the Board and management team with diversity in mind. This is not rocket science. We know it – yet still it doesn't happen. So why is there this 'knowing-doing gap'? I suggest that this is where we come face to face with the very deepest level of fear and prejudice on the part of those currently in power in the arts – that 'they' (who are culturally different to us) won't run things as well as 'we' would. And it's here that people

'Anyone who thinks they can acheive a diverse audience by implementing whizzy schemes whilst leaving the core of the organisation and its people intact is on a hiding to nothing.'

'Let go and trust that when a diverse group of people is given the reins it will not be run like it is now by different people. It will be run differently.'

most need to let go and trust. Let go of the idea that the way things are now is working – because it patently isn't – and trust that when a diverse group of people is given the reins it will not be run like it is now by different people. It will be run differently.

Leadership behaviour

More than all the marketing in all the world, the thing that most influences the eventual nature of the audience an arts organisation can attract is the way its leader behaves. Success is not just about believing passionately in cultural diversity, it's about acting on it too. For a leader, this means integrating the objective of cultural diversity into day-to-day conversations with your team, the language and references you use, coaching and pep talks, and in writing as the starting point for vision documents, business plans and team objectives. And in staff recruitment.

How staff are recruited

If your organisation is to model diversity internally, it makes obvious sense to strive to match the make-up of your staff to that of the audience you wish to attract – at all levels, and on a permanent basis.

People are always talking about how important it is for cultural diversity that we advertise in different places (not just *The Guardian* on a Monday) and use word of mouth, but whilst media choice is important, it isn't the real issue. We want to appoint a culturally diverse staff, but the nature of the society in which we live can leave

people from some groups relatively less skilled than others in key areas. And the answer is?

Feel the fear and do it anyway. Start somewhere. Look for great raw material rather than finished skills and ask yourself not 'how can we find people out there who already have all the skills we need?' but 'how can we build up a team of great people and help them build their skills with us?' Pay eagle-eyed attention to the potential of your people. Use secondments and buddying systems at all levels to develop people. Coach and promote internally to grow the skills you need. And insist that the funding bodies support you in your endeavour.

The way staff work together

A powerful means to encourage and reinforce diversity in an organisation is to create mixed teams that bring together people with a range of skills and backgrounds to work on core issues such as programming, internal communications and customer service. I'm not talking about meetings with a representative from each function or culture, whose job it is to 'fight their corner'. Nor am I describing a talking shop. These teams must be given both responsibility and authority. It should then be their job to take decisions, make plans and make sure they're acted upon.

Mixed teams like these promote diversity because they bring in multiple viewpoints, foster trust and understanding and give broad access to core decisions. They are thus a vehicle of learning and development for individuals and the organisation, and they embed cultural diversity into the fabric of an organisation in

'Recruit by looking for great raw material rather than finished skills and ask yourself "how can we build up a team of great people and help them build their skills with us?"'

such a way that it can survive beyond changes in leadership.

Ethos and atmosphere

I've said that we need to start hiring people not just skill sets. When we do this, we have an important responsibility, which is to create a working ethos and atmosphere in which people feel they can indeed grow. The key to this is to be people-centred, pro-risk and blame-averse. To show respect and trust for all viewpoints and cultures. To assume that everyone is creative. To believe that people are capable of more and give priority to personal development, striving to fit the job to the people rather than the people to the job. To encourage people to try new things, support them in doing so and view mistakes as learning opportunities.

I have been personally inspired in this respect by David Fleming, the Director of the National Museums Liverpool who said in a workshop one day: *I know I'm going to make at least six mistakes a day, so why should I expect anything different from my staff?*

We don't have to get it right first time, or even every day. What we really need to do is keep trying. That, surely, is the fertile field of opportunity in which we can best grow a diverse arts sector.

Making connections with audiences

Of course it's not all about what happens on the inside of an organisation. Reflecting diversity and opportunity internally may be critical, but there are other important things we need to do externally if we are to build a culturally diverse arts sector.

When we studied organisations that are attracting a broad audience, we found that successful organisations make an effort genuinely to connect with audiences on their (the audiences') own terms. Here, the things that make the biggest difference are:

- how audiences are perceived and talked about
- the way the organisation engages with and involves audiences
- the way programming reflects the needs of the audience
- the effort the organisation puts into making a diverse audience feel at home

How audiences are perceived and talked about

It's important to think and talk about audiences in a way that is inclusive and positive from the outset. Good ways to start doing this are to look carefully at the language that is being used internally – are people talking about 'Black audiences' or 'minority ethnic audiences' as if these are homogenous groups? Do you speak of audience development as being about attracting 'non-attenders'? One inspiring organisation I encountered refused to use the description 'non-attender' because of the us/them dynamic that it creates. Besides, they said:

These people are attenders, they just don't happen to choose the arts right now.

This kind of thinking opens pathways in people's minds that make it easier to create relationships with people who are new to the organisation.

Engaging with and involving audiences

The golden rule of audience development is that if you want to develop a relationship with an

'It's important to think and talk about audiences in a way that is inclusive and positive from the outset. Are people talking about 'Black audiences' or 'minority ethnic audiences' as if these are homogenous groups? Do you speak of attracting 'non-attenders'?'

Mel Larsen explores how we can get to know our potential audiences better on page 168. **Rupa Huq** explains the complex relationship between subcultures and the mainstream on page 163 and **Jorella Andrews** and **Tony Graves** explore ways of approaching the diversification of arts programmes on pages 141 and 154.

audience group, you first have to get to know them. So it makes sense to get curious about the people you want to reach – who they are, what they're like, what they like, what they care about. And never, ever to assume you already know, or that finding out once means you've found out forever. Seek information wherever and whenever you can find it – quantitative research, qualitative research, your own customer circles, hanging around the foyers and cafes. Ensure that all staff interact with audiences, officially and unofficially, not just the marketing team. And commit to acting on what you find out.

Engaging with audiences isn't just about doing market research, however. The organisation that achieves real cultural diversity will be the organisation that actively involves audience members in its decision-making on key issues – including programming. This has multiple advantages: informing and motivating staff, improving the level and range of input to decision-making, generating real audience involvement in and commitment to the outcomes, creating ambassadors in the community and last (but by no means least), committing you to deliver.

Programming for access

Everyone working in the arts knows (even if they don't always like to believe it) that you can run whatever schemes and campaigns you like to attract new people, but if you don't offer an experience they can personally connect with, they won't come. Or worse, they will come – but only once, and then go away feeling more alienated than they did beforehand.

So it goes without saying that if we mean business about cultural diversity, it must be reflected in programme. Danger lies, however, in ticking boxes or 'dealing with' specific communities by putting on a festival of 'their' art once a year. The aim is to reach the position where programming is culturally diverse as a natural consequence of the diverse voices that have taken part in its creation.

Helping a diverse audience feel at home

As any good sex therapist will tell you, it is very difficult to enjoy something unless you are relaxed. Successful organisations recognise this and work hard at helping people of different cultures to feel at home when they visit. They know that as well as getting it right with the big things (like the product and the staff) they also have to get it right with the smaller things – like the food and drink (or lack of it), the way people are addressed (or not), opening hours and days, the signs and symbols used and so on.

The result

And if you do all of this? The result is an arts organisation that looks different, sounds different, is different and very importantly *feels* different, to staff and audiences alike.

People instinctively know when you invite them to take part in something but don't really mean it. They don't believe you, and they express it by staying away. But make *real* change to the organisation – embed cultural diversity in its very blood and bones and in how it relates to the world – and there is a chance people just might believe it and come along.

Acting on diversity

John E McGrath describes how Contact in Manchester has changed to embrace diversity

Contact's core audience is young adults ages 13-30. Within this remit, we are committed to reflecting – in our artists, participants, staff, audiences and board – the rich cultural diversity of contemporary Manchester. Year round, Contact brings together a wealth of emerging companies, international work, new writing, events, showcases and debate to explore today's lives and passions.

Starting points

In re-opening Contact after a lottery re–build in 1999, we sought to address the 'invisible barriers' to entering a theatre building. We worked with young people to identify the rules and words that feel unfamiliar and unwelcoming in theatres – funny terms like 'stalls' or 'matinee', laws about seat numbers and what you can and can't bring into the space. We play music everywhere, all of the time – even outside the entrance, and employ young staff from a range of backgrounds to say hello to people as they enter. We let people wander into most areas of the building and asked local celebrities to do voiceovers for our lift. Not surprisingly, by breaking down barriers for young people, we also became a popular venue for a range of communities who felt unwelcome in stiff, traditional environments. We also engage in a range of outreach programmes with those communities, but the key was making them feel at home – welcomed and listened to – when they arrived.

Maintaining involvement

Engaging with communities is relatively easy. It simply involves well designed projects led by creative, skillful artists. What's more complex is

maintaining people's involvement, ensuring that they move on from a specific initiative and into the daily fabric of the organisation. This can only be achieved by a shift of power – at board, staff and artist levels – so that newly engaged communities feel that they have a real input into decision making.

Our quarterly Open Contact forums provide an opportunity for anyone to give feedback to staff from Artistic Director to Marketing Assistant, find out more about what's happening and sign up for future projects. They can also join one of our Action Contact groups in programming, technical theatre, management or marketing. These groups take on projects within departments and contribute to decisions at all levels. Each has a leader chosen by other young people through an interview and is supervised by department staff. Action Contact group leaders meet weekly to discuss the programme, make plans, meet the Artistic Director and Chair of the Board, feed into Contact's three year plan, develop plans for recruitment and outreach and undertake training from staff and external professionals. They send two representatives to board meetings.

Our theatre is a meeting place for people from many backgrounds that you might not meet elsewhere. The ability to have a good time together has been essential to our success: we are not afraid of conflict or disagreement, but we like best of all to throw a party. Contact is a social as well as a creative environment so a night at the theatre doesn't begin and end with a play. The bar and foyers are a hub where anything can happen (at

'Maintaining people's involvement, ensuring that they move on from a specific initiative and into the daily fabric of the organisation, can only be achieved by a shift of power – at board, staff and artist levels'.

'If you're going to embrace diversity, you will have to be ready to change – not just once but every day'.

the moment we have a real garden installed in the upper foyer, where all sorts of people are hanging out and sparking impromptu performances).
We cannot do this work in isolation. Partners such as leading black touring company Nitro, and the innovative community-based South Asian company Peshkar, have been absolutely essential to our success in reaching black and Asian communities.
In a diverse society, we need a diversity of creative voices. These partnerships are long-term and they cover everything from co-producing work to running training programmes together.

If I were doing this again I would insist on spending more time recruiting a diverse staff team prior to the re-opening of the building. We employed staff in a rush to address fairly traditional job descriptions. They did a great job, but next time I would probably be more radical in how roles are defined. Practitioners from marginalised communities often have a particularly wide range of skills, because they have frequently had to be one-person bands in the past. This breadth of knowledge often doesn't come through in recruiting for jobs which have a narrow, traditional focus.

Diversity means difference – different opinions, different ideas, different ways of working. If you're going to embrace diversity, you will have to be ready to change – not just once but every day.

Losing labels and liking it

Jorella Andrews proposes an approach to programming the visual arts that focuses on the individuality behind the labels

If creations are not a possession, it is not only that, like all things, they pass away; it is also that they have almost all their life still before them.
(Maurice Merleau-Ponty)[1]

I'm not sure how useful it is to *foreground* collective concepts – race or ethnicity or 'Blackness', for instance – when thinking about art and about audiences for art. Somehow, doing so seems to close down more possibilities for communication and exchange than it opens up.

Admittedly, during the late 1970s and early 1980s, a number of British artists *did* organise themselves collectively around self-identifications of 'Blackness' – I'm thinking particularly of Eddie Chambers' BLK Art Group (1981-4), the Black Audio Film Collective (1983-98) and the Black-Art Gallery (opened 1983). There was also Rasheed Araeen's venture *Black Phoenix* (1978-9), which re-emerged in 1987 as the academic journal *Third Text*.

Such collectives were strategically important for a short period. They brought together artists who had been relatively isolated and unsupported, enabling them to exchange ideas and develop their thinking and their art. Together, artists produced work that exposed and addressed overt racism as it occurred on the streets and in the media – often by re-telling historical and current events from perspectives that were unacknowledged by the mainstream. John Akomfrah/Black Audio Film Collective's *Handsworth Songs*, a counter-narrative of the Handsworth riots of 1985, was a striking example of this.

Venu Dhupa on page 79 argues that Black artists are excluded from theatres and galleries because arts organisations are ignoring what is happening in the society around them and that this matters because they control access to resources.

Collectivity around 'blackness' also empowered artists to address the more covert forms of institutionalised racism that dominated British social and cultural life, including the art schools. For, as Eddie Chambers, Keith Piper, Sonia Boyce, Lubaina Himid and other Black Britons coming of age in the late 1970s and early 1980s quickly learned, the art-educational institutions were often indifferent, if not antagonistic, to the experiences and concerns of their Afro-Caribbean and Asian students. Furthermore, publicly funded and commercial art galleries typically excluded the work of Afro-Caribbean and Asian artists from their exhibition programmes, or marginalised it by presenting it in exoticised or primitivised terms. The work of Afro-Caribbean and Asian artists was also excluded from official accounts of the history and development of modernity and of modern art. Rasheed Araeen, who was already making work in a modernist/minimalist idiom when he came to Britain from Pakistan in 1964, has been particularly concerned about this issue. He has attempted to address this lack throughout his career as a politicised artist, writer, editor and curator – with his exhibition *The Other Story*: *Afro-Asian Artists in Post-war Britain* at the Hayward Gallery in 1989, for instance, and with the journal *Third Text*. But as noted by Alicia Foster in her recent book *Tate Women Artists*[2] exclusions persist today, particularly where Black women are concerned. (Incidentally, an even more profound absence is to be found in the National Portrait Gallery's contextualising accounts of 20th century British history. Here neither the fact of post-war immigrations into Britain, nor their impact on British cultural life are mentioned.)[3]

Eddie Chambers' response to such exclusions (shaped in important ways by his exposure to the Black Power/Consciousness movements in the USA) differed somewhat from Araeen's. Chambers, with Keith Piper, Donald Rodney, Marlene Smith and Claudette Johnson, was the driving force behind the BLK Art Group, and like Araeen he curated a number of important exhibitions of Black art. However, his approach was to look for ways of working outside of the parameters of the mainstream art establishment.

Chambers insisted that Black art should be made by Black people for Black people. Militant, educational and affirmative, particularly where the younger generation of Black Britons was concerned, Black art was about addressing social, political and historical issues as these affected Black people in Britain and elsewhere in the world, and it was about establishing a sense of pan-African solidarity and pride.

But, important as collective ventures of this kind were, most had run their course by the mid 1980s. As Keith Piper put it, by now 'individual group members were itching to emerge from the collective entity'.[4] Furthermore, there were issues other than race that many of them wanted to address in their work. The broader social and intellectual climate was also changing. 'Difference' was being understood in more complex ways as operating internally to individuals and groups as much as between individuals and groups. (Interestingly, this sense of complexity was always present in the early work of practitioners like Keith Piper, despite the

'Artists weren't necessarily abandoning notions of cultural heritage, but they were increasingly thinking about these as a resource to use if, and as, they pleased rather than something that narrowly defined who they were.'

'If a collective ethnocentric approach wasn't sustainable for artists in terms of their practice, how successful is it likely to be as a curatorial strategy for the 21st century?'.

often oppositional nature of the rhetoric that was being used during this period. His *Reactionary Suicide: Black Boys Keep Swinging* (or *Another Nigger Died Today*) from 1982 is a case in point, with its mix of materials and its multiple references not only to the Black male body but also to art history, to punk, to comics, to crucifixion, to African-American art, to graffiti…) Artists weren't necessarily abandoning notions of cultural heritage, but they were increasingly thinking about these as a resource to use if, and as, they pleased rather than something that narrowly defined who they were.

Also interesting, I think, is the dilemma that quickly became apparent with Chambers' venture: the Black community didn't appear to be interested in what Black artists were trying to do on their behalf! In conversation with Araeen in 1989, Chambers spoke about a 'gap' that existed between Black artists and the Black community. 'You don't hear Black musicians talking about such problems', he said, 'because there is no gap to fill. The question here is of communication and how to increase it'[5] (This dilemma regarding 'blackness' and the visual, approached in an American context by Michele Wallace, interests me greatly.)[6]

Ironically, though, it was just as collective ethnic and racial identifications were losing their usefulness for artists, that these designations were adopted with a vengeance by the arts institutions – in the form of equal opportunity policies for funding, and so-called multicultural agendas.

This wasn't all bad. As already noted, some important exhibitions opened in mainstream spaces. Like Araeen's *The Other Story* – even though its staging as *other* (in the exhibition title at least) was seen by some as problematic. New funding opportunities also opened up possibilities for many artists and radically increased their visibility. However, as Araeen has observed, because artists were generally required to 'show their cultural identity cards' in order to obtain this backing many found this state of affairs restrictive and separatist rather than enabling.[7] Artist and writer Sunil Gupta has referred to the 'Beast' of race politics in this regard.[8] More recently, neurologist and cultural critic Kenan Malik has claimed that multiculturalism's understanding of diversity is more divisive than racism ever was or is.[9] In any case, the question that arises is this: if a collective ethnocentric approach wasn't sustainable for artists in terms of their practice, how successful is it likely to be as a curatorial strategy for the 21st century?

Individuality … and letting the work lead *such as it is*

We are not who we are primarily because we belong to this or that group. Key instead are all those factors and aspects that the use of collective labels all too easily renders invisible. I think that the best art, the best writing about art and the best curatorial strategies, create situations that allow these invisibilities and particularities to come to light.

Crucially, work of this kind is not about abandoning notions of personal or collective coherence and belonging. Instead, it can make our

Naseem Khan examines the impact of equal opportunities policies and multicultural agendas in her article on page 21.

'We are not who we are primarily because we belong to this or that group. Key instead are all those factors and aspects that the use of collective labels all too easily render invisible.'

connections with others and ourselves flexible and strong – albeit in ways that may be difficult to 'put into words'. This potential was demonstrated powerfully in Lubaina Himid's site specific exhibition *Inside the Invisible* from 2002. It was made for the St. Jorgen's Leprosy Museum in Bergen, Norway, to commemorate those who had suffered from this disease:

'I wanted to make a series of works that might give these people a voice. They were individuals, real, idiosyncratic, sexual, thinking people. They had memories, hopes, families. In the same way that slaves were more than slaves, lepers are more than just people with bits of their bodies missing through disease.'[10]

For the installation she created a series of paintings. Each painting was a simple, brightly coloured pattern, five inches square, centrally positioned on a canvas measuring eight inches square. And each had small luggage label attached with words written on it, English on one side, Norwegian on the other. She talks about how the visitors experienced the work:

You look at the pattern, see it, read the text, 'This is my boat, my brother helped me build it', and either see the boat or do not. Someone who did not see the object, however hard she looked, decided that the owner of the pattern/object did not want her to look into this private memory… Each work existed as a memory, a secret, a history, a fact.

In other words, Lubaina Himid's actual, physical, touchable labels (together with the patterns) functioned as anti-labels on a conceptual level,

undoing the category of leprosy behind which these people had disappeared. Her approach here is fascinating and, I think, a model for other art-related practices (writing, curating) because of the way in which it combines singularity, a definite concreteness and historical specificity, and a label-free openness that is humanising and engaging.

So… where our art-writing and curatorial strategies are concerned, perhaps it's about letting the individuality of persons – and the individuality of works of art – take the lead. For as the French philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty put it, '… we are grafted to the universal by that which is most our own'.[11]

'Where our art-writing and curatorial strategies are concerned, perhaps it's about letting the individuality of persons – and the individuality of works of art – take the lead.'

I’m an artist, not an audience developer

Kristine Landon-Smith points out the challenges she faces when her touring company is asked to develop culturally diverse audiences

Alda Terracciano (page 101) and **Tony Graves** (page 154) are concerned about the negative impact of confining Black art to the ‘safe zone’ of access and inclusion. **Jorella Andrews** (page 141) discusses approaches to programming that place value on the artistic product not just the social impact of the art.

Tamasha is a national touring company that produces work about the Asian diaspora. We tour on the small and middle scales and produce one or two shows a year alongside a Developing Artists programme which offers professional development to writers, actors, directors and designers of Asian origin. We also have an education programme which seeks to assist teachers at secondary level in their delivery of an intracultural curriculum in drama.

We aim to achieve a culturally diverse audience, however the reality is that our audiences are show specific and often speak to very particular groups within the Asian diaspora. For example, *House of the Sun* (Theatre Royal Stratford East 1990) drew a large Hindu Sindhi community, *East is East* (Birmingham Rep, Royal Court and Stratford East) achieved our most culturally diverse audience with 60 per cent being non Asian, *Balti Kings* (Birmingham Rep and Lyric Hammersmith 1999) drew an equal mix of Muslim Punjabis and non Asian audience. *Strictly Dandia* in London (Lyric Hammersmith 2004-5) played to a mostly Gujarati audience.

We know how to get these audiences but do we know how to keep them? Our work speaks directly to very particular groups of people at a moment in time so we can’t guarantee that these groups will return for the next show. Whilst we can draw new groups of people to theatre buildings, we too have difficulty in holding that audience. So I prefer to say that Tamasha’s product attracts new audiences at different times to theatre spaces but we are not

a company that magically draws culturally diverse audiences and keeps them for five to 10 years.

When people see new audiences, they get excited. This is where it begins to get dangerous – Tamasha becomes popular because of its ability to 'develop audiences' (which, as I've explained, is not what we do). As an artist, to score so highly as an audience developer means that to the people who are trying to develop their audiences the 'art' can become of secondary importance. So relationships become strained and on occasions the artist is only invited in when the particular audience they are bringing in has value. The artistic product seems to hold less interest.

So what do we want? As an artist, I want the importance of the work to precede the importance of the audience. I love bringing new audiences to theatre spaces. I'm not passionate about making them come back again and again: let them come when they want to, when they feel they will see something that really speaks to them. The implication of this of course is that there needs to be more product that reflects the experiences of people from all walks of life. And when the product is there, the easiest thing is to find the audience. It's common sense – you simply go out and talk to the target group, get them excited about the work and they'll come in their droves. Sure it's time-consuming but it's the only way.

Revealing histories

Bernadette Lynch describes a project designed to make museum collections more relevant to local people

At some point in its history, the museum became 'one of the fundamental institutions of the modern state.'[12] Those values, on which the museum's current relationship with the state and its citizens are based, are deeply embedded within the museum's past. Where better to look for the source of such a symbiotic connection between politics, culture and the marketplace than in one of the great cities of the industrial revolution – Manchester.

It was typical from the mid-nineteenth-century onwards for civic leaders of provincial towns and cities such as Manchester to express their civic pride and power by founding cultural institutions like museums, galleries and libraries. In 1888 Thomas Greenwood asked, *Why Should Every Town Have a Museum and a Library?* and gave the answer, '*Because a Museum and a Free Library are as necessary for the mental and moral health of the citizens as good sanitary arrangements [and] because the existence or absence of a Museum and a Free Library in a town is a standard of the intelligence and public spirit manifested in that town*.' He stressed the responsibility of civic leaders and argued that libraries and museums 'deepen the sense of the duties and privileges of citizenship', focusing on the improvement of the rest of society.[13] As the academic Kate Hill points out, these civic improvements, including public buildings such as museums, represented a vision of the city and its middle-class citizens designed to glorify the status of both,[14] as can be seen in Greater Manchester in the many architectural examples still in existence within the city's 19th century urban landscape.

Thus, the founding of its cultural institutions was intimately linked with the economic history of the region, at time when the Royal Exchange in Manchester with its 8,000 traders under its blue glass domed roof effectively controlled the northern ports and thereby a significant portion of the world's trade. This important fact was to have a direct bearing on the growing diaspora populations of the region in the decades to come, and on the nature of those collections hidden deep within the vaults, or on display inside the glass cases and hanging upon the walls of the museums and galleries of Greater Manchester today.

Yet a few years ago when a small number of museums and gallery professionals from across Greater Manchester came together to collaborate in planning for Black History Month, it was realised how little is known about that history, about the region's institutional collections, their relationship with the economic history of the area and with its diverse populations. The group, which became known as *Connecting Our Histories*, set out to begin to unlock the hidden histories within the collections as a way of making them more relevant and visible to local people. Thus, the *Connecting Our Histories* (COH) network was established.

Connecting Our Histories is a broadly based group of museums and galleries across Greater Manchester committed to making their institutions more representative of social and cultural life in contemporary Britain. COH has most recently commissioned research, the Revealing Histories project (funded by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council's NW Museums Development

'It was realised how little is known about the region's institutional collections, their relationship with the economic history of the area and with its diverse populations.'

Fund) into the global trade links between Greater Manchester museums and galleries and their collections, aimed at highlighting the interconnectivity of the region's collections and their shared histories.

The Revealing Histories project plans to develop a programme of interventions across the sites leading up to and including activities around the 2007 bicentenary of the passing of the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act. The longer-term aim of this innovative project is in influencing museum collecting policies, interpretation and audience development strategies. It is expected that the project will lead to a wide-spread re-evaluation of current 'core' practices such as collecting, exhibiting and interpreting collections in museums and galleries in Greater Manchester. The learning experience for the museums involved will leave a legacy that should become integrated into the ongoing professional practice of the institutions.

The power to describe something lies at the heart of the museum's traditional power. This is the role of 'interpretation'. The *Connecting Our Histories* network initiated its *Revealing Histories* project in order to lay the basis for museums and galleries in Greater Manchester to unpick the hidden histories in their collections so as to begin to work with communities through a process of negotiated interpretations. Thus, the museum becomes a 'contact zone', to borrow from anthropologist James Clifford,[15] a site of comparative learning, innovation and reciprocity, including the negotiation of cultural boundaries and the sharing of responsibility for the construction of meanings

and the repatriation of knowledge to originating communities. It centrally involves an integrated approach to the exploration of multiple voices and beliefs and the facilitation of the urban bridging of identity through the interpretation of museum collections. It is anticipated that the *Revealing Histories* project will unearth shared histories between people, collections, institutions and places in the world, thus beginning to return the wealth of cultural knowledge that helped establish the region in the first place.

The right of interpretation to 'describe' has been the critical area of negotiated status at the heart of the museum project. It still remains contested as to whether museums continue to act to 'legit-imise' particular (dominant) cultures/heritages to this day, appointing themselves to speak on behalf of entire populations and cultures, to speak on behalf of the colonised. 'In order for Europe to emerge as the site of civilisational plenitude, the colonised world had to be emptied of meaning.'[16] By beginning to understand the interconnected histories of the regions' collections and its peoples, the Connecting Our Histories network aims to redress that omission.

It is expected that the project will lead to a wide-spread re-evaluation of current 'core' practices such as collecting, exhibiting and interpreting collections'.

Programming outside the comfort zone

Tony Graves argues for a transcultural, collective approach to programming the performing arts

See **Sarah Champion** on page 188 for examples of how programmers make assumptions about the interests of artists and audiences from Chinese communities.

We are all familiar to some degree with the concept of the comfort zone. In programming terms this can be interpreted as the adoption of shorthand approaches to the needs and interests of different communities, for example a diet of bhangra for Asian audiences and hip-hop inspired work for Black British youths.

Audience development can often begin from these prescribed routes, but driving this attitude is the essentialising of communities. This inevitably leads to programming based on the flawed concept that we can somehow identify an authentic representation of people.

Who has prescribed this authenticity? Sometimes it is self imposed, but often it has been imposed by others, be it programmers, funders or marketing managers. It leads to the view that traditional mushaira will be of interest to people of South Asian origin, and in doing so treats them as a homogenous group, whilst also assuming that it appeals to them alone. Undoubtedly the importance of traditional artforms should be recognised, especially in terms of their significance in locating the cultural heritage of certain people within diasporic communities, however allowing this approach to dominate is a mistake and leads to programming along tired and stereotyped lines.

This approach has perhaps developed as a result of the desire by arts organisations to avoid accusations of universalism; that they are promoting a gold standard of culture, predominantly western, to which we should all aspire. The danger might be that in doing so we make

the assumption that artforms such as 'Western classical music' are for white middle class people and therefore cannot be programmed for a Black or South Asian audience. Integral to this is the need to adopt a wider definition of words such as 'classical'. The music of Tunde Jegede or ragas for the sitar are clearly from a classical root so concert halls could echo to music from more than one classical tradition.

The creative process of programming should enable us to play with and explore interesting synergies in all artforms. The curatorial approach, traditionally associated with the visual arts, is one which could equally be applied to a concert series, thereby providing an extra dimension by placing concerts in new contexts. The influence of Ghanaian music on Reich may provide an entry point for some audiences. This intercultural approach, juxtaposing Ghanaian drumming with Western orchestral music, is perhaps more reflective of the way in which people engage with society in general and display multiple influences and identities. In contrast, a shorthand approach to programming and marketing might refer to Bharatha Natyam as South Asian dance, rather than acknowledging its South Indian origin, as this is (erroneously) seen as a more convenient and less aesthetically challenging label on which to hang it and thereby locate an audience.

Equally problematic is the regular confinement of Black and Asian work within the 'safe' zones of access and inclusion. Programming under the heading of audience development, and by that I mean developing audiences that are engaging with

There is a list of sources of information about artists and companies on page 219.

Kristine Landon-Smith (page 148) objects to her company being booked primarily because of its ability to develop audiences rather than for the quality of its work.

the subsidised arts sector for the first time, is often located within this remit. This may encompass initiatives such as Black History Month or programming around calendar dates of religious significance. In these and other instances it is important to embrace aesthetic considerations as well as those of widening participation. In other words too often the emphasis is on delivering work as a way of addressing the long isolation that cultural institutions such as museums have held from culturally diverse communities rather than a celebration of the artistic merit of the work itself.

Research has shown the social significance that art holds for many African, African Caribbean and South and East Asian audiences. At the root of this is the concept of orature[17] which sees celebrations such as Carnival and Mela as having an important social function, integral rather than separate to society. By pressing the social inclusion button the true significance of an holistic approach to the arts is being missed and unless this important point is grasped then programming policy, and ultimately programmes themselves, will always create a false divide between aesthetics and the achievement of social aims.

How can such a shift in policy be achieved? Departing from the western concept of the all-knowing artistic leader and moving towards a collective approach to programming may be unfamiliar and most challenging for policy and practice alike. This is not a recommendation for adopting a corporate multiculturalist approach where the usual suspects act as spokespeople and gatekeepers. There is no substitute for knowing

your communities and developing a relationship with them that is incremental through constant dialogue. In turn this may help avoid the problems seen in Birmingham in 2005 through the causing of offence to certain sections of society. Of course this approach raises various questions such as: to what degree can people play a formal part in the decision making process? In addition, how ready is the subsidised sector to recognise and embrace more commercially oriented cultural practices that might be the preferred option for members of different communities? However it will help to address the visible and invisible power structures that can otherwise exclude the representation of culturally diverse arts and artists.

Ultimately people are not representatives of their communities and certainly artistic programmes cannot be either. However there is a basic desire to see something of ourselves reflected in artistic programmes of whatever variety. It is important therefore that programmes and programming policy reflect this aspect of human nature that we all have in common.

'Ultimately people are not representatives of their communities and certainly artistic programmes cannot be either.'

Diversity or new forms?

Choreographers are mixing traditions and styles to create new dance forms that reach far beyond 'cultural diversity', argues **Alistair Spalding**

'If the work of minority artists is missed then so is an important area of artistic investigation'.

It used to be incumbent on any arts programmer to present work from diverse sectors in order to serve those communities who would be attracted to that work. It is now the case that if the work of minority artists is missed then so is an important area of artistic investigation: the work from artists whose tradition and training comes from one culture and yet live in and are influenced by another.

I want to use two examples of dance artists who have an association with or have visited Sadler's Wells.

I start with the most obvious example of this phenomenon, Akram Khan. Akram's parents are from Bangladesh and it was when he was growing up in London that he learned the craft of Kathak Dance (the North Indian abstract percussive dance form) He became an accomplished Kathak dancer. He subsequently went to the Royal Northern College of Contemporary Dance and De Montfort University and then spent some time at the schools of Anne Teresa de Keersmaeker's PARTS in Brussels. The result of this combination of physical and intellectual training is a dance form which combines something of Akram's Kathak training but within a western contemporary vocabulary. It is also set within a contemporary western European art framework. His most recent work *zero degrees* is just over an hour long, it has text, it is abstract, he has collaborated with lighting designers, a sculptor and a composer etc. But more than this the actual movement language is new – it is not a fusion of forms but a new form drawn form his two major cultural influences.

Similarly the choreographer Lin Hwai-min from Cloudgate Dance Theatre is a Taiwanese choreographer who uses Tai Chi as the base for his movement language. He has a contemporary training but makes reference in his work to western classical tradition. So *Moon Water*, which the company performed at Sadler's Wells in 2002, is really a white ballet: set by a lake the dancers move like a corps de ballet in various combinations. The movement content, though, is unlike anything you will see on a classical European company – it is slow-flowing, grounded and aware of gravity. Lin Hwai-min has, through his various cultural experiences, formed a new dance vocabulary.

With these two artists it is no longer possible to define their art in terms of either a tradition or a purely contemporary form. The work has transformed into something which requires new language to describe it. It is insufficient and it underestimates its significance to simply describe it as culturally diverse, for example. The reason to programme it is principally an artistic one.

This mixing up of traditions and styles is nothing new – if you look at the origins of the flamenco tradition, for example, you will find the influence of the Moorish, the Jewish and the gypsy traditions. But the fact is that these processes of change have accelerated in an environment of hyperspeed global communication – sometimes so fast that the definition of them has still to catch up with their development.

The appearance of these new forms is inevitable; they do not come out of any schemes or initiatives

they just evolve from an artist's creativity, imagination and experience. The work is new, confident, and completely relevant.

However it is wrong to assume that these works will automatically deliver an ethnically diverse audience. The move that these artists make into the contemporary field may leave their existing audience behind. Although there are noticeably more South Asian faces in an audience for a contemporary piece by Akram than for other contemporary work, there are far less than for a classical recital by one of the stars of classical Indian Dance for example.

The challenge that exists for presenters of this type of work is in recognising the opportunity it offers for developing new audiences instead of simply hoping to convert an existing audience.

Assuming the same South Asian audience who enjoy classical Indian dance will automatically enjoy this new work is wrong, just as it would be wrong to assume all South Asians enjoy classical Indian dance. In this case cultural relevance is much more significant than ethnicity.

Akram's contemporary work is hugely relevant to a large number of people who are interested in the issue of identity. His latest work *zero degrees* explored themes of race, culture and nationality that would be familiar to any British-born Asian. However, those very same themes would have been equally relevant to any British-born person of Caribbean or African descent.

Work like *zero degrees* is not created in isolation; it reflects our changing society, and its potential

Mel Larsen questions the effectiveness of targeting by ethnicity in her article on page 168.

***zero degrees* at Sadler's Wells: Nitin Sawhney/Akram Khan/ Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui/ Antony Gormley**
Photographer: Tristram Kenton

Rupa Huq gives examples of audiences themselves generating the publicity for sell-out events on page 165.

audience cannot be targeted on the basis of ethnicity alone. Its natural audience may choose to define itself in many different ways and that definition may change depending who is asking the question.

For Sadler's Wells, new technology is constantly opening up new forms of communication; digital print technology means that dedicated small print runs can be created to communicate to very specific audiences. The spread of broadband means work can be viewed via the internet rather than described on a leaflet. Online booking allows audiences to choose their own seats. The use of phone text shortcodes and bluecasting will allow us to place information in people's hands. By harnessing the power of this technology we can not only communicate with new audiences but also provide the means for the audience to communicate with itself – thereby spreading information and opinions.

The journey that must be taken to develop an audience for new work need not present an insurmountable challenge when begun from the right starting point. Instead the search for an audience defined by culture opens up exciting new opportunities as long as we are prepared to take a fresh look at what we are saying and who we are talking to.

Subculture RIP?

Rupa Huq asks if subcultures are a thing of the past. If so, where is the next big thing for arts programmers?

Once the notion of 'subculture' conjured up images of rebellious, underground youth movements.[18] Now it's come off the streets to become the stuff of the lecture theatre, it's entered everyday vocabulary and makes frequent media appearances. Can subculture's 21st century respectability be explained though by the fact that it has effectively ceased to exist,[19] killed by over-academicisation and an unimaginative generation of youth? Where should arts programmers look to for the 'next big thing?'

Common-sense wisdom dictates that youth cultures begin with a moment of subcultural purity, emerging from the underground. The forces of capitalism then pounce on the raw subculture and a mass-produced version – complete with accompanying marketable commodities – comes out of the other end of an industry-led sausage machine. This has implications for arts programmers too. Once the 'powers that be' begin to appropriate youth musical scenes into massively public-funded projects, the argument goes, the subcultures in question have lost their anti-establishment appeal.

Yet received wisdom sometimes needs challenging. Why should we get overly hung up on subcultural purity? Examples from the Asian Underground and hip-hop scenes illustrate the complexity of contemporary youth cultural action.

Eyebrows were raised when Talvin Singh was asked to play the Labour Party conference in 1997. But who was using who here? It's clearly problematic to knock the incident as it represents so many different things. On a more straight-forwardly commercial note,

'Do subcultures lose their anti-establishment appeal once they are appropriated into massively public-funded projects?'

After all 'underground' is in some ways a synonym for 'unpopular'.

accusations of sell-out followed when Asian Dub Foundation did a series of adverts for Philips electrical goods – a move that seemed to contradict their overtly leftist political stance. However the deal did maximise exposure to the band's music and messages. The Militant Muslim group Fun-Da-Mental also made great capital of their radical political leanings, playing numerous benefit gigs. However, having their videos banned by MTV arguably prevented them reaching a wide audience. Their compilation album of 2000 was self-deprecatingly titled *And Still No Hits*. Perhaps to remain as uncompromising as they did was a mistake if they wanted to influence large numbers. After all 'underground' is in some ways a synonym for 'unpopular'.

The idea of having different levels of audience reception was raised when I interviewed the amateur teenage hip-hop band Helletic Domains (HD) in Manchester in 2003.[20] Ravelle (MC Wizdom) commented:
Sometimes you don't necessarily 'go commercial', it's just more people are buying it so more people say you're commercial. On an album you don't just get commercial tracks.

Mathew (MC Tear-ror) concurred:
You just put out a few commercial tracks [as singles] to learn the fans to ya… that's when they're gonna start listening to your album, [then] they might listen to a few of your hardcore stuff.

This shows that it is too simplistic to draw a dichotomy between 'commercial' and 'sub-culturally pure'. Interestingly, HD came into being on a project run by Cultural Fusion, formerly

known as Longsight Youth Arts. On the scheme, band members completed the NVQ Level 2 qualification in music technology after putting in 30 assessed hours of practical work fitted in part-time around other educational routes. The fact that they chose to compose, record and perform hip-hop shows how this once threatening subculture is being harnessed to the official qualifications framework.

Those who argue that current youth culture has run out of steam may be looking in the wrong place. For those willing to seek it out, obscure venues in ethnic neighbourhoods in our big cities provide examples of its healthy state, as does pirate radio. Post-colonial circumstances have shaped many of the most exciting youth musical developments of late from hip-hop to Asian Underground. I came across HD in a disused church in Longsight, a run down inner-city district of Manchester, which had been converted with public money into the Cultural Fusion HQ – combining a recording studio and performance space. The occasion was the project's NVQ certificate-giving ceremony.[21] Attending a packed weekday daytime gig with 400 Asian youth trying to snog one another at the Western pub in Moss Side, Manchester similarly opened my eyes to the continuing popularity of bhangra. Neither event would ever get a mention in *The Guardian Guide* or listings magazine, *City Life*, but they exist due to their self-generated publicity and word of mouth networks.

In my interview with Manchester bhangra-spinner DJ Fritz, he answered that Asian weddings, rather than bookings on the trendy underground club-

See page 213 for details of a guide to using ambassadors to open a dialogue with audiences and generate word of mouth.

scene, were his favourite type of gig as they were the most lucrative. I asked if he would ever play Womad. My question was intended to probe at the difficulties of appearing as exotic performer at this much-reviled white person's 'world music' festival. The unhesitating reply was 'Of course I would if I got paid'.[22]
The mismatch between what practitioners want out of their work and how it is interpreted by commentators can be seen in Simon Reynolds's experience of interviewing Bally Sagoo. Reynolds wrote:
When I suggest that... 'Chura' [a love song]... might have a political dimension – demonstrating to the racists and BNP that Britain is now a multicultural society... he shrugs. It's clear that Sagoo's main interest in crossover is maximum market penetration.[23]

Importantly, modern subcultures co-exist, rather than succeeding one another. Many of the key features of youth culture are intangible eg 'being hard', 'looking good' and 'hanging out'. Reacting against what has gone before was a subcultural motor when youth were more homogeneous. Punk's short sharp shock followed the overblown pomposity of progressive rock in the 1970s. However in the 1990s, although grunge with its lo-fi guitars and dressed-down look came chronologically after rave's electronically processed music and fashion-conscious image, the two crucially existed alongside each other rather than one killing the other off. Many of the fans were the same people. The same can be said of the relationship between the seemingly 'white noise' of Britpop and Asian Underground.

Our definitions of subculture therefore need updating rather than wholesale junking. We cannot ignore the fact that youth culture is an international industry for which constant re-generation is vital, ensuring a quick turnover of all the associated consumer products such as fashion and music. However today's music makers and fans are all-too aware of this and are not simply victims of market manipulation. By the same token, youth won't turn up their noses at state sponsored music so arts programmers should not be afraid of drawing up imaginative bills to reflect multicultural audiences. HD were grateful of the opportunities that the music action zones initiative had given them and were all looking to eventually make their living from hip-hop. Band member Rosie (MC Universal) was clear about this at the age of 15:

I'm not in it for the money right now because I'm young. I just do it because I like it but [eventually] I see it as a career, definitely.

Such pathways are possible because of the emergence of the new creative and cultural industries that now occupy the spaces of industrial decline at the heart of many UK cities.

The study of subculture has always had its critics.[24] Yet the ubiquity of the term is surely a sign of its success rather than its death. As for me, I count myself lucky to be part of a new generation of writers addressing the subject, taking my inspiration from a new set of youth cultural developments providing definitive proof that the Great British subcultural collection still has plenty of life in it yet.[25]

'Youth won't turn up their noses at state sponsored music so arts programmers should not be afraid of drawing up imaginative bills to reflect multicultural audiences.'

Classified information

Mel Larsen finds ways of reconciling segmentation – a key principle of marketing – with diversity

'We all choose to align ourselves with any number of different collective identities. Ethnicity does not necessarily dictate one's cultural choices and neither does age, income or gender. Instead look for people who share a similar perception of or relationship to your brand.'

There was a time when the word 'segmentation' used to feel a bit too close to 'segregation'. However nowadays most people involved in marketing and programming can see that segmentation is a sensible approach to developing audiences. Some still feel uncomfortable about classifying people into groups but in reality better targeting tends to mean better communication, service, representation – and less marketing spend.

So much for the ideal but, as a practice, segmentation brings its challenges. There are many ways to divide up a potential market. It used to be a case of chopping up audiences along the lines of geography, age, income and education. These are still of great use but finding commonality is not so simple anymore.

Once you get past basic geographic or demographic distinctions, the psychographic stuff is where it gets really interesting. Here, looking at motivations, aspirations and actual behaviour of audiences can be fascinating.

We all choose to align ourselves with any number of different collective identities. Ethnicity does not necessarily dictate one's cultural choices and neither does age, income or gender: some sixty year olds behave like teenagers, some middle-class kids style themselves on sink estate culture while some men change their gender alignment, dress up and outsass the women. I recently read an article on people in China who take on different names according to where they are living and who they are mixing with: they have one name for staying in this or that region, another name when they are in Hong Kong and an

English name for work.[26] The notion of a fixed identity just doesn't work for their many lifestyles.

Ethnicity is a complex differentiator on which to segment as is 'culture' and 'cultural heritage'. Cultures – be they based on ethnicity, religion or geography – are a paradox. On one hand, cultures are light. They are self-defined in a variety of ways by different communities who say they belong to a particular culture (just think of the terms 'Jewish', 'Black' or 'British' to get an idea). They are not fixed, they shift and they are debated over. On the other hand, cultures are weighty, significant, have huge histories behind them and people literally die for them.

A way through the maze

How do we find a way through this fabulous morphing maze of difference? A useful start is to look for people who share (or could be persuaded to share) a similar perception of or relationship to your brand. They will be groups of people with something in common, looking for similar experiences. The key thing to consider is how customers perceive your organisation rather than how you perceive them and to be aware of the social and aspirational boxes that people put themselves into rather than deciding that we know where they fit.

Let's look at our boxes – the boxes we as marketers put people into:
We need to attract the local African community, they are missing from our audience
or
Our Indian audience is exclusively middle-class we want to attract Pakistani and Bangladeshi audiences who live just five minutes away.

'It's important to be aware of the social and aspirational boxes that people put themselves into rather than automatically deciding that we know where they fit.'

Now let's look at the boxes the audience puts themselves into, consciously or otherwise:
Tonight I feel like being around African Caribbean people at a spoken word event and having a drink.

I want to go somewhere where my children can experience positive role models from a variety of cultures.

I want a great night out with a top act at an affordable price. I don't care who's in the audience but I don't want to feel singled out either.

It's interesting to note that these needs could easily be voiced by someone of any culture. The opportunity to close the gap here lies in communicating to connect with potential customers rather than simply labelling them for convenience or out of habitual relationship with a particular community. All obvious stuff of course, but this personal approach gets lost inside the shorthand descriptions, the tight budgets and schedules, the assumptions of difference or of familiarity and so on.

Understanding audiences

Often talk of targeting minority ethnic markets doesn't seem to go much beyond 'attracting Black and Asian markets' in the same way that one might refer blandly to tapping into, 'the women's market'. There's not much sub-segmentation evident. This is partly due to the difficulty in accessing information that goes beyond the general. I am told by a commercial researcher that the ethnic market in the UK is just too small to warrant extensive lifestyle research. I think this is

something that will change as major cities become 'minority majority' in the future.

The general information that is available tells us that broad distinctions can be made between the British, African, African Caribbean, South Asian and white population. There are all sort of facts available from the 2001 census: Overall, the British African, African Caribbean and South Asian populations have a younger age profile than the white population. There are some non-English speakers and some disproportionately low income groups (60 per cent of Bangladeshis are living on low income) and groups where single parentage is common, (Mixed origin, Black Caribbean) and there can't be anyone living in the UK who doesn't know that there are geographic areas where you are more likely to find minority ethnic populations. All this information can be useful up to a point, especially when looked at on a local level.

Psychographically, there are a variety of self-definitions and groupings around the notion of ethnicity and cultural heritage. These cultural choices can influence purchasing interests around 'culture-specific' products such a targeted newspapers, food and beauty products and arts experiences offered by specialist promoters.

All of these factors could potentially influence the planning of arts programming and marketing. There is plenty of evidence to show that there are definable minority ethnic art markets and that specific targeting does work. There are British Black and South Asian people who are looking for arts

Ahmad Jamal explores the way retailers offer a range of products originating from a diversity of cultural back-grounds enabling consumers to shift between their different cultural identities (page 112).

Sandra Kerr (page 27), **Nadine Andrews** (page 62), **Maddy Morton** (page 131) and **Sarah Champion** (page 188) all argue that the best way to move beyond making decisions that are merely comfortable is to increase the diversity of your staff.

experiences that are specifically targeted at them and reflect identifies based around ethnicity or cultural heritage. However, equally, there are people with these backgrounds who are not particularly looking for 'ethnic reinforcement' but primarily for a value for money experience. Then there are those who jump between these two positions and beyond. Anyone aiming to develop minority ethnic audiences needs to be at least aware that there are many different ways in which people locate themselves around ethnic and cultural identities.

The key challenge for the arts marketers is often simply attracting the first-time visitor who does not match the ethnicity of their current core audience. In my experience this objective first emerges in response to a funding agenda or opportunity. It may surprise some people that many minority ethnic-led organisations have also had the uncomfortable realisation that their audiences are not as representative as they would like. Again often for the same reasons as mainstream organisations: the arts organisation has felt more comfortable making decisions from values and lifestyles that they are personally familiar with.

One other point: in their eagerness to do the right thing, arts providers sometimes fail to take a realistic look at the market: the size of available African, South Asian or Chinese population within a catchment and what could be realistically attained; how many of this population are likely to be arts attenders. This can result in downheartedness and a post-audience development scheme that is

wholly out of sync with the original promise of the marketplace.

Accessing information

Some information on lifestyle is available from commercial reports. Mintel and MORI have a number for sale (including valuable information on newspaper readership). Many are too expensive for the average arts marketer, but it's worth noting that some can be accessed at major libraries like the British Library.

A range of information is available from local authorities or the Commission for Racial Equality, for example the impact of different religions and languages on arts-going choices – often less relevant for younger markets, (but not exclusively as family outings mean parents' needs are taken into account). Knowing about important religious holidays and commemorative dates can also be useful.

Audience research has been undertaken by venues throughout the UK as a result of various diversity initiatives. This kind of general information can be useful for attracting first-time attenders it often prompts us to reassess the way we do things.

It's also helpful to consider the observable strategies used by the people who are reaching the audiences you want. Who is selling products to minority ethnic markets in your catchment area? Where are they advertising? What offers are they making? How does this compare to how you do things? Working in partnership with different leaders and networkers within target communities is a good route ahead especially if

You'll find details of available sources of information about existing and potential audiences from page 213 onwards.

Ahmad Jamal makes suggestions about community partnerships on page 112.

Research comparing the purchasing behaviour of ticket buyers for events categorised as 'culturally diverse' with those buying for the programme as a whole found just two differences: when they booked and whether they attended more than once (publication details on page 213).

resource sharing is mutual. Community networkers known as Arts Ambassadors have proved to be worth considering at the start of a push for new audiences.

We still lack more detailed and affordable psycho-graphic information (which is true for a lot of other arts markets), in particular information that takes us down to the level of those collective alignments that individuals move in and out of. I recall *Time Out* did a very interesting study many years ago about the lifestyle groups that urban types put themselves into. It acknowledged the importance of ethnicity as an identification without seeing it as the sole or exclusive factor. It also acknowleged that many people of all backgrounds want to and do access more than one cultural identification and experience. It would be great to get our hands on some more of this information of this type.

Information from the box office

Once first-time audiences start coming in, the box office data at least provides a chance to look at what choices attenders are making in relation to the programme. Segments can be created from this valuable information. However, again, a lot of venues and companies haven't had the time to go any deeper into their customer base, so audiences remain categorised as simply 'attenders of Black or Asian arts events'. This results in the kind of complaints heard at focus groups where for example, African Caribbean audiences (and Press representatives) say they are only contacted 'when there is a Black show on'.

Even at the point of data capture there is still another challenge. How to classify attenders without making assumptions and remaining sensitive to the fact that people want a night out and not a full-on enquiry into their ethnic status. Questionnaires are fine for a limited period but obtaining data on ethnicity over time is not an easy task. If anyone has achieved this without alienating customers I'd love to hear about it.

As a database builds up, it will undoubtedly be more useful to segment on the basis of purchasing behaviour in relation to an arts programme rather than the ethnicity of achieved audiences. However, most of us are a long way off that stage and have to keep cultural diversity on the development agenda just to ensure that Black and Asian audiences are served as well as everyone else.

The next stage

Will the need to segment on the basis of ethnicity ultimately become redundant? Yes and no: alignment around identities of ethnicity and cultural heritage plays a powerful part in people's formation of identity and is something to be acknowledged and celebrated. It is possible that cultural identities and power balances may shift beyond recognition by the end of this century but my guess is that in the foreseeable future we will continue to need to measure that equal opportunities are truly being made available, whatever the social group in question.

It is important to remember that addressing ethnic identity alone is not enough to satisfy the market and that audiences can always smell tokenism. Experience and research has

'As with all audiences, offering an all-round quality arts experience is just as important as addressing ethnic identity.'

'Navigating around difference is always going to be both challenging and inspiring. It's up to each of us to draw a new road map.'

shown that as with all audiences, an equally important factor is offering an all-round quality arts experience. So, to sum up:

- there is a minority ethnic population in the UK with certain circumstances and characteristics distinct from the rest of the population
- there is no single 'Black British' or 'British Asian' identity, more a cluster of identities situated in and around these terms
- there is no single minority ethnic arts market
- honouring the individual is a critical mindset to take when planning yet the most practical and affordable way ahead is to find group identities

Putting it into practice

You may well ask how can anyone possibly address all of this? Good question. Going beyond broad generalisations about the market and beyond the complexities of social identities can be difficult. I don't have a simple textbook answer and thank God for that or we'd all be clones. Navigating around difference is always going to be both challenging and inspiring. It's up to each of us to draw a new road map.

My position has always been simply that if you, with genuine desire, connect with whoever you are targeting, the route will gradually become clearer. Personally, I don't believe that observation and analysis of a market from afar will work where cultural and ethnic differences are concerned. It really requires getting in there and dancing passionately with the paradox of People.

Implications for audience development practice

It's really about getting the basics right across the whole organisation, says **Caroline Griffin**

Over recent years, arts organisations have put a significant amount of effort into developing new Black and minority ethnic audiences. They have used various approaches and the majority of the effort has been, at least to some degree, experimental. While it is clear that we are in the early stages of developing our skills in this area, we have already achieved significant successes. It is a good time to look back and take stock of the types of approach that are successful and likely to inform future work.

The task of developing new audiences often falls squarely at the feet of marketers who usually make a rapid response by reviewing their marketing practice and looking for new techniques.
One of the first things we discover is that it is not enough to say that we are trying to generate a 'culturally diverse' audience. Neither is it appropriate to assume that the audience for a piece of work is 'Asian' or 'Black'. The reality is that marketing to Black and minority ethnic audiences follows the same principles as any marketing activity. Potential audiences should be identified not solely by their ethnicity but also by other defining characteristics, such as social circumstance, income, geographical location, educational attainment, history of attendance and so on. We must then work out which benefits of the work we are promoting (that is, reasons why someone will want to get involved with the work, not just facts about it) best match the needs and wants of those audiences.

As Mel Larsen has outlined, some of the tools for such sophisticated segmentation are still in their

Information about where to find reports on the many projects that have focused on developing new Black and minority ethnic audiences is on pages 213-219.

infancy. It is currently hard to locate target audiences using traditional profiling methods. It is also very difficult to assess the ethnicity of an audience on the basis of postcode analysis or even with audience surveys. This makes judging success difficult. However, these tools are being developed all the time and, just because it's hard, it doesn't mean that appropriate market segmentation is less important than when marketing to any other audience.

Knowing the target group thoroughly will help programmers and marketers make decisions about such issues as:

- which benefits are most persuasive
- language and tone of voice for print
- appropriate imagery
- phrasing of information about the venue
- the timing of shows
- potential audience size
- ticket pricing, where applicable

As our experience has grown, organisations have begun to accept that marketing is only part of the solution. Marketing only works when the product is appropriate, accessible and attractive. In the arts, this means that sustainable development of Black and minority ethnic audiences is linked to the programming of work by Black and minority ethnic artists. This is not, as Tony Graves has discussed earlier (page 150), the whole story but why would people want to get involved with an organisation where ideas and representations they can identify with are conspicuous only by their absence on the walls of the gallery or on the stage?

Arts organisations have found that programming culturally-specific work is often the quickest and most reliable way of getting a new audience from a particular ethnic background.

However many organisations don't just aim to develop specific audiences for a particular event. Instead, they would like to encourage a broader audience across the whole programme – a diverse audience in its correct sense. This is a more complex programming issue and is usually only successful, as Maddy Morton has pointed out already, when the organisation considers how to appeal to a broad constituency across all its activities including management systems and practices; ticket sales, stewarding, catering and bar operations; and education and outreach activities.

A barrier frequently cited in the now substantial body of research into barriers to attendance is the perception that organisations don't welcome people from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds. A scarcity of Black and minority ethnic staff and artists is usually seen as proof of such a lack of welcome.

Ambassadors along with other types of community liaison scheme have been particularly useful in supporting the development of deep relationships between arts organisation and new audience. These roles have been effective because they provide an essential two-way channel for communication between organisation and audience. Experience shows that these roles only succeed when the organisation listens to, understands and acts upon information it receives.

See page 213 for details of a guide to setting up and running Ambassadors schemes.

The following article assesses the extent to which arts organisations are succeeding in developing this 'whole hearted, long term commitment'.

It is clear that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to developing Black and minority ethnic audiences. Each organisation needs to tailor an approach that takes into account its own aims, the characteristics of the potential new audience and their attitudes and desires.

However there are some critical success factors that should form the basis for any audience development activity. An organisation needs to:

- be genuine about its desire to develop new audiences
- set audience development objectives that are authentic and are complementary to its artistic, social, and financial objectives
- participate in meaningful dialogue with the target audience
- be open to change, both in its organisational culture and artistic programme
- recognise that new audiences consist of individuals with marketers developing relationships based on the identification of appropriate benefits and the careful targeting of communications

All the approaches discussed depend upon a whole-hearted long-term commitment by the whole organisation to developing Black and minority ethnic audiences.

Principles in practice

To what extent are arts organisations putting the principles into practice, asks **Heather Maitland**

When Maddy Morton and her colleagues examined a clutch of cultural organisations to see how they had succeeded in engaging with such a wide range of people from their communities, they concluded that leadership quality and organisational culture were crucial factors (see page 131).

My own research has reached the same conclusion. Effectiveness is dependent upon a clearly articulated vision and an understanding by everyone in the organisation of how that vision is to be implemented. This can only be achieved through clear thinking, open discussion, agreed priorities and an allocation of resources that reflects those priorities. Contact in Manchester is just one example of an organisation that has achieved this (see page 138).

The contributors to this book have emphasised that cultural organisations can only succeed in increasing the diversity of their audiences, participants and visitors if they make a long term and wholesale commitment to change. We can see the impact of such a commitment in the work of organisations like Wolverhampton Arts and Museums Service. Inspired by their participation in Birmingham Arts Marketing's networking project in 2002, they set up user panels, host positive-action traineeships and have introduced an officer level post dedicated to outreach and inclusion. These internal changes have impacted on the way they interpret and display their collections enabling people from Wolverhampton to shape content and add their voices to those of the curators.

Effectiveness is dependent upon a clearly articulated vision and an understanding by everyone in the organisation of how that vision is to be implemented.

But in many organisations, the staff members championing diversity are not in senior positions from which they can easily influence the rest of their colleagues. This is why so many audience development projects are self-contained and short-term – and therefore have a limited impact. In the absence of delegated authority, diversity champions have to work within their own sphere of influence. The lack of commitment by their leaders also means little access to core resources so their activities depend on the availability of short-term funding. This results in projects that have been squeezed to fit the criteria and the often unrealistic delivery schedules of those funding sources. Although the project was later extended to three years, it is difficult to imagine how National Museums Liverpool's excellent work with refugees and asylum seekers could have been crammed into the 12 months originally stipulated (see page 194).

Effective audience development initiatives spring from a collective clarity about their purpose. Too often, projects are compromised because they are really about increasing earned income rather than meeting the needs of the people they are aimed at. If leaders initiate and sustain organisation-wide discussions about diversity, then it is much easier for staff to build on their understanding of local communities and create a tailored approach that is right for the art, right for the organisation and right for the people it serves. Without this, the only option is to implement an off-the-shelf scheme that has been successful elsewhere, regardless of whether it is really appropriate. This inevitably shifts the focus of all the staff involved away from the

outcomes and onto replicating the established process. It also leads to the kind of shorthand, tokenistic approach to programming described by Tony Graves (see page 154) and Mel Larsen (page 168). This in turn results in the search for a quick solution to getting an audience decried by Sarah Champion (page 188).

A planned approach to developing diversity bears fruit at Shisha, the contemporary South Asian visual arts and crafts agency. Their work in Manchester is based on long term collaborations between the agency, South Asian artists and curators and the staff at local authority museums and galleries. Each collaboration results in a very different project shaped by local needs. In *Parampara Portraits* centred on Tameside Museum and Art Gallery, the established artist, J Chuhan, was commissioned to paint portraits of British South Asian celebrities, not normally seen in a formal cultural context. The exhibition toured to spaces where Victorian portraits of town dignitaries are the norm, breathing new life into local authority collection policies. The establishment of long-term relationships means that marketing and education officers can pull out all the stops knowing that there will be another relevant exhibition coming soon.

Some cultural organisations, often located in ethnically mixed urban areas, are founded upon the principles of diversity. But although staff members have an in-depth knowledge of their local communities, this doesn't always feed through into audience development practice. Local knowledge is taken for granted and so it

'The establishment of long-term relationships means that marketing and education officers can pull out all the stops knowing that there will be another relevant exhibition coming soon.'

is assumed that audiences will follow equally effortlessly. Some of these organisations still engage in the kind of print-to-people marketing that has become standard in the arts sector rather than focusing the people-to-people marketing that has proved more effective. As Caroline Griffin has discussed on page 177, effective audience development is about a systematic approach that defines target groups appropriately, chooses the messages that best fit the needs of those target groups then selects the communication channel that will get that message across to the target group most efficiently. If word of mouth is the most efficient communication channel then systems need to be put into place to generate it.

The team at South Hill Park Arts Centre in Bracknell take a systematic approach to finding audiences for their increasingly diverse programme. They have a long standing relationship with two arts ambassadors whom they employ on a regular basis. They are involved in decision making with access to all the department's resources. They form partnerships with local radio and community organisations, including hosting productions by two of the largest, target youth clubs and schools, ensure that their print distribution includes sites within minority ethnic communities and advertise events in media relevant to those communities. These publicity methods are only effective because of the number and range of events by Black and Asian artists that they programme.

All the organisations consulted emphasise the importance of partnerships. Not only do they

enable contact with otherwise hard to reach groups, but they also provide vital information about their needs and attitudes and the barriers which currently prevent them engaging with the arts. All the organisations identified key success factors in developing partnerships: engaging with partners at the earliest possible stage; establishing mutual benefits; understanding and responding to partners' own needs; spending time developing trust; maintaining contact; approaching the relationship in the spirit of openness and collaborating with honesty and generosity.

Working through partnerships has its pitfalls, though. It is all too easy to listen only to the loudest voices and so ignore the needs of the stakeholders who are least articulate, have least influence or who are least used to working with larger organisations. Community leaders may express opinions that are not shared by the rest of their community, as Jonathan Church points out in his discussion of the much publicised events surrounding the Birmingham Rep's production of *Behzti*.[27] Partners often have a different understanding of the extent of their influence on a project so it is important to have an open discussion from the beginning.

One of the questions most often asked by arts organisations wanting to develop the diversity of their audiences is how to initiate partnerships.

The team at the National Museums Liverpool started by contacting key support workers in the local authority and voluntary sectors to invite them to a meeting at which they explained the

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'It is up to arts organisations to build bridges by making the first move and being approachable.'

project and offered taster visits or workshops for their groups (see page 194).

Wolverhampton Arts and Museums Service started with their existing networks, identified the gaps and then did a lot of cold calling of group leaders. They were surprised how well this worked, with groups being genuinely pleased that the organisation had contacted them and not the other way around. They feel it is up to arts organisations to build bridges by making the first move and being approachable.

Pawlet Warner from The Peepul Centre in Leicester also started with her existing contacts in the City Council and in the probation and health services – and even her family. They were able to tell her who she should be talking to. She tries to keep up to date with broader policy issues in housing, health and education as she feels this gives her an entry point into other networks. She too believes that it is important for arts managers to be visible and approachable so she ensures she talks with participants and audiences at events and is constantly out meeting people in the community. Kristine Landon-Smith from Tamasha agrees that it is absolutely essential to become personally known to particular communities as the only way to get a project moving. Tamasha always researches communities to assist in the writing of each play and so will be in contact with key people throughout the 18-month process. She says this translates directly into audience numbers and by the time the show opens a significant section of the community is very curious about the work.

The most striking aspect of almost all of the audience development activity I encountered is that the ethnicity of the participants hardly affects the way projects are planned and implemented. The age, faith, interests and experiences of participants are far more important. Contact have discovered that breaking down the invisible barriers preventing young people from engaging with the arts has meant that the theatre has also become popular with other communities who would normally feel unwelcome. South Hill Park Arts Centre attracted a culturally diverse audience to Nitro's *Slamdunk* by focusing on the needs of young people aged 14-24, not on particular ethnic groups. The rural arts development agency, Littoral, created partnerships between urban community organisations and farming communities in the Forest of Bowland. The most important char-acteristic of the inner city groups was not their ethnicity but a shared desire to promote healthy living and eating, so they joined together to help farming families develop new food products and marketing techniques to access new urban customers.

It appears that organisations that have successfully developed diverse audiences, participants and visitors do subscribe to the principles described by contributors to this book. They make a long-term and whole-hearted commitment to diversity; engage the whole organisation in delivering that commitment which means changing the way they approach programming, marketing and customer service; and work through partnerships based on mutual benefit. Unfortunately, alongside them there are too many organisations still seeking short-term, quick fixes and so wasting time and money on projects that can't possibly deliver.

Why are there still 'too many organisations still seeking short-term, quick fixes and so wasting time and money on projects that can't possibly deliver'?

Chasing a Chinese audience

Sarah Champion discusses her organisation's approach to developing artists and audiences

'Chinese artists have never seen themselves as part of the Black Arts movement.' Are we excluding them further because we aren't questioning our assumptions about 'culturally diverse' work?

Chinese Arts Centre was established in 1986 by a group of British Chinese artists who were frustrated that their work was rarely seen. Also, at this time, the funding systems were keen to support 'Black Arts' but Chinese artists have never seen themselves as part of this movement and so, once again, felt excluded. Unfortunately this situation is only slowly changing and so there is still a need for Chinese Arts Centre to exist.

We act as the national agency to promote contemporary Chinese art and interpret Chinese culture. The majority of our work is with visual arts. We have a changing exhibition programme, tour exhibitions, host an artist residency scheme, run a national education programme, organise conferences, seminars and training events and act as an agency for performers.

We are frequently asked by arts organisations to provide support to enable them to engage a Chinese audience. The constant cry is that the Chinese audience is 'invisible', 'quiet', 'difficult to pin down'. These cultural stereotypes are more a reflection on the organisations frustration that there are no quick solutions than an accurate description of the community.

The first question we ask such organisations is why they want to reach a Chinese audience. More often than not they haven't given it much thought, it is a knee jerk, funding box-ticking exercise. However, it is often because they have programmed a Chinese event and so think the

Chinese population is their natural audience. Both are painful and frustrating to deal with, but both have the same long-term and time consuming solution.

The only way to get a Chinese audience, or any specific audience group, is for the organisation to make a sincere commitment to serving that community. Firstly this means asking the community what they would like to see and do. Secondly, do it. Thirdly, and most importantly, keep doing it and keep asking if you are doing it right.

Audiences are not stupid, they respond to a genuine attempt to woo them and shun the quick hit. Most arts organisations programme a Chinese event around Chinese New Year – don't they realise that Chinese people would like to spend that evening with their families, or, if they run restaurants, they will be working? Better to use this event to attract a mainstream audience to Chinese arts, rather than preaching to the converted who would rather be somewhere else. In a survey of Chinese arts attenders carried out by Arts About Manchester, 70 per cent found out about events by word of mouth. This is a huge proportion and demonstrates that to attract a Chinese audience, you need to recognise it will take time and you should programme a whole series of events to get the word out there. One simple way to 'fast track' audience building is to employ Chinese ambassadors who will go out into the community and talk to people about your events. Another approach, scarily obvious but so rarely done, would be to employ Chinese people.

'One simple way to "fast track" audience building is to employ Chinese ambassadors who will go out into the community. Another approach, scarily obvious but so rarely done, would be to employ Chinese people.'

'Audiences are not stupid, they respond to a genuine attempt to woo them and shun the quick hit.'

It's not the audience who needs to change; it's the arts organisation. Why should an audience come to you if you are not providing them with a service they desire? Swallow your pride, you need to go out and ask them for help.

Working with faith groups

Arts organisations need to deliver on their promises urges **Naz Koser**

Ulfah Arts responds to a need in the market for women to enjoy arts, leisure and cultural activities without compromising their cultural values. It also provides a platform for women to perform, again without compromising their cultural values. It specialises in catering for the needs of women with strong cultural beliefs (such as practising Muslim women) but makes opportunities available to all as we have found that these needs go across other faiths and cultures.

Ulfah Arts started from research I carried out into the needs of Muslim women and the questionnaires and focus groups proved overwhelming support for the concept. I started by looking into basic religious and cultural rules. I then gathered a focus group, asked the participants whether my understanding was correct and got lots of ideas about how we could work. We have carried on consulting at the various stages of the organisation's development to make sure that we take the women with us. Many of them have little or no experience of the arts so it's hard for them to imagine what experiences Ulfah Arts could offer. I have to put together a range of possibilities and then get feedback on them. I think people working in the arts need to learn to empathise with people like this who have never had art in their lives. This is difficult so they should spend more time with them so they can see and appreciate their audience and then their audience will appreciate them!

We have been successful because we show an understanding of and accept beliefs and values and don't try to change them. For Muslims, for

'It's difficult for people working in the arts to empathise with people who have never had art in their lives so they should spend more time with them.'

It's all too easy for arts organisations to raise expectations they will not be able to meet, as in this case. Get an agreement organisation-wide about what is possible and, indeed, appropriate before approaching groups.

example, it is very important to be able to pray at the correct times during the day. Our programmes cater for this and we ensure there is a private space available – although our audiences have said that 'even an office somewhere in the back will do'. We know that they hang out more in places where there are prayer facilities. When we visited Birmingham Rep, we ensured that people were able to pray between the pre-show workshop and the performance. Free mixing between men and women isn't allowed so it's also very important that we have women-only events or at least women-only seating areas.

We work hard to understand what's acceptable and respond with new ways of working, even new art. For example, some Muslims do not listen to music created by musical instruments, and women can sing and dance whereas men can't. So rather than trying to change this, we try to find innovations that can address it. We put together a programme with no musical instruments, just the sound of women's voices and we plan to experiment with using natural sounds. A very important partner for us is the Al-Hijrah School, a faith-based Muslim school, where the staff give us feedback on whether our plans are acceptable.

We attract a completely new audience by providing the right environment and facilities – between 47 per cent and 85 per cent of the attenders and participants at our events had never been to the particular venue before. We can help build on those audiences too. In one case, the attenders at an event have become an advisory group for the venue.

But we need venue partners who can deliver what they promise. Some organisations are very responsive when they consult with our focus groups but then their internal communications let them down. Other members of staff haven't been told about our needs and why they are important to us and this makes the organisation very difficult to deal with. When we arrived at one venue, they had forgotten to reserve women-only seating!

Engaging refugees and asylum seekers

Kate Rodenhurst gives a step-by-step guide to a complex project

You'll find details of resources to help you form partnerships with voluntary organisations like the ones National Museums Liverpool worked with on pages 213-219.

National Museums Liverpool's eight venues cover everything from social history to space travel, dinosaurs to docks, arts to archaeology. Our Learning Division focuses on building diverse and under-represented audiences, locally and regionally, through partnership, consultation and collaboration with community organisations that reflect the diversity of Liverpool.

Engaging Refugees and Asylum Seekers was developed through a Department for Culture, Media and Sport initiative to support the development of partnership working between national and regional museums. Our project partners were Tyne and Wear Museums, Leicester City Museums Service and Salford Museum and Art Gallery.

The project aimed to support the integration of local refugees and asylum seekers in each city by offering them the opportunity to become involved in activity at their local museums and galleries. The resulting activity enabled over 1,000 learners to increase their confidence, learn new skills, improve their English and get to know their new surroundings.

Starting points

We were aware that in order to identify appropriate participants in the project, we would need to find partners with a similar agenda, rather than trying to work directly with local asylum-seeker families. The projects in each location therefore began by developing these links. We held a series of meetings to identify key contacts with support workers, and invited them to bring their groups

in to the museum, or offered outreach sessions as a way of introducing ourselves to potential participants.

The next step was to encourage initial visits to the museums. We identified activity we felt was adaptable to the needs of people with limited English language skills, and suitable for a wide variety of age groups. We then organised a series of 'days out' for refugees and asylum seekers, developed in partnership with our local contacts. Transport and refreshments were provided to reduce some of the barriers to participation.

Key factors for success

Several things contributed to the success of the project, but the main factor in our success was the recruitment of a dedicated officer in each organisation, tasked with developing the project. They were able to establish trust and build relationships with groups, maintaining contact over the lifetime of the project, and ensuring that all developments of the project were based on feedback from participants. The project officers themselves formed a support and advice network for each other and regularly shared details of their development work and experiences.

The delivery of the project was very flexible, and based on the needs of the learner, rather than on the systems at the museum. We provided additional support for the visits, such as transport, appropriate refreshments and space for prayer. Sessions were delivered in the museums, in community venues, in colleges, on walks around

'Some of the most successful resources are based on materials produced by refugees and asylum-seekers or on feedback from their participation in events.'

the city centre and even on the beach. Subject matter for the sessions and the way they were delivered varied widely depending on the ages, interests and abilities of the groups. However overall, the project officers discovered that hands-on activity worked best to break down language barriers and create effective learning.

The most successful sessions were the ones were the group had been able to prepare in advance. In particular we made sure that the group was given advance notice of the content of the sessions, and could drop out if members felt it was not for them, particularly when the session was themed around sensitive subjects such as Merseyside Maritime Museum's Transatlantic Slavery Gallery. We developed a range of resources to support teaching, including maps and city orientation packs, vocabulary and activity sheets, photo guides, training sessions and materials for museum staff, videos about refugees and asylum seekers and their experiences, oral history integrated into exhibitions, and bilingual listening posts. Some of the most successful resources are based on materials produced by refugees and asylum seekers or on feedback from their participation in events.

We developed partnerships with refugee charities and advocacy groups, counselling services and support networks, housing providers, community colleges with departments teaching English for Speakers of other Languages, language centres, drop-in centres, community centres, youth centres, library services, healthcare providers, theatre and performance arts groups, community safety unit

and faith organisations. These partnerships were important in terms of communication support and reaching out to participants for the project. They also provided an overview of the whole asylum issue and were key to understanding what barriers refugees and asylum seekers faced in accessing education and the arts.

What we learned

The project was initially funded for one year, and was extended for a further two years to March 2006. This extension is of great benefit, as we found that it takes a great deal of time, patience and commitment to build sustainable relationships, especially when community partners are dealing with a transient client group, unstable funding and a constantly changing and highly charged political climate.

Each of the project officers found that some activities and approaches were more successful than others, and that what worked for one group did not necessarily work for another – refugees and asylum seekers are not an homogenous group, but very diverse with a wide range of skills, interests and experiences to contribute.

We have produced a best practice guide which looks in a very honest and practical way at how other arts organisations may implement similar projects. The guide is available on request from National Museums Liverpool.

Across the project we took the needs of refugees and asylum seekers as our starting point, and were prepared to do things in a new way in order to meet those needs. The ability to be

'Refugees and asylum-seekers are not an homogenous group, but very diverse with a wide range of skills, interests and experiences to contribute.'

'For many of our partners, this project was not a priority when compared with their caseload of immigration and housing issues, and we developed strategies to support them to organise activity.'

flexible in delivery made a huge difference to the success of the project. As a result the project activity was delivered in a wide variety of ways, using a broad range of subject matter, with varying types of learning resource materials available to enhance learning and understanding.

Building good relationships with support agencies working with refugees and asylum seekers was crucial to the success of our projects, and without these they would not have been such a success. We developed an awareness of their particular pressures, agendas and ways of working which made it easier to deliver activity successfully. We were aware that for many of our partners, this project was not a priority when compared with their caseload of immigration and housing issues, and we developed strategies to support them to organise activity.

The project also benefited greatly from the fact that although it was based on local needs and different in every museum, there was a support structure for staff because we could call on our partner organisations for advice and guidance. We would strongly advise any organisation thinking of undertaking this type of outreach work to seek out similar examples and network widely to inform your project development.

Diversity with integrity

Anne Torreggiani looks at how to promote successful audience development practice.

Audiences London was set up two years ago and – not surprisingly perhaps, in a city considered by many as the most diverse in the world – diversity has been a dominant motif in our work from the start. In developing an audience development agency that's fit-for-purpose, I've looked with great interest at the range of approaches taken by my colleagues in the UK's other dozen agencies. The critical success factors Caroline Griffin lists on page 177 seem relevant to all of them. I want to explore why – and how – they apply in so many different contexts.

Like our colleagues elsewhere, we've been privileged to observe, support and amplify the achievements of colleagues in organisations across our region. With enough promotional resources and an event with a suitably broad appeal, there are few cultural organisations that can't attract audiences as socially and culturally diverse as the population. Sometimes they do it as part of a successful strategy for change, but just as often it's for short-term gain, and they bust a gut and blow the budget in the process. So why is it that some organisations manage to attract mixed audiences in what appears to be an effortless and ongoing way?

The Theatre Royal Stratford East deserves its almost iconic reputation for a genuinely diverse audience. The popular view is that it's blessed by its location in the most diverse borough in Britain, but there's more to it than that. All local audiences have a special place in the strong, central vision that is not just able to keep up with the pace of diversification in Newham, but draws inspiration from it. Staff are dedicated to enabling real community dialogue

'Sometimes arts organisations develop audiences as part of a successful strategy for change, but just as often it's for short-term gain, and they bust a gut and blow the budget in the process.'

'Some of the most interesting community engagement programmes are based on partnerships with smaller community-focused organisations in an equitable trade-off where both sides win: resources in return for relationships.'

around every aspect of its work. Whereas 10 years ago, audiences followed the cultural specificity of the works on stage, now the programme, still rooted strongly in its locale and its multiplicity of identities, draws a diverse audience in what Caroline Griffin terms the 'correct' sense of the word.

It's also about more than location for The Albany in Deptford, Hackney Museum, Waterman's Arts Centre which serves some of London's largest South Asian communities, and Tower Hamlets' Ragged School. In these, and plenty of other organisations like them, neighbourhood communities play a central role in all aspects of their work. They are involved as makers, curators, advocates, suppliers, staff and governors as much as audiences and service-users. These organisations act as a local resource and draw on local resources. This loop is kept in motion by a meaningful dialogue: the listening, understanding and responding that Maddy Morton discusses on page 182. It works because it enables organisations to respond appropriately to a market segmented by articulated needs and expectations (as Mel Larsen describes on page 216) rather than misleading assumptions about ethnicity or cultural background.

For national or international institutions along with all the others that have to compete for audience attention in London's frantically crowded cultural market place, having your "own" community is a luxury.

But many of these institutions *have* found solutions that fit authentically with their mission. The Tricycle Theatre in Kilburn has a reputation for consistently

producing and nurturing the work of Black artists, as well as uniquely making space for political theatre which confronts issues of race, identity and justice. This reputation is equally strong among its local community, among London's growing Black middle-class, and in other regular theatre-going (and theatre-making) circles. The Young Vic has enhanced its position as an important player in London's theatre scene. But it has also looked after its local audience, investing heavily for the past 15 years in close links with its surrounding, ethnically mixed boroughs while always making a symbiotic connection to the work on stage.

Of course, many London-based (inter)national institutions now invest in community engagement programmes. Some of the most interesting of these are based on partnerships with smaller community-focused organisations in an equitable trade-off where both sides win: resources in return for relationships. The Ragged School and Science Museum have a long-running partnership of this kind. And there are a number of experimental variations on the old 'audience-sharing' models. Shoreditch's largely African and Turkish communities felt they were missing out on London culture so the Virtual Arts Centre ploughs resources originally earmarked for inflexible bricks-and-mortar into a London-wide arts club. Waterloo Arts and Events Network brings together all this regeneration area's many community and cultural organisations in a give-and-gain partnership.

When organisations adopt strategies to become audience-focused, changes in staff attitudes and practice follow rapidly. But, as the organisations

The organisations discussed here have achieved 'diversity through integrity' by implementing the kinds of approaches that **Maddy Morton** advocates in her article on page 131.

'Sometimes arts organisations develop audiences as part of a successful strategy for change, but just as often it's for short-term gain, and they bust a gut and blow the budget in the process.'

I've mentioned above have discovered, external perceptions are slower to change: far more time is needed for members of communities who have long felt uninvited to feel welcome instead.

These organisations all systematically nurture trust among their extended communities. In time this approach to diversity wins them respect and affection from far further afield. Word gets around. Stratford East and the Tricycle attract young Black and Asian recruits for jobs from all over the country, as well many powerful and passionate advocates among Black and Asian politicians, commentators and celebrities. Recently I was talking to residents on a housing estate in Southwark. None of them had been to a theatre since school, but they said if there was one place they would go, it would be the Young Vic because they knew about its work in the area.

Like the hugely successful Push season, these companies' brands are strongly associated with diversity and access.

This is diversity with integrity, as opposed to hit-and-run; it informs planning and is a source of inspiration. Most of us now understand that an isolated event chosen to appeal to a particular cultural group that pops up in a programme that is otherwise unconcerned with the interests of that group will be seen as tokenistic. There's also plenty of evidence that the associated high-profile, resource-hungry publicity campaign will fail. Although culturally specific programming and promotion have their part to play, it's their critical mass that makes the difference.

For the past 15 years, the audience development agencies have planned, delivered and evaluated a

huge range of initiatives to develop more socio-demographically diverse audiences. Their collective knowledge probably constitutes the best overview of good practice in the field. Their experiences have led to a shared conviction that the key to sustainable success lies in developing strong mechanisms within individual organisations. The broad trend among the agencies' work, therefore, shows a move away from managing short-term 'special' audience development projects, towards helping organisations take a strategic approach to diversity.

Of course, organisations need good systems and tools: more relevant market intelligence, better relationship management systems and a greater diversity of communication channels. But, as we've heard elsewhere, diversity is as much a personal issue as it is a corporate one. So now, agencies are focusing more energy on helping *people* to manage the change essential to developing genuinely diverse audiences. People make the greatest difference, so we're working to build awareness and confidence through mentoring, action-learning, debate and leadership development.

They're all processes designed to turn Caroline's recipe into a success at a personal and organisational level:

- mean it
- why bother: make sure you know
- talk to people
- be ready to act on what they say
- don't assume (do your marketing properly)
- don't give up
- (and if you're stuck, talk to an audience development agency)

'Their experiences have led to a shared conviction that the key to sustainable success lies in developing strong mechanisms within individual organisations. The broad trend among the agencies' work, therefore, shows a move away from managing short-term "special" audience development projects, towards helping organisations take a strategic approach to diversity.'

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16 Nandy, Ashis, *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self Under Colonialism*, Oxford University Press, 1983, p xi

Programming outside the comfort zone, Tony Graves

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Subculture RIP? Rupa Huq

18 The original idea behind subculture was summed up in 1979 by academic Dick Hebdige who wrote '[S]pectacular subcultures express forbidden forms (transgressions of sartorial and behavioural codes, law-breaking etc)' in *Subculture: the Meaning of Style*, Routledge, p91-92

19 eg the *New Musical Express* has remarked 'A rather dull consensus of cool has begun to form about music, culture and fashion and lifestyle, and a lot of that is a result and a reflection of the decline of tribalism, as manifested in the amorphous but nevertheless fiercely identifiable subcultures which have traditionally dominated British pop culture' 'Tribal Ungathering', in *NME*, 5/12/98

20 Fieldwork note: I interviewed the group HD at Slade Lane, Longsight Manchester M13 during rehearsals on 7/5/03. All interview transcript material is taken from this date

21 Cultural Fusion presentation, 29/4/03

22 Interview conducted at The Western, Manchester M16, 5/7/02

23 *The Wire*, 1994

24 eg by 1980 Stanley Cohen, one of subculture's founding fathers, in the introduction to the revised edition of his well-known work *Folk Devils and Moral Panics* wrote: 'to read the literature on subcultur[e]… is a depressing business' pxxv

25 The ideas in this article are expanded further in my book *Beyond Subculture*, Routledge, 2005

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Epilogue

Arts Council England and diversity: looking forward

Tony Panayiotou, Director Diversity, Arts Council England

At the height of the Sino-Soviet dispute in the 1960s, Nikita Khrushchev boasted that socialism in the USSR was so advanced that it was on the horizon. Mao Zedong replied that, as with all horizons, the closer you try to get to it, the further it still remains. This feels like something that could apply to debates and actions around 'cultural diversity' in the arts. So, how can we avoid this conundrum?

Arts Council England's work on diversity is at an interesting point. The Race Equality Scheme has been in operation for a year and has presided over many positive changes to processes and the allocation of resources. Our strategies for Disability, for Arts and Health and Arts and Young People at Risk of Offending are at advanced stages. Although they are not the totality of what the Arts Council does, these four strategies are the flagships of the diversity agenda.

As other contributors have shown, 'cultural diversity' is no longer the most relevant model to create the conditions for wider engagement in the arts. A new paradigm is now required to analyse, interpret, plan and deliver a 21st century diversity agenda, one that addresses issues of wider social exclusion within the arts and challenges institutional prejudice on all fronts.

Equal opportunities policies and statements were found in huge abundance in the public sector in the 1980s. All job advertisements had a footer inviting and in some cases 'positively encouraging' applicants from all sorts of minority communities. Equal opportunities, however, largely became a

mechanical exercise centred on the recruitment of (mainly) Black and minority ethnic staff and gave the impression of being focused exclusively on race and ethnicity. Little proactive work was undertaken to promote equal opportunities as something that could benefit society.

In its *Cultural Diversity Action Plan 1998-2003*, the Arts Council of England defined cultural diversity as 'African, Caribbean, Asian and Chinese Arts' while decibel defined cultural diversity as 'ethnic diversity resulting from post-war immigration, with an increased focus on British artists of African, Asian and Caribbean descent'. This has led Arts Council England to concentrate very intensively on race and ethnicity. Unsurprisingly, it began to intertwine its use of the terms 'diversity' and 'cultural diversity'. They are not the same thing, however. The phrase 'cultural diversity' is not widely used outside the arts and its currency within the arts helps prevent a more mature understanding of the platform on which the essential principles of diversity are built. We need to seek a more appropriate and more embracing definition because: some people use the phrase 'culturally diverse artists' almost as a euphemism for 'Black artists' or 'Chinese artists' etc; Black and minority ethnic artists would not ordinarily consider themselves as 'culturally diverse' except to fulfil a communication need or fit a category; being 'culturally diverse' is not a group identity; and, in a more widely accepted definition of the term, it could be said that every artist in Britain is culturally diverse.

Arts Council England is working on a paradigm shift to allow it to explore, discuss and respond to

diversity in its broadest sense – and it will no longer use the term 'cultural diversity'. This does not mean that the Arts Council will dilute its commitment to work on race, disability and social inclusion – far from it. These will remain priorities for a number of years yet. Their status will be similar to the relationship of the British Prime Minister to their cabinet ministers: 'first among equals'. This strategic and philosophical re-alignment would see Arts Council England doing more arts-related work on issues such as age, class, faith, gender and sexuality; working with refugees and asylum seekers; and responding to issues around community development such as urban regeneration, anti-poverty initiatives and the whole rural agenda.

The key characteristics of this broader approach will see:

- a celebration of all the diverse cultures that make up modern British society
- a mutual respect for and understanding of cultural differences
- the removal of barriers, especially institutional barriers, which prevent active involvement by all
- the assertion that artistic excellence can only be supported within an inclusive framework
- greater innovation through wider participation
- nurturing new artistic talent through greater accessibility to the arts
- development of more relevant arts organisations
- more diverse audiences and consumers of the arts

The solution to Mr Khrushchev's conundrum is to make sure that we take a view that does not have an unachievable horizon. So the only logical view to take on diversity is a global view.

Change is gonna come

Gabriel Gbadamosi

It's not our fault we can't quite grasp what's meant by cultural diversity; we're all very different people. If other people's culture is what's meant, of course that, too, must have its place, according to its quality and usefulness in the open marketplace, or as it deserves to be brought to our attention. But special pleading is bound to fall on deaf ears. Too much else is begging our attention, not least our own affairs…

On *Desert Island Discs* in January 2005, Carlos Acosta, the first Black principal dancer at Covent Garden, spoke of his decision to pursue the culture and practice of ballet. After mucking about in the back streets of Havana, getting into trouble, he went down to an old woman at the crossroads who told him to choose his path in life. He chose to dance. The story marks him out as an adherent of Cuban Santeria, part of that widely spread West African religious culture that syncretised with Christian and pre-Columbian cultures in the Americas. Most people know of it through voodoo and the tale of the blues guitarist, Robert Johnson, who went down to the crossroads to sell his soul to the devil in order to play as no man should.

I recognise it as a version of my own, home-grown London Irish catholicity mixed in with the Yoruba paganism of Nigeria and only thinly disguised by an Anglican schooling. The crossroads, for Acosta and me, is both an image of the crucifix and the place of Eshu (Elegba), a deity – sometimes a man, occasionally a woman – who rules over chance, indeterminacy, the crossing of boundaries, change. I even wrote a play, *Eshu's Faust*, inspired by

Christopher Marlowe's version of the Faust story and sited at the crossroads of a cruciform chapel in Cambridge, to make more or less the same point to the syllabus setters about other English literatures: 'To change! To change!' (And here I quote the Pope's message, given in English to the world's media, on his visit to Cuba in January 1998.) Change is here. We can't stop it. It's happening at Covent Garden. The principal dancer moves between Cuba and Britain as effortlessly as Marlowe's Doctor Faustus crossed from the old medieval morality plays onto an Elizabethan stage enriched by the new cultures of Renaissance learning – the rough magic of a new theatre.

Our choices are before us. We can, of course, choose to mobilise the concept of 'heritage', to hang on to things in the act of changing them.

Or we can go forward from this crossroads in our affairs to grasp the reality of change. And to do that, you use what you know, the way you use one language to grasp another. Until, as a Latin teacher once told me, you start to dream in a new language. That might sound like grasping the nettle, but going back to those London bombsites where I used to muck about, I learnt that some – the ones with small white flowers – don't sting.

Resources

Sources of information about audiences and participants

Demographic data

A detailed commentary on the 2001 census data on ethnicity and religion can be found at **www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001/profiles/commentaries/ethnicity.asp**

A more general overview of the UK population including headlines on ethnicity and religion is at **www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001/profiles/commentaries/united_kingdom.asp**

Focus on Ethnicity and Identity
The characteristics, lifestyles and experiences of the UK's ethnic groups with an emphasis on comparing and contrasting the main groups. Download at **ww.statistics.gov.uk/focuson/ethnicity**

British Asian Demographics
A compendium of data from the 2001 Census is available to download at **www.bl.uk/cgi-bin/print.cgi?url=/collections/business/asiandemographics.html**

Detailed statistics on local English and Welsh neighbourhoods by ward and local authority district, including data on ethnicity, are available from **www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk**

Find similar data for Northern Ireland, including data at village level and details of seminars on using the information for community profiling and funding applications, at **www.ninis.nisra.gov.uk**

The Scottish neighbourhood statistics site does not include data on ethnicity but does detail other types of population and economic data at **www.sns.gov.uk**
Arts Council England has developed *Area Profile Reports*, a system of creating demographic profiles of specific areas of the UK. You can define the area you are interested in by distance, drivetime or local authority area. These reports will tell you the number and percentage of people from very broad ethnic groups ('White', 'Black', 'Mixed: White/Black', 'Mixed: White/Asian', 'Asian', 'Other Mixed' and 'Other Ethnic') within each postal sector in the area you define. Postal sectors contain on average 2,500 households each, a manageable number at which to target marketing activity. *Area Profile Reports* are only available to funded clients of Arts Council England, the Scottish Arts Council or Arts Council Wales or to venues that present work produced by funded clients. Get more information and an order form by emailing areaprofiles@artscouncil.org.uk

Publications

This section takes as its starting point a bibliography compiled by Audiences London

Arts Council England

All available to download or order online at **www.artscouncil.org.uk**

A practical guide to working with arts ambassadors by Mel Jennings
A summary of ways in which ambassadors have been used to reach new audiences around the country including analysis of work pioneered by Audiences Central and Arts About Manchester

Arts – what's in a word? Ethnic minorities and the arts
Key findings and recommendations for developing Black and minority ethnic audiences for mainstream and culturally diverse arts

Cultural Diversity Research: key findings
Research to compare audiences for culturally diverse work with those for other types of programme

Eclipse: developing strategies to combat racism in theatre

Focus on cultural diversity: the arts in England: attendance, participation and attitudes
Detailed findings of a survey into attendance, participation and attitudes to the arts and culture among Black and minority ethnic adults in England

Not for the Likes of You – a resource for practitioners
An extensive list of published material around barriers to engagement

Not for the likes of you – report
A two-part report on this major action research project into how cultural organisations can attract a broader audience

Respond: a practical resource for developing a race equality action plan

Routes Across Diversity: Developing the arts of London's refugee communities

The shared space: Cultural diversity and the public domain
The report from a seminar looking at changes in national demography and their impact on cultural life

The Spirit of Roots
Summary of a major audience research and development project by East Midlands Arts and the BBC

This New Diversity: audience analysis on 'Mother Courage and Her Children' and 'Slamdunk'

Whose heritage? The impact of cultural diversity of Britain's living heritage
The report of the 2000 conference bringing together arts, museums and heritage

The National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO)
All available to order online at
www.ncvo-vol.org.uk

Are you looking at me?
A practical guide to recruiting a diverse workforce

Making Diversity Happen
A practical guide to creating a diversity policy, strategy and action plan including how to involve volunteers, users and employees

Managing Diversity in the Workplace
Aims to improve the effectiveness of organisations by ensuring that everyone who works and volunteers for them can realise their potential

Social Capital: Beyond the Theory
Demonstrates the value of the social capital concept and offers practical advice for those working with communities

Voluntary Agencies Directory 2005
Find project partners with this A–Z list of over 2,000 voluntary sector organisations

ALM London
the strategic development agency for London's archives, libraries and museums
All available to download at
www.lmal.org.uk

Aiming High: raising the achievement of minority ethnic pupils
A summary of the DfES consultation document for those working in museums, libraries and archives

Enriching Communities: how archives, libraries and museums can work with asylum seekers and refugees

Holding up the Mirror: addressing cultural diversity in London's museums

Telling it Like It Is: Black and minority ethnic engagement with London's Museums

In-between two worlds – London teenagers' ideas about identity, cultural belonging and Black history

Other Sources

Access for All Self Assessment Toolkit: Checklist 2 – cultural diversity for museums, libraries and archives
A straightforward set of self-assessment questions and guidance. Download at www.mla.gov.uk

Arts Ambassadors Unit (2001)
A report and CD-ROM on Arts About Manchester's pioneering project. Available for purchase by emailing intray@aam.org.uk

Challenging Institutional Racism: a toolkit for the voluntary sector
This useful publication includes advice on changing your organisation's culture. Download at www.rota.org.uk

The Changing Face of Britain: ethnic minorities in the UK
Race: Creating Business Value
Two volumes of business-focused facts and case studies published as part of Business in the Community's Race for Opportunity programme. Download at www.bitc.org.uk/resources/publications

Chinatown Britain
A guide to the Chinese community in Britain including the Chinatowns in London, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle and Birmingham. Order at www.chinatown-online.co.uk

Community Involvement in Neighbourhood Renewal: Toolkit of Indicators
A toolkit of indicators to help think through and monitor the practical effects of community involvement. Download at www.neighbourhood.gov.uk/document.asp?id=905

Dreaming the global future – identity, culture and the media in a multicultural age
A summary research report on media use and attitudes to advertising among Britain's minority ethnic communities. Download at www.coi.gov.uk

The Economic Potential of Ethnic Minorities
A summary of a report by the Institute of Practitioners in Advertising. Download at www.abi.co.uk/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=185&Itemid=135

Equal Opportunities: Policy into Practice. Race, Gender, Sexuality and Disability
A series of booklets to set the scene, outline the legal obligations and offer practical advice for managers and practitioners. Order from the Independent Theatre Council (ITC) at www.itc-arts.org

Ethnic Group Statistics: a guide for the collection and classification of ethnicity data Download at www.statistics.gov.uk/about/ethnic_group_statistics

Ethnicity Monitoring Guidance: involvement – guidance for partnerships on monitoring involvement
Includes an exploration of a range of monitoring strategies. Download at www.info4local.gov.uk

In Our Neighbourhood: a regional theatre and its local community
A study tracking West Yorkshire Playhouse's development project over 12 months. Download at www.jrf.org.uk/knowledge/findings/housing/221.asp

Islamophobia: a challenge to us all
Highlights the consequences of Islamophobia throughout society and sets recommendations for practical action. Download at www.runnymedetrust.org
The Journey to Race Equality: delivering improved services to local communities
Download at www.audit-commission.gov.uk/reports

Listen Up: effective community consultation Download at www.audit-commission.gov.uk/reports

Multicultural Matters: minority ethnic communities in Britain
Background information on a huge array of ethnic communities including religions, languages, important times of year, community liaison and size of community. Available for purchase at
www.multicultural-matters.com/minority_ethnic_communities.htm

Multiple Identities and the Marketing Challenge: developing diversity among audiences
This extensive resource pack written to accompany an Audiences London seminar series can be ordered by email from info@audienceslondon.org

Reflections: mapping cultural diversity in London's local authority museums collections
Download Val Bott's study at
www.londonmuseums.org

So You Think You're Multicultural?
A unique picture of attitudes to and experiences of multiculturalism across Britain. Download at:
www.vso.org.uk/culturalbreakthrough/cb_report.pdf

Sporting Equals Factsheets
Straightforward guidance on a variety of equality issues. Download at
www.cre.gov.uk/speqs/factsheets.html

Third Text, Critical Perspectives on Contemporary Art and Culture
An international scholarly journal providing a forum for the work of artists hitherto marginalised through racial, gender, religious and cultural differences. Order online at
www.tandf.co.uk/journals

Who do we think we are?: heritage and identity in contemporary Britain – research and initiatives
This report on research for the Heritage Lottery Fund together with a bibliography and a summary of research and initiatives in the UK is downloadable from
www.heritageandidentity.org.uk

Websites

Arts About Manchester
Executive summaries of project reports including *Chinese Audiences Profiling*, *North West Diversity Festival*, *What in the World? Comic Book Project* and *Enabling Diversity* are available to download under 'Completed Projects' on the left hand menu. There is also a link to a presentation *Re-thinking Cultural Diversity* under 'current projects'.
www.aam.org.uk

Arts Council England
Reports, project summaries and articles resulting from the New Audiences programme aimed at finding new approaches to audience and art development that target harder-to-reach audiences
www.newaudiences.org.uk

Arts for All People
This American site contains a vast array of research reports and other information about audiences for the arts
www.arts4allpeople.org

Arts Professional
Subscribers to the magazine can access an online, searchable archive containing features and case studies on cultural diversity issues
www.artsprofessional.co.uk

The Audience Business
The Edinburgh audience development agency's site includes an online catalogue of diversity publications held in their library
www.tab.org.uk

Australia Council for the Arts
An excellent research resource about audiences for the arts with links to useful information worldwide plus archived discussion forums on arts and audience development issues
www.fuel4arts.com

BMESpark
Part of the Supporting People programme, this site contains research summaries and case studies on working with vulnerable Black and minority ethnic people
www.bmespark.org.uk

Chinese in Britain Forum
Publishes a quarterly newsletter
www.cibf.co.uk

Civil Service Diversity Site
Information on all aspects of Civil Service diversity plus the legal requirements of employers and employees, good practice examples and useful contacts
www.diversity-whatworks.gov.uk

Community Development Exchange
Downloadable reports, toolkits and guidance notes from a variety of sources
www.cdx.org.uk/resources/library/bme.htm

Community Business Scotland Network
Training resources on social accounting and audit plus links to relevant reports and networks
www.cbs-network.org.uk

Commission for Racial Equality (CRE)
Information and guidance on good practice in race relations, racial discrimination, equal opportunities and ethnic and cultural diversity including a downloadable minority ethnic media list, a directory of links to minority ethnic and diversity websites and practical advice on ethnic monitoring. A series of fact sheets were being updated in summer 2005
www.cre.org.uk

The Community Development Foundation
Promotes and improves work that strengthens communities
www.cdf.org.uk

Council of Ethnic Minority Voluntary Sector Organisations
Aims to build capacity within the minority ethnic voluntary sector through a network of officers and is building a network of community resource centres
http://ethnicminorityfund.org.uk

Cultural Co-operation
An independent arts charity that promotes cross-cultural contact, dialogue and understanding. It runs an online database of artists, mainly musicians, from diverse cultural heritages
www.culturalco-operation.org

The Diversity Unit, British Council
This site includes a useful summary of key legislation, demographic information, a glossary of terms and links to key reports
www.britishcouncil.org/diversity/index.htm

Friends, Families and Travellers
Includes a beginners' guide to Gypsy and Traveller issues
www.gypsy-traveller.org

IDeA
The Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) site includes a range of useful downloadable reports including the *Promoting Racial Equality* theme guide and *Getting Closer to Communities*
www.idea.gov.uk/publications

Joseph Rowntree Foundation
Downloadable research reports including case studies plus videos and publications to buy
www.jrf.org.uk

Mintel
Research reports for sale
www.mintel.com

MORI
Free commentaries on research into Black and minority ethnic communities, report summaries and innovative research methodologies
www.mori.co.uk/ethnic/thinking.shtml

Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA)
MLA was developing an archive of past research which will include its self-assessment toolkits in the areas of disability, social inclusion and cultural diversity
www.mla.gov.uk
MLA also runs the *cultural diversity network* for museums and libraries at
www.mla.gov.uk/action/learnacc/00access_02.asp

Network
Links to the regional audience development agencies, all of which can offer advice, support and information as well as helping to broker relationships with other organisations and networks (some information and services are only available to subscribers or members). See page 224 for a complete list of member agencies
www.audiencedevelopment.org

Office for National Statistics
The most extensive source of publicly available demographic information, most of it downloadable free
www.statistics.gov.uk

Policy Studies Institute
The institute undertakes and publishes research studies relevant to social, economic and industrial policy. Research prior to May 1995 is available to download free including *Changing Ethnic Identities*, a report on changing perceptions of cultural identity
www.psi.org.uk

Race on the Agenda (ROTA)
A social policy think-tank that publishes a quarterly journal *Agenda* together with a themed supplement featuring articles and commentaries as well as policy briefing and responses
www.rota.org.uk

www.renewal.net
The online guide to what works in neighbourhood renewal and social exclusion addressing work. Documents on the site include how to guides, case studies, project summaries as well a comprehensive jargon buster

Runnymede Trust
Acts as a link between various Black and minority ethnic communities and policy makers. Its *Real Histories Directory* lists links to resources to support learning about cultural diversity in the UK
www.runnymedetrust.org

Scottish Arts Council
Audience research, case studies and project reports available to download
www.sac.org.uk

Spiked-culture
Debates, articles and resources online, including the decibel debate on culture and difference
www.spiked-online.com/Sections/culture/debates/artsRacism/default.htm

South West Arts Marketing
Demographic data on each local authority area in South West England and a cultural diversity project report
www.swam.org.uk

Support for Learning
Links to religious calendars and other religious information resources online
www.support4learning.org.uk

Other sites

News, issues, entertainment and lifestyle sites, community forums and information exchanges run by and for Black and minority ethnic communities:
www.barficulture.com
www.blackbritain.co.uk
www.blackukonline.com
www.blink.org.uk
www.britishbornchinese.org.uk
www.chinatown-online.co.uk
www.clickwalla.com
www.dimsum.co.uk
www.live247.co.uk
www.redhotcurry.com
www.ukchinese.co.uk

Other sources

Many local authorities have set up community forums, some of which are structured specifically to represent the local Black and minority ethnic communities. These can be useful ways of consulting or disseminating information although it is important to remember that some community members, particularly women or young people, may feel that their views are not reflected by their representative. Some local authorities have established youth forums to represent the views of young people. Your local authority's arts officer will be able to put you in touch with the forum coordinator.

A significant proportion of voluntary sector organisations working at local level have user groups or other types of representative bodies. Again, these are useful ways of consulting with communities and disseminating information. Staff are likely to have a wide range of contacts within the community. There is useful advice on partnerships with voluntary organisations in: *Black and minority ethnic communities and primary care: key points briefing* by Jane Belman, London Voluntary Service Council 2004.

Sources of information about artists and companies

No artist likes being labelled. As Jorella Andrews points out on page 141, artists aren't abandoning their cultural heritage, but they want to use it as a resource if they choose, rather than it being something that narrowly defines who they are. So although some artists have proposed an online Black arts register, others are reluctant to associate themselves with information resources that centre on ethnicity. Here is a selection of the available sources of information:

There is a list of over 80 projects Arts Council England has categorised as 'diverse' at
www.artscouncil.org.uk/links
(click on Diversity)

Promoting Diversity is a list of 'culturally diverse' theatre companies funded to tour in the UK, although it is not an exhaustive list of arts organisations presenting culturally diverse work. Download it at
www.artscouncil.org.uk/documents/projects/phpmE3C78.pdf

You can also download *decibel: a North West profile* from the Publications section of the Arts Council England website.

This contains a directory of 40 'culturally diverse' artists and organisations in the North West region.

The British Council's *Performance in Profile* at
www.britishcouncil.org/arts-performance-in-profile.htm
lists small, medium and large-scale dance, drama, live art and street arts companies. It is by no means comprehensive as it is restricted to organisations available for international touring and that are considered to offer 'interesting, innovative' work.

As part of its London: Diaspora Capital project, Cultural Co-operation lists 216 audio visual artist profiles searchable by artform, genre, culture or faith origin, country of origin and the London Borough in which they are based. Consult it at **www.culturalco-operation.org**

You'll find an archive of South Asian literature, art, theatre, dance and music by British based artists and organisations at **www.salidaa.org.uk**. It's not comprehensive but has plans to grow.

www.artvibes.org is an online resource for Black and minority ethnic arts, although it's intended to be used by audiences and participants. Again, it's not comprehensive.

Consult archives of past showcases organised by xtrax, including decibel showcases, at **www.xtrax.org.uk** They also host a directory of street artists.

Mainstream Newsletter contains profiles of 'culturally diverse' artists and practitioners in the East Midlands. Subscribe by contacting **mainstream@artstrainingcentral.co.uk** or calling 0116 2425202.

London Dance has a directory of London based dance companies categorised by dance style at **www.londondance.com/content/99/directory/**

A list of Independent Theatre Council's 600-plus members is available at **www.itc-arts.org/index.php** but non-members can only search alphabetically. The Diversity Programme is a ground-breaking project that aims to increase the visibility of minority ethnic artforms in East England and to support Black, Asian and Chinese artists and performers. The site includes a good links section at **www.diversityprogramme-pace.org.uk**

Shisha, the contemporary South Asian visual arts and crafts agency, finds new artists to work with by putting advertise-ments in publications and on websites aimed at professional and semi-professional artists in general such as *a-n Magazine*. More information about the publication at **www.a-n.co.uk** where there is also a good links section to UK and international artists' networks and professional development organisations.

What's Apnaing is a quarterly ebulletin produced by Audiences Yorkshire listing South Asian cultural events throughout the region. Sign up through the **www.digyorkshire.com** website by joining the mailing list and ticking the 'South Asian Arts' box.

Key words and their meanings

This is not a glossary – a list of words with definitions – because most of the vocabulary used to talk about cultural diversity is woolly at best and at worst a source of contention.

The vocabulary has changed over time: 'black' was once considered offensive but is now the preferred term when used as an adjective with an initial capital letter as in 'Black artist' but unacceptable when used as a noun, 'a black'. Some words, like 'race', have complex and contentious histories, with possible meanings that are rooted in discredited ways of thinking.

Words considered acceptable by some are seen as offensive by others. Young Londoners talking about identity said they thought 'minority ethnic' implied inferiority and disadvantage[1] but for others it is a preferred term. Within the arts, some terms have acquired a widely accepted usage that may be different from the formal definition ('cultural diversity' is one example). The very different terminologies used by the contributors to this book, all experts in their field, illustrate the problem clearly.

The solution is to be aware that whatever words you use may be open to misunderstanding. Whenever you work with a group or individual for the first time ask what terminology they prefer and agree a common vocabulary.

Culture

Undergraduates write essays and academics write whole books about the meaning of culture. Raymond Williams mapped the way the word changed over the 18th and 19th centuries to come to mean 'a whole way of life, material, intellectual and spiritual.'[2] Ziauddin Sardar quotes a range of definitions including 'Culture is the learned behaviour of a society or a subgroup' (Margaret Mead) and 'Culture is simply the ensemble of stories we tell ourselves about ourselves' (Clifford Geertz). The most useful is probably his concluding definition: 'Culture seems to be (almost) everything'.[3] An individual's culture derives from their upbringing, education and social experiences and is a matter of choice.

Cultural diversity

This phrase is not widely used outside the arts although the most celebrated definition was made in a speech in 1969 by the politician, Roy Jenkins:
'I do not think that we need in this country a 'melting-pot', which will turn everybody out in a common mould, as one of a series of carbon copies of someone's misplaced vision of the stereotyped Englishman … I define integration, therefore, not as a flattening process of assimilation, but as equal opportunity, accompanied by cultural diversity, in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance.'

This marked an important shift towards a concept of social cohesion in which immigrants could integrate without losing their own national characteristics.

Within the arts 'cultural diversity' is used in different ways. The Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) defines it like this:
'Cultural diversity refers to the complex composition of society, made up of different interest groups which may be based on region, gender, generation etc and which have their own sense of history, values and ways of communicating.'[4]

MLA recognises, though, that this definition may not be universally accepted and one of the self-assessment questions in its *Access for All* toolkit asks:
'Has your organisation developed a definition of cultural diversity and what it means for the organisation?'[5]

Arts Council England has defined cultural diversity in a similar way to the MLA to include dimensions of age, disability, ethnicity and sexual orientation, but its *Cultural Diversity Action Plan 1998–2003* focused specifically on 'African, Caribbean, Asian and Chinese Arts'. Similarly, decibel mentions a broad definition of cultural diversity but then narrows it down:
'In the context of decibel the term "culturally diverse" means ethnic diversity resulting from post-war immigration, with an increased focus on British artists of African, Asian and Caribbean descent.'

This is a common approach: arts organisations and researchers refer to a holistic definition but then, for the purposes of the project, focus on ethnic diversity. Sometimes the broad meaning is termed 'diversity' to distinguish it from the narrower meaning intended for 'cultural diversity'.

But even this working definition is problematic, as Mary Clarke discovered when researching differences between audiences for culturally diverse work at mixed programme venues and those for the rest of the programme. Arts Council England, who commissioned the research, defined 'culturally diverse' as work by Black and minority ethnic artists, whereas several of the participating venues used a much wider definition encompassing events relating to other cultures such as flamenco, and all work featuring performers of Black and minority ethnic origin. Some venues

defined work as 'culturally diverse' if it had a feature that meant it could be marketed to what Clarke terms a 'culturally diverse audience'.

Unfortunately, the lack of a clear definition has led to the term being used inaccurately to mean both 'ethnic diversity' and the opposite, 'culturally specific'. It is used inappropriately as a euphemism for Black, Asian or Chinese or, even more inappropriately, as a group identity – 'a culturally diverse artist'. There is also a tendency to group together all ethnic identities under the umbrella of 'culturally diverse' and make the inappropriate assumption that all members of a 'culturally diverse audience', for example, are alike.

It is worth noting that Arts Council England has decided in future not to use the phrase 'cultural diversity' (see page 207).

Race

Race was originally framed to describe significant biological distinctions between populations but this concept has been discredited because the differences actually consist of largely superficial physical characteristics. The divisions between 'races' come from society not biology. The British Council points out that the human race is a single race so terms like 'racial groups' are misleading. Even so, 'race equality' and 'race relations' are in widespread official use and the Race Relations Act (1976) defines a racial group as:
'a group of persons defined by reference to colour, race, nationality or ethnic or national origins'

Ethnicity

Like 'race', ethnicity is a social construct and, like 'cultural diversity', it defies simple definition. It is a fairly recent term. A report for the Department for Constitutional Affairs (DCA) comments that the word 'ethnicity' only appeared in the English language in the 1950s. The House of Lords made a ruling in 1983 in which they said essential features of an ethnic group were 'a long shared history and distinct culture' along with the following 'relevant' characteristics that may be present: 'a common geographic origin or descent from a small number of common ancestors; a common language; a common literature; a common religion and being a minority within a larger community'. Although this ruling refers to religion, quite often faith is excluded so descriptions of ethnicity focus on geographic origin even though for some, such as young people from Pakistani and Bangladeshi backgrounds, religion is a more important factor in their sense of identity.

The DCA report describes ethnicity as 'the essence of an ethnic group or the quality one must possess in order to belong to an ethnic group'. It emphasises that ethnic identity is concerned with a sense of belonging, as opposed to separateness. Ethnicity is about the distinct identity perceived by the individual themselves, but also that perceived by others.

The term is frequently mis-used to mean 'non-white' with connotations of exotic, out of the ordinary and primitive in phrases like 'ethnic clothes' and 'ethnic restaurants'. Some of the contributors to this book, in particular marketing experts from outside the arts, use the phrase 'ethnic communities' to mean non-white communities. This, like the phrase 'non-white' itself, is widely considered to be inappropriate and even offensive because it implies that it is 'normal' to be white and everyone else is 'non-standard'. It also fails to recognise the huge ethnic diversity of white communities.

Ethnic minority, minority ethnic and BME

These phrases are in widespread use as preferred terms, often specifically to refer to people who are not white. In addition to the issues around the word 'ethnic' described above, they are problematic because of the underlying assumption that the white population is numerically larger, which is not the case in many UK neighbourhoods. 'Minority' implies 'marginal' and also that 'White British' is not an ethnic group.

The issues are such that the Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain decided to avoid using 'minority' and 'ethnic' altogether.

'Black and minority ethnic', was Arts Council England's preferred term in 2005. It shares all the problems of 'minority ethnic' and also implies that Black people are not part of an ethnic minority.

Black and Asian
This is often used within the arts in phrases like 'Black and Asian audiences'. People of African and Caribbean origin often refer to their identity as 'Black' alongside more specific ethnic identities – British, Nigerian, Jamaican and so on. The British Council reports that, in contrast, 'Asian' is often considered unacceptably broad. Ziauddin Sardar, like many others, objects to the phrase because it 'lumps all ethnicities together' as 'not Western' (see page 45). Some commentators have also used 'Black' in a political sense as an umbrella term for all those of any ethnic origin who self-identify as discriminated against and excluded.

Mainstreaming
Mainstreaming refers to the integration of good equal opportunities policy and practice into every aspect of an organisation's activities rather than it being seen as a bolt-on. See page 88 for Marie Gillespie and Anita Sharma's discussion of the mainstreaming of multiculturalism in broadcasting.

Multiculturalism
The well-respected campaigning charity Race for Racial Justice defines multiculturalism as: *'the belief that many different cultures should be encouraged and allowed to flourish in society and that services and facilities such as health, education, the arts, etc should be delivered in a way that embodies and promotes this belief.'*

Although still widely used, several of the contributors in this book discuss multiculturalism as a concept that has outlived its usefulness. They point out that within it cultural boundaries are seen as fixed and unchanging, people of ethnic minority origin are always defined by their ethnicity, and equality is seen within a hierarchy with 'majority' cultures as 'dominant' (see Ranjit Sondhi on page 46, Lia Ghilardi on page 54 and Jorella Andrews on page 141). Ziauddin Sardar comments that 'although multiculturalism is a great idea, it is still yesterday's ideal … too fixated with containing and managing difference.' (see page 37).

Notes and references

Key words and their meanings

1 Johnsson, Emily, *In-between two worlds: London teenagers' ideas about identity, cultural belonging and Black history*, ALM London, 2004

2 Williams, Raymond, *Culture and Society*, The Hogarth Press, 1993

3 Sardar, Zaiuddin and Van Loon, Borin, *Introducing Cultural Studies*, Icon Books, 1999

4 www.mla.gov.uk/action/learnacc/00access_02.asp

5 *Access for All Self-Assessment Toolkit: Checklist 2 – cultural diversity for museums, libraries and archives*, MLA at www.mla.gov.uk

6 www.britishcouncil.org/diversity/race_terms.htm, 11/8/2005

7 'Chapter 26: Respecting Cultural Diversity', *Information Meetings and Associated Provisions within the Family Law Act 1996: final evaluation report*, Department for Constitutional Affairs

8 Mandia v Lee

9 Johnnson, 2004

Audience Development Agencies

Network – the national audience development network
www.audiencedevelopment.org.uk

AMH (Hampshire)
01962 846962
www.amhonline.org.uk

Arts About Manchester
0161 238 4500
www.aam.org.uk

Audiences Central
0121 685 2600
www.audiencescentral.co.uk

Audiences London
020 7407 4625
www.audienceslondon.org

Audiences North East
0191 233 3868

Audiences Northern Ireland
028 9038 5224
www.artscouncilni.com

Audiences Wales
029 2037 3736
www.audienceswales.co.uk

Audiences Yorkshire
0870 160 4400
www.audiencesyorkshire.org.uk

Glasgow Grows Audiences
0141 248 6864
www.gga4arts.co.uk

Momentum Arts (Eastern region)
01223 500202
www.momentumarts.org.uk

Smart Audiences (Surrey)
01372 825123
www.smartaudiences.co.uk

South West Arts Marketing
0117 927 6936/41
www.swam.org.uk

Sussex Arts Marketing
01273 882112
www.artsinsussex.com

TEAM (Liverpool)
0151 709 6881
www.team-uk.org

The Audience Business (Edinburgh)
0131 243 1430
www.tab.org.uk

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