

# **Two heads are better than one: what art galleries and museums can learn from the joint leadership model in theatre**

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## Executive Summary

### Context

Art galleries and museums in England are currently facing their biggest challenge in a generation. The past decade saw significant growth through new institutions such as Turner Contemporary, The Hepworth Wakefield, Baltic, Nottingham Contemporary, MIMA as well as major buildings projects for existing organisations at Towner, Whitechapel, South London Gallery and Firstsite. Many of these developments have been integral to wider regeneration initiatives, supported strongly by local authorities and regional development agencies. Public revenue funding for the visual arts at central and local government level has grown during this period. Similarly the public profile of the visual arts, and the status of the UK internationally as a centre of visual arts, has increased dramatically, as evidenced by the success of Tate Modern (the most visited art museum in the world) and Frieze Art Fair.

And yet this success story may be built on sand: outside the capital most art galleries and museums are heavily reliant on public subsidy for revenue funding and have not yet developed a range of reliable or sizeable income streams through fundraising or trading. With public funding of galleries now set to fall sharply at local, regional and national levels it is as yet hard to see where alternative income will be found.

More worrying still is the failure of increased public investment in arts facilities and activities to translate into a larger, more diverse and more engaged audience base for the contemporary visual arts nationally. Attendance levels for galleries and art museums as a whole have plateaued during this period of growth so that the average level of subsidy per visitor to an Arts Council-funded gallery has increased by 28%.<sup>1</sup> There are also systemic problems with workforce development and diversity in the sector leading to 'a crisis of leadership'.<sup>2</sup>

Recent research<sup>3</sup> reveals a sector which is over-extended and under-capitalised – in other words lacking the resilience and capacity to respond to a rapidly changing operating context where major shifts in funding, audience behaviour and technology are disrupting business models across the arts and wider society. All artforms are facing these challenges, but in the visual arts we have the added 'problem' of free entry. Just as the newspaper industry struggles to find a new business model in an era of free online content, we too have an existing audience base which is accustomed to free access to our core product.

### Purpose and approach of this research

*'People have been allowed to carry on as 'king-curators' devising their programmes in isolation – touring used to be much more common than it is today. We can't tolerate any longer people who just want to do their own thing and just want to look to their international counterparts for their kudos. Their organisations will sink. The financial basis on which they operate will be so different – so they'll need to find new sources of income and collaborate more to make best use of resources.'*

So leaders of art galleries and museums face undeniably significant challenges in the coming decade. This research sets out to ask whether new leadership models would be helpful, given this context. It looks at the joint leadership approach in theatre which developed around thirty years ago largely in response to a more complex and uncertain financial model. The report considers theatre's joint model, characterised by a double-headed structure of Artistic Director and Executive Director and a more collaborative style of leadership, and asks whether it offers any benefits beyond the single Director approach preferred in the visual arts.

Theatre has its own culture and challenges, and the changes we need in the visual arts will not be found through uncritically importing models from other sectors. But by understanding better how theatre is responding to similar pressures and comparing the two sectors we can shed light onto some of the deeply embedded assumptions we hold, which may stand in the way of discovering new strategies that will enable our organisations to thrive in tough times.

The research was undertaken through a series of semi-structured interviews with those involved in leading galleries, art museums and theatres, and a review of management and leadership literature. Thirty-four interviews were completed to capture the full range of leadership models in both sectors. Many in the theatre sector had experienced different permutations of the two main models - single and joint leadership - at different stages in their careers. Others were interviewed for their experience as Trustees or in recruitment of leaders.

Interviewees are listed in Appendix 1 but are cited in this research on a non-attributed basis. It was never my intention to seek out both parties in joint leadership structures in an attempt to study the detail of specific partnerships. Therefore these interviews represent only the views and experience of those directly involved in executive leadership models.

The report is structured in six parts:

**Section one** offers a summary of the evidence relating to the kinds of leadership visual arts organisations will need to thrive.

**Section two** provides an analysis of current leadership models and approaches.

**Section three** explores the role and position of senior managers in the visual arts including a description of the role of the Executive Director and the benefits it offers organisations.

**Section four** discusses the merits and drawbacks of joint leadership models.

**Section five** looks beyond structures to explore the conditions of success.

**Section six** concludes with six key recommendations for those responsible for leadership in the visual arts.

The report aims to do three things:

1. For Boards and visual arts leaders, the report presents the case for reconsidering our leadership models (structures and approaches) in the visual arts.
2. For Boards and those seeking to recruit and develop leaders in the visual arts, the report offers:
  - practical advice about the range of leadership options and the context each model suits best;
  - findings relating to the competencies and structures required for joint leadership models, and collaborative leaders more widely, to be effective (section five);
  - An outline description of the roles and requirements for EDs (section three).
3. Finally, for all those working in the visual arts, I hope this report stimulates further discussion about our wider values in the non-profit sector and the critical need for a step-change in our approach to audiences, enterprise, management capacity and continuing professional development.

## Key findings

### What's driving change?

*'I cannot understand what benefit it is to the organisation to put all your ability to really function at a senior level into the hands of one person, because that one person can only achieve what they can physically do in any 12 or 24 hour day and it is so much more effective to have a group of empowered individuals working together towards a common goal.'*

Collaboration between organisations is recognised by leaders in private, public and non-profit sectors as an important business tool: particularly in contexts which are complex and uncertain, where cost effectiveness, the increasing specialisation of companies and the need for innovation are high.

The arts and cultural sector is one such context where collaboration is rapidly becoming essential. We are facing major challenges, some specific to the sector and some more general, which result from application of new technologies, the need to reduce carbon emissions and conserve energy, changing audience expectations and falling public funding.

The main benefits of collaboration and collaborative leadership are that it generates new ideas and innovation through harnessing the creative power that different perspectives and skills can produce in combination. Collaborative leaders are also able to motivate colleagues and peers through developing a shared vision that encourages 'discretionary effort'. At a time when we have reduced resources, making the most of our staff, skills, and insight alongside other assets will become increasingly important, and collaborative leadership is the key tool that can help us achieve that goal.

In the visual arts sector we need new income generating strategies which look beyond fundraising from high net worth individuals and securing corporate sponsorship deals, which in any case tend only to be suited to larger metropolitan organisations. Enterprise (including smart ways to generate income from our visitors whilst retaining free access) is essential, as is re-thinking how we encourage mass micro-philanthropy, on the lines of crowd-funding or more traditional membership models.

We also need a fundamental shift in how we engage our audiences – both to deliver our mission but equally to justify our public funding and achieve greater trading income. Raising the profile of our organisations with stakeholders locally and regionally, as well as nationally and internationally will underpin our ability to do this.

Despite recent initiatives such as Turning Point and Plus Tate, collaboration between visual arts organisations – and between the collections-based museums and exhibitions galleries in particular – is under-developed. There is however enormous potential for greater inter-organisational collaboration to maximise resources and benefit from the respective strengths of each part of the sector.

We need to develop our workforce, attract more interns and volunteers, and Board members who can support the realisation of these more enterprising and user-centred strategies to doing business. Collaboration between organisations and within organisations is going to be critical to achieving these changes rapidly and effectively.



## **We need a new leadership culture not structure**

To respond to the external challenges- and our problems with workforce diversity and capability - we first need to challenge some of our out-moded assumptions within the visual arts sector. These include:

- A lack of focus on the audience and satisfying their needs not least because the financial model, and funding practice (for all its rhetoric about extending audiences), does not currently require this.
- A related tendency to see the artistic programme (and peer approval) as the only measure of success for galleries, and the conflation of the individual curator's taste with a wider vision for the organisation.
- A distrust and lack of respect or understanding for management and managers.

Investing in management capacity is an uphill struggle against a wider policy backdrop that sees any activity that is not 'front-line' as an 'overhead' that should be pared to the bone. Understanding how investing in and developing assets to create long-term resilience, and the role of managers in this, is one of the biggest challenges facing our arts and cultural organizations.<sup>4</sup>

## **Should curators still run galleries?**

*'The traditional route to senior roles in the visual arts has been curatorial and so that's the skills-base people start with and value [...] So I think there's a sense within the visual arts that as long as you're a good curator that's the most important thing - that's going to get you profile and that will lead to a senior position.'*

The vast majority of art galleries and museums in the UK are run by people who began their careers as curators and this has been the traditional career path for gallery directors since exhibition galleries first emerged after the Second World War.<sup>5</sup> But running an art gallery or museum in 2011 is far more challenging than it was in the 1970s and 1980s. Those seeking to lead galleries and museums today can no longer expect to learn all the fundraising, business, managerial and strategic skills they need in today's environment while 'on the job'. Nor - I would argue - can curators single-handedly expect to master all these diverse skills alongside their core expertise of continually developing their knowledge of artistic practice.

Over the past 10-15 years we have begun to see the emergence of Deputy Director and more recently Executive Director roles in the visual arts, often during periods of major growth (such as capital developments) or in response to major change. Executive and Deputy Directors are not the same: Executives tend to report directly to the Board, and play a strategic role, which includes responsibilities for organisation-wide decisions such as business planning and programming; Deputies tend to be more operational and have limited authority.

Career paths for visual arts managers are fragmented. We lose many managers who have developed a working knowledge of the sector to other non-profit and arts organisations for a variety of reasons. These include lack of recognition, poor pay and conditions and lack of career progression

opportunities. Validating management as a valuable career route, to attract and retain skilled staff, is critical to the future health of this sector – as is improving the understanding of the benefits of management. The two are interdependent.

*‘The art part is valued more than the business part –people don’t feel valued.’*

For cultural reasons, many visual arts organisations prefer to recruit single leaders (and curators specifically) although interviewees felt that there is a problem with supply of suitably experienced candidates. Research into the university sector shows that for knowledge-rich organisations (such as art galleries) having leaders who understand the core business is important for standards and internal and external credibility. It also has a demonstrable impact on business performance.

Art galleries and museums should be led by those with a deep understanding of our core mission. But the core business of arts organisations is not just the art product – it is equally the way we engage people with the art and yet we very rarely appoint learning or marketing experts to executive leadership roles in visual arts. We might take it for granted that curators have this knowledge of ‘the core business’, but they do not necessarily have expert knowledge (or a vision) about how people engage with art. Curators should lead art galleries and museums, but so should other visual arts professionals with expertise in audience engagement, such as learning and marketing staff. And if we want to develop a wider and stronger pool of future leaders in the visual arts then we need to value management and leadership and encourage curators to develop their competencies in these areas, alongside their curatorial expertise.

### **From Administrators to ‘organisational producers’**

Executive Directors are usually extroverts, defined as ‘Resource Investigators’ in terms of Belbin’s team roles; put simply they are outward-facing, risk-taking, entrepreneurial people who make things happen, not the traditional accountant or administrator stereotype. Providing the structure and the resources required to achieve the mission is the core business of an ED. Therefore recasting the ED role as ‘organisational producer’ – responsible for the frameworks and resources to realise the vision - may be helpful in improving the perception, profile and understanding of these important roles.

Visual arts organisations that have invested in EDs have seen significant benefits including more ambitious programming, increased co-production and touring partnerships, increased earned and fundraised income and higher public profile. Improved stakeholder relationships, increased organisational stability and greater innovation are further key benefits of joint leadership models.

### **Context is king**

There is no-one-size-fits-all leadership model that is right for a gallery or an art museum: leadership choices will depend on the organisational needs (the type and scale of organisation as well as its stage of development) and the strengths and weaknesses of the potential candidates available.

However, the research suggests strongly that two heads can be better than one, particularly for many mid-scale and larger galleries, especially outside London where the need to embed organisations in their local and regional contexts is particularly high, or in circumstances of major growth (including capital developments) or change. Some people, particularly those moving into executive leadership for the first time, or those who would prefer to work part-time (or even just forty hours a week) because of caring responsibilities, might definitely prefer joint structures. Belbin also suggests that executive teams of two can be extremely powerful and effective:

*'a team of two, capable of multiple-role relationships with each other, can operate very efficiently in working arrangements, far surpassing a much larger team in what can be achieved'.<sup>6</sup>*

Joint leadership is not a sticking plaster that can be used to prop up Artistic Directors who don't want to lead organisations, and is very unlikely to be successful if applied on that basis, not least as the best EDs will not be attracted to work alongside these candidates. It works best when ED and AD offer over-lapping experience and skills, and are 'fiendishly interested' in one another's' patches (to quote one ED). That means having EDs who are passionate about, and understand the artform, who see their role as making extraordinary art experiences happen, and Artistic Directors who respect how an organisation – and the people within it - works best and understand that great management enables great art to thrive.

### **A professional marriage**

The language of personal relationships often dominates discussions about joint leadership. Several interviewees referred to these partnerships as 'professional marriage'. Some AD/ED pairings in theatre are long-term commitments which endure beyond one organisation with ED/AD pairings applying for roles together. 'Personal chemistry' is often cited as a reason why some pairings work (or fail), and less than ideal situations are described as 'forced marriages'.

Regardless of how a pairing comes together, interviewees and the wider literature concur that, as with romantic love, it takes time – and effort – to build an effective relationship and stressed the importance of partners sharing common values. Just as sometimes 'opposites attract', difference of approach and experience was also apparent and found to be highly productive in professional relationships.

It is this difference which is considered the greatest asset of collaborative working – the grit in the oyster which makes the pearl. And yet it is also this difference which can lead to conflict within partnerships, ultimately poor performance or even breakdown of the relationship. For collaborative leaders, awareness of their own preferred way of interacting with others, combined with the ability to adapt their style for different situations, ('emotional intelligence') emerges as a key competency.

Beyond their own working relationships, collaborative leaders are adept at managing the inherent tensions within non-profit arts organisations between the different agendas of mission and money, artistic innovation and audience experience. The skill of collaborative leaders is to create an environment, a framework and an organisational culture, in which difference can support

and result in a synthesis of ideas, rather than a battle between opposing camps – characterised as ‘creatives versus suits’.

Joint leaders have to be collaborative leaders, but in the arts and cultural sector what can be overlooked is that single Directors also need to be just as (if not more) collaborative as joint leaders.

AD and ED are inter-dependent roles – it is not a transactional relationship where the role is split into two distinct parts so that it can be done separately. Therefore joint leaders need to share responsibility for the key objectives (programme, budget etc). Performance management and accountability structures also need to encourage collaboration not competition.

While many working in the arts may aspire to collaboration: relatively few achieve it. As MMM highlight in their report on collaborative working, participants often know what is required in theory and have good intentions but lack the competencies required.<sup>7</sup> Collaboration is demanding and the necessary values to achieve success also often run counter to prevailing attitudes and ways of doing things within our organisations. Recognising the systems and behaviours that underpin collaboration and having in place measures that reflect *how* leaders (and organisations) work and not just *what* they achieve is imperative if Boards are to be able to support and challenge executive leaders.

### **What needs to change**

*‘Too often they [the Boards] want someone who is a charismatic leader in the Director role whereas in my opinion often what they need is someone who’s a great manager and who has a talented team whom they enable to deliver.’*

Theatre offers of a model of leadership from which I believe we can learn in visual arts. It is more collaborative and respects the need for organisational as well as artistic leadership. There are many parallels between leadership in theatre and visual arts – but also some key differences. Within theatre, EDs play a key role in programming, and the audience is recognised as being fundamental to strategy – both in terms of the mission but also the simple economics of the box office.

Theatre EDs work within the theatre sector throughout their careers which means that those running theatres have a deep understanding of their artform and the business of theatre. Often there is significant overlap of experience and skills between ED and AD, although their roles are distinct.

Many EDs have been CEOs themselves, often in venues which are not producing-theatres (such as art centres). They are committed to their Artistic Directors – and particular about who they will work with – and they feel that theatres should be led by artists, not administrators. In turn, theatre ADs value organisational leaders and have visions for their organisations which extend far beyond the artistic programme to include their relationship with audiences, place and the wide range of people they recognise contribute to making successful theatre.

Fundamentally, leadership in the visual arts needs to change to become more collaborative – both in terms of how we work within and beyond our

walls. Management capacity also needs to be urgently addressed because of the unprecedented external challenges we are facing.

Joint leadership structures are one way to address this situation, but there are also other options – and in the long term a more strategic approach professional development of curators specifically, but visual arts professionals more widely, has to be the priority. Ironically, for a sector where many employees have two or even three university degrees, professional learning seems to stop when we enter the workplace. All of us concerned with visual arts leadership need to value ongoing professional development, to develop recognised standards and invest in people to a level far beyond current practice.

In the short-term increasing management capacity is crucial, although again this does not have to be limited to the adoption of a joint leadership model. Many interviewees acknowledged the under-utilised capacity within our organisations, and potentially through volunteers, which could be unlocked with a small amount of training and peer-peer mentoring.

A little investment, underpinned by a far bigger change towards more collaborative leadership, could unlock the skills and resources needed by this sector to become far more entrepreneurial and audience-focussed. Two heads are better than one: but why stop at two? Joint leadership models, and collaborative leadership more widely, capitalises on the new ideas that spring from bringing together different experiences and perspectives. Small teams, whether teams of two or larger management groups working to a single Director, are the most effective units for running organisations. But to thrive into the next decade we will need to engage all staff, volunteers, supporters, and audiences: collaborative leaders know how to harness and engage this far wider range of contributors.

## Summary of recommendations

### 1. Boards, funders and visual arts leaders need to revisit our mission and values in the non-profit visual arts sector

We may need new leadership structures, but more important is a new leadership culture which I suggest is based on the following values:

- Genuine respect for artists *and* audiences. Belief that arts organisations exist to create art experiences for audiences and have responsibility to support and develop innovative artistic practice.
- Belief that all staff are creative and have mission-critical roles: not just the artistic team.
- Pride in developing 'talent' and facilitating the work of others rather than believing that you alone can achieve success.
- A vision for the arts that extends beyond the art world and sees a role for arts organisations in the life of the community.
- An understanding of the distinct role different arts organisations play in a wider ecology – i.e. looking to smaller organisations to profile emerging artists and using the resources of a larger space to develop audiences and to provide curatorially rigorous appraisals of an artist's career, to offer fresh insights.

### 2. Boards need to select executive leaders who can work collaboratively and who possess a strategic vision for the organisation

- Boards need to look for collaborative competencies in all leaders – whether as joint leaders or single Directors.
- Key attributes required in leaders in the visual arts include an entrepreneurial approach to resourcing the organisation and a strong vision for the kind of relationship they want with their audiences and their context.
- When looking to recruit a new leader an organisation should be open to a range of possible models including the single Director and the joint Artistic and Executive Director models.

### 3. Boards need to be more active in supporting and holding executive leaders to account

- Collaborative leadership is a tall order and we should therefore expect our leaders to need to continue to develop their skills throughout their careers, including after appointment.
- Performance management of executive leaders should assess how effective they are in achieving collaboration. *How* people achieve results, not just *what* they do, matters. For example, a brilliant programme is important, but not at the expense of external relationships, declining audience figures, or a high turnover of staff who declare they can't work with a 'difficult' colleague.

- In a joint leadership model both the AD and the ED, and in a single Director model the whole SMT, need to be jointly responsible for delivering a high quality programme, generating the necessary income and meeting the audience engagement targets they jointly agree with the Board.

#### **4. Boards, funders, visual arts professionals and our professional bodies and networks (including VAGA, Turning Point and PlusTate) need to take professional development far more seriously in future**

- The amount of time invested in developing people needs to change dramatically. It will also take some money, but this need not be a major barrier as many low-cost and free options exist. It is primarily a change in culture that is required.
- Developing professional standards for contemporary and modern art curators would encourage curators to value professional development and to recognise the wider competencies they need to acquire. This will improve both organisational performance and individual professional development and mobility.

#### **5. Management, and managers, needs to be better understood in the visual arts**

- To create extraordinary art experiences we need to make the most of our resources – financial and human. In mid-scale and larger galleries that can be done by employing dedicated strategic managers, but this is not the only option.
- There are many other over-qualified, under-utilised people in the visual arts sector who could develop the entrepreneurial skills we badly need – given some encouragement. But this requires a shift in the culture of the visual arts so that roles beyond the curator are valued properly.
- All staff, whether technicians, marketing officers, learning professionals or curators need to feel they are equally valued by the organisation; that they ‘own’ the programme; that they contribute directly to the mission. A good collaborative leader can deliver this shared vision.

### **Section one: What does a joint leadership model offer the visual arts?**

*In this opening section we look at what joint leadership models offer the visual arts. I suggest that within a joint leadership model exists a commitment to collaborative leadership and a recognition of the need for a business and audience-focus at the executive level of the organisation.*

*Drawing on the wider literature, I argue that collaborative leadership can create added value through its power to harness a diversity of perspectives and skills that fuel innovation and promote a shared vision that increases discretionary effort across the whole organisation.*

*Finally, we look briefly at the challenges facing visual arts organisations and identify why collaborative leadership and increased management capacity – these two features of joint leadership models – are particularly important for this sector in the coming decade.*

### **The case for collaboration**

*‘Partnership is not a soft and fluffy approach [...] It’s hard and difficult. You need to have a backbone of steel.’*

John Yard, senior public sector leader.<sup>8</sup>

Who could object to collaboration in principle? This buzz-word has long been a staple in the lexicon of arts funding – and is used in such varied contexts by funders and arts organisations alike that the term has become almost meaningless. I believe that we need to take a step back from the current fashion of assuming that sharing back-office functions will somehow solve all our problems and think more fundamentally about how collaboration could help us rise to the many challenges facing us as leaders of arts and cultural organisations.

Collaboration is a serious commitment not to be entered into lightly and it requires significant work and resources. Given how many interviewees referred to joint leadership as ‘professional marriages’ we would be well-advised too think carefully before saying ‘I do’ in our work lives. Many of our current leaders are not equipped to lead collaboratively.<sup>9</sup> And if collaboration goes wrong it can have catastrophic consequences.

Collaboration is a conscious business strategy which many in the private, public and wider non-profit sectors see as essential to their success – if not their survival. As early as 1994, Harvard Business Review published an influential article by Rosabeth Moss Kanter stating that ‘being a good partner is a key corporate asset’.<sup>10</sup>

In a 2007 Ipsos MORI survey business leaders rate collaborative partnerships as either very important or essential today, and increasingly important into the next decade.<sup>11</sup> Many champions of collaboration, such as Peter Senge, base their approach on systems-thinking: a model which looks at the bigger picture to identify causes of problems and find solutions by understanding how elements relate to one another. They argue that the challenges the world faces are complex ones and required joined-up solutions – for example climate change, global epidemics, and terrorism are interrelated and caused by poverty, lack of education, competition for resources and disenfranchisement.



Similarly in the arts sector many are calling for a systemic approach and regard increased collaboration as a way to extend the efficiency and effectiveness of organisations, to engage with audiences in new ways, to produce ambitious artworks at a scale which requires co-producing partners, or in formats that require broadcast partners – be that NT Live’s collaboration with cinemas or Artangel’s partnerships with television and film distributors (Robinson, 2010; Cooper 2010; Bunting 2010).

Collaboration enables you to do things you can’t do on your own, to increase your impact and to innovate (Archer & Cameron, 2008).<sup>12</sup> In public, private and non-profit sectors alike companies are investing in developing open and user-led innovation strategies to maximise innovation, profits and impact.<sup>13</sup> Private sector studies have shown that organisations with a strong culture of collaboration thrive better.<sup>14</sup>

Across the private, non-profit and the public sectors, leaders are recognising the need to collaborate as well as compete (‘coopetition’). They are driven by three main factors: the increasing specialisation of companies in the pursuit of efficiency; the impact of technology as an enabler and platform for delivery of services and the increasing complexity of the operating environment which creates the need to share up-front costs and risks.

These same drivers also apply in the arts sector: for example, several interviewees said that one of the practical benefits of introducing Executive Directors into the visual arts had been to release the Artistic Director to develop co-productions and touring partnerships nationally and internationally delivering shared costs and risks of producing commissions and exhibitions. Arts and cultural organisations (ACOs) are currently facing unparalleled reductions in their funding from central, regional and local government alongside other equally significant challenges – not least major shifts in audience expectation and behaviour and disruptions to traditional business models precipitated by new formats and media for distribution afforded by digital technologies (Bunting, 2010).

Based on its action research into collaboration between ACOs, Mission, Model Money’s (MMM) 2010 report *Fuelling the Necessary Revolution* identifies the four main reasons arts organisations are increasingly working together as ‘improved organisational effectiveness, reduced duplication, better use of resources and more value for money’.<sup>15</sup> As we will see in section four when we look at the benefits for ACOs of joint leaderships models in greater detail, another key factor in their adoption has been the increasing complexity of the operating context. This makes the likelihood of finding all the requisite skills and experience in one human being increasingly difficult. As one interviewee put it:

*‘We ask an enormous amount of someone trying to lead any of these organisations in the current climate. They have to be fundraisers, they have to be managers, they have to be coaches, they have to be original thinkers, they have to be capable of talking to artists or performers as well as to businessmen. It’s asking a huge amount of an individual.’*

Other interviewees used terms such as ‘super-human’ and ‘unrealistic’ to describe the demands on single leaders of arts organisations, and claimed that in the past decade there had been an ‘exponential growth in the skills required’ to successfully run ACOs. Just as this increased complexity in the private sector has led to business to business partnerships (such as Peugeot

Citroën and Toyota sharing components on a new car range), we are now beginning to see an increase in partnership working and joint leadership models within our ACOs.<sup>16</sup> MMM's research shows that the business case for collaborating, particularly in this period of unprecedented change, is becoming crystal clear to ACOs. Inter-organisational collaboration, or partnership working, requires collaborative leadership: leaders who can work effectively with other leaders, across organisational boundaries, to achieve results.

### **The benefits of collaborative leadership**

At a time when we are facing a reduction in arts funding perhaps the most appealing features of collaborative leadership are that it makes best use of the resources (including most importantly the staff and volunteers) *within* organisations: as well as just beyond their boundaries. Involving the wider staff team in developing strategy – particularly in terms of programming which many arts organisations still regard as off limits to all but the artistic team – generates ownership and increases productivity through greater effort ('discretionary effort') among staff.

Last year, for a project commissioned by MMM for their *Capital Matters* programme I was part of a research team looking at ACOs developing successful business models.<sup>17</sup> We observed a number of common characteristics across these organisations, including what we described as 'distributed artistic leadership.' By this we meant that programming decisions were made by a cross-organisational group involving membership of more than a traditional artistic team.

Sometimes this simply took the form of Artistic Directors working in an open and inclusive way by inviting all staff to engage in regular programme meetings (e.g. National Theatre of Wales, Dance United); other organisations had replaced the in-house artistic director model with an external advisory group or moved to fixed-term appointments (e.g. Cornerhouse, Britten Sinfonia). Whatever the mechanism, the outcome was seen in similar terms, and this quote is typical:

*'We don't have an artistic director telling us what they want to do – we're a team and we work together. There is ownership throughout the organisation.'*

That is not to say these organisations did not value or invest in artistic expertise – on the contrary – but they had uncoupled artistic expertise from exclusive and automatic control of programming decisions. In many cases this was encouraging greater discretionary effort from staff and also attracting large volunteer workforces. One museum director I interviewed explained why he was able to draw on volunteers to resource huge areas of the museum's work from collections care, to front-of-house and administration: 'we don't ask them to do things *for us*, it's about *involving* them in the leadership of the organisation.'

The other key benefit is that collaborating parties are different and bring alternative ways of thinking, complementary skills and different experience which leads to fresh approaches and innovation in solving problems. One leader I interviewed cited innovation gurus IDEO who encourage companies to 'employ people you don't like' because they believe innovation thrives on difference and challenge. Archer & Cameron see the main value of

collaboration stemming from the difference between the partners ('the grit in the oyster that makes the pearl') and their approach is centered around managing this difference constructively, and dealing with the conflict which inevitably arises due to different of styles and cultures. Innovation, then, is the other key reason people value collaboration. One interviewee explains what this means for her role:

*'For me that means you are looking for innovation wherever you can generate it - and that means really working with the whole staff team. It doesn't mean sitting on top and dictating - it's a very organisational, cultural position. I don't see myself in the centre of or above it - I just see myself facilitating it and trying to get the best out of the people and the circumstances we're in, towards the vision, but recognising that I as an individual don't have many ideas, never mind the right ones, and the best answers are going to come from the organisation itself and the people who make up that organisation.'*

Meredith Belbin, in his work on team roles, makes similar claims for the characteristics of what he calls 'team leadership' in contrast to the more traditional solo leadership model in a simple table replicated below:

**Table 1: the characteristics of team and solo leadership**

(reproduced from Meredith Belbin, *Team Roles*, p.122)

Solo leader	Team leader
Plays unlimited role (interferes)	Chooses to limit roles (delegates)
Strives for conformity	Builds on diversity
Collects acolytes	Seeks talent
Directs subordinates	Develops colleagues
Projects objectives	Creates mission

For Belbin, solo leadership confers some advantages, notably in a crisis situation where swift, difficult, decisions need to be pushed through. Team leadership comes into its own in other contexts where 'complexity poses greater problems than urgency'.<sup>18</sup> He attributes the rise in team leadership to increasing uncertainty in the operating context for organisations where 'one person can no longer comprehend everything or provide the direction that can cover all occasions'.<sup>19</sup>

As we have already seen, this uncertainty and complexity is familiar to leaders of ACOs. And while some yearn for the visionary leader who can save an organisation - particularly in the current period of uncertainty - as François Matarasso cautions in his essay on leadership and uncertainty: 'visionary self-belief is not helpful in fog: it's dangerous and leads people dangerously over cliffs'.<sup>20</sup> As we will see later in comparison with leadership in the university sector which - like the arts - is characterised by highly-educated, independent thinking professionals who are frequently motivated by non-financial rewards, those working in arts organisations can be resistant to authoritarian, top-down styles of leadership which are more commonly associated with flying solo.

### **In praise of strategic management**

Management has a bad reputation in some parts of the arts sector, perhaps due to the heavy-handed, poorly-practised managerialism that swept through the public sector in the 1980s and 1990s, often understood as a desire to make arts organisations more like businesses. There is a widespread and closely-related counter-assumption, which we will return to in Section four that arts organisations should be lead by arts specialists. This championing of the role of arts specialists has been at the expense of recognising the value of good management. Various commentators have observed the need for arts and cultural organisations, and visual arts galleries in particular, to develop stronger managerial skillsets and entrepreneurial outlooks of the type often found in Executive Directors.<sup>21</sup> As one Executive Director I interviewed insisted:

*'If you don't have great marketing, and you don't have great management and financial control and you don't have fantastic fundraising - you don't have a great programme.'*

In Section three we will look in detail at what strategic managers and leaders, in the form of Executive Directors, do and the benefit they bring to arts organisations. In brief their role is to generate and marshal the assets and resources - financial, human, reputational, physical - that enable the artistic vision and wider mission of the organisation to be realised. Below one ED describes her role as follows:

*'How I explain it to the AD is that the way I see my role is as far as possible to do what you want to do, so you tell me what you want to do and I will try and marshal the resources unless I think it is a completely stupid idea in which case I'll try and talk you out of it.'*

On this basis EDs can be understood to play a critical and highly skilled strategic facilitation role in the theatre sector. Organisations that have recently introduced EDs in the visual arts report increased reach (size and diversity of audience), increased fundraised and earned income, a far improved profile for the organisation locally, regionally, nationally and internationally, improved morale and productivity, and improved artistic programmes (as the AD has more time to devote to this task). And yet there persists a tendency to see management as an overhead cost and not directly contributing to success in the gallery, reflected by the small numbers of strategic management positions - and consequent lack of capacity - in galleries and art museums around England.

### **Challenges facing the visual arts sector**

*'Visual arts organisations face a stark choice: they either cut programme or they find new models [...] Some of the mid-scale galleries that might be able to broaden the appeal of contemporary art are simply going to disappear, because local authorities are beginning to pull away money left, right and centre. [...]The heyday of public subsidy in culture is over.'*

As this interviewee observed, after a long period of rapid growth we are about to experience some fundamental changes in how galleries are funded and what they can afford to do. But even before the forthcoming funding

changes for which we are all braced, there were serious problems with the business model and performance of visual arts organisations.

In her forthcoming report *Business models in the visual arts* Susan Royce finds evidence that business models are weak, vulnerable to even minor fluctuations in income, under-capitalised, poor at generating income from their visitors and not making provision for maintaining and renewing hard infrastructure. She cites 'a generally low level of business skills within the sector' as a major contributing factor along with poor funding practices, an often unquestioning commitment to free entry models and a limiting set of beliefs within the sector, which she describes as prone to re-inventing the wheel, individualistic and anti-business.<sup>22</sup>

Lack of skills (in marketing, IT, management, and commerce) and attitudinal barriers were also reported in the 2009 *Visual Arts Blueprint* workforce development plan published by Creative and Cultural Skills (CCS) and *Turning Point*, Arts Council's England's ten year strategy for the visual arts sector. CCS claim 'there is still some scepticism in the sector towards acknowledging the importance of business skills.'<sup>23</sup> *Turning Point* identifies serious concerns about the visual arts workforce concluding:

*'there is an urgent need to address fundamental issues associated with the lack of diversity, the nature of employment, reward, career development, talent management and leadership which threaten the visual arts' future health.'*<sup>24</sup>

ACE's report also highlighted a loss of people from the sector at mid-career, resulting in what is termed 'a leadership crisis'.<sup>25</sup> However, those working in the visual arts sector seem reluctant to take up existing leadership development opportunities.<sup>26</sup> Speaking about his own experience in gallery management, one interviewee illustrates these short-comings very clearly:

*'You learn on the job but no-one tells you how to do charity accounts or what the finer details of a lease are, how to draw up contracts. There's no budget for any of that training and hardly anyone knows how to do it. There are no standard contracts for artists, there are no norms. [...] I think it's much easier in theatre to learn on the job - you can only learn the ropes if there are ropes.'*

These workforce challenges have an impact on the efficiency and effectiveness of our visual arts organisations, as does the fragmented nature of the visual arts sector which has, until now, seen a separate policy and funding system for museums and galleries with collections (supported by local authorities and MLA) from that of contemporary exhibition galleries without collections (supported by UK Arts Councils).<sup>27</sup>

Arguably there is much each part of the sector could learn from the other: on one hand the exhibitions galleries have expertise in commissioning new work and connections with artists and dealers which could benefit art museums seeking to collect contemporary art but often lacking this expertise. Indeed recent partnerships around acquisitions have been forged, with support from the Arts Council and Art Fund. On the other they tend to lag behind in understanding audiences, whereas according to the independent review of *Renaissance in the Regions*, audience development is strong in the museums sector.<sup>28</sup>

In terms of our financial resources, exhibitions galleries and art museums alike need to find new income sources beyond the public purse and traditional fundraising models which tend to serve only the larger, London-based, parts of the sector well. Recent Arts & Business research shows the vast majority of private income going to the arts sector is concentrated in London (over 80%) and in turn this is mainly targeted at performing arts organisations with turnovers above £5 million.<sup>29</sup> Within the ACE portfolio, the visual arts sector generated the lowest percentage of its income of any artform, while recent research points to a growing dependency on public funding and a diminishing return on this investment.<sup>30</sup>

Increasing audience engagement (in terms of numbers, quality and diversity) has to be our priority as it underpins the ability to develop a more sustainable resource base for the sector through earned income and increased direct public support. However evidence suggests audiences have plateaued for several years now at around 21% of the adult population.<sup>31</sup> As Susan Royce highlights in her report: ‘the absence of good customer information is a serious obstacle to building better business models’.<sup>32</sup> One of the visual arts leaders I interviewed explained how when she had come into post her organisation had virtually no data about its audiences.<sup>33</sup>

## Section two: Leadership in the visual arts

*In this section we explore the current leadership models in the non-profit art gallery and museums sector and ask do they still serve us well, or do they need to change? We look at those galleries which have developed joint leadership, exploring how they are structured and what led them to change. I also explore how the lack of box office; the elevated status of the curator over the past fifteen years; and a distrust of management contribute to the current leadership culture.*

### What leadership models do we currently have?

The vast majority of art galleries and museums in the UK are run by people who began their careers as curators and this has been the traditional career path for gallery directors since exhibition galleries first emerged after the Second World War.<sup>34</sup> Typically, the future director would train as an art historian and then work as an exhibition organiser or curator before progressing to appointment as a Director. They would begin by running a small gallery and learn about the managerial aspects of the role 'on the job', supported by able administrators responsible for ensuring the organisation functions on a day-to-day basis and is compliant with legislation and funder requirements. Then as their experience grew they would progress to run larger and larger organisations. This worked well a generation ago for those now leading our national galleries and museums.

But running an art gallery or museum in 2011 is far more challenging than it was in the 1970s and 1980s. Those seeking to lead galleries and museums today can no longer expect to learn all the fundraising, business, managerial and strategic skills they need in today's environment 'on the job'. Nor – I would argue – can curators single-handedly expect to master all these diverse skills alongside their core expertise of continually developing their knowledge of artistic practice, which has also expanded to become global and necessitates knowledge of an increasing range of media and forms.

However outside a handful of our largest institutions, the single Director model still dominates the exhibition gallery sector. Boards seeking to appoint Directors are often faced with a choice between an artistically brilliant leader, lacking managerial expertise and an excellent manager without a first-class artistic vision. The compromise is usually to appoint a curator as Director, supported by a more operational 'deputy': in the report I refer to this model as Director-Deputy Director or D-DD.

The D-DD model began to appear in the early 1990s, largely triggered by capital developments, and is usually the default model that organisations consider once the need to strengthen leadership and management capacity is recognised. Many are very satisfied with the D-DD model and individual Deputy Directors are frequently highly valued by their colleagues. But as we will see, the D-DD model lacks many of the benefits of true joint leadership models.

A handful of other organisations have gone further, introducing an Executive Director as joint leader, or sometimes second-in-command, and even a CEO with an Artistic Director as second-in-command although this is exceptional (and those exceptions are festivals or multi-artform centres – not traditional

galleries). Another common model is for some of the functions which would otherwise belong to an Executive Director to be outsourced, via consultancy.

The table below summarises the main models currently employed.

**Table 2: summary of current leadership models in the visual arts**

<b>Model</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Examples</b>
Director	Most common model in visual arts. Single leader with combined artistic and managerial responsibility. In larger organisations may be supported by a management team of 3-4 departmental heads.	Nottingham Contemporary, Turner Contemporary
Director & Deputy Director	Director with curatorial background leads organisation, supported by an operational second-in-command. Extent to which Deputy is involved in strategy and external relations varies. Deputy rarely involved with programming.  Fairly often the Deputy will bring functional expertise to the role and be more hands-on in that area - like a 'player-manager' in football.	Whitechapel Gallery, Ikon Gallery, South London Gallery
Executive Director/ Artistic Director	Joint equals. AD leads on programme, ED leads on organisation/business. Both develop strategy. ED usually involved in programming, although AD leads on this.	Tate Liverpool, Tate St Ives
Chief Executive with Artistic Director	CEO and artistic lead are separate roles, and AD reports to CEO. Not found in galleries currently, except for arts centres/ multi-artform venues.	Bluecoat, Cornerhouse, Photoworks
Outsourced	Very common way of creating additional management capacity or bringing in expertise on major projects in visual arts sector.  Employment of independent consultants, often with experience of having run organisations including in Deputy Director role, usually to produce business plans, undertake strategic planning or organisational reviews.	Susan Royce, Loveday Shewell, Holly Tebbutt, Tom Wilcox



### **How and why are models changing?**

The impetus to seek a new leadership model often arises from a specific opportunity (such as Liverpool Capital of Culture), or a capital project (Tate St Ives, Bluecoat, Whitechapel). As one interviewee outlined in describing why his organisation shifted to a CEO-led model rather than a solo Director during a capital redevelopment:

*'As the organisation came towards its major redevelopment the Board felt it needed different leadership with a different set of skills because the organisation was becoming a more complex place to run that it had been before, when it had been exclusively focussed on arts delivery, so they recruited me.'*

But whilst in some cases there is a decision made by the Board to augment capacity through a new structure to respond to growth in scale or complexity of the leadership function, in other cases changes to the model are reactive: such as in a crisis, or 'turnaround' situation. One interviewee expressed the view that, as a non-curator, he would not ordinarily have been considered a suitable candidate to run the organisation, had it not been in serious trouble:

*'There's no doubt that they don't give people like me the job unless they are in crisis [...] Because the default position is to put a curator in charge - and I'm not sure that's a wise choice.'*

In the past 5-6 years we have begun to see Executive Directors appear alongside Artistic Directors in the gallery sector. Only once has this job been advertised (Liverpool Biennial), other roles were tailored to specific individuals. At Whitechapel, the Managing Director was promoted into this new title from General Manager in recognition of the role he was playing during a major building redevelopment and expansion. The two joint Directorships at Tate were not recruited as such, more traditional single Directors were recruited (Liverpool) or sought (St Ives) and then Executive Directors brought in (in the case of Liverpool) or co-appointed (St Ives) from within existing staff teams. Currently there are only three examples of joint leadership (and in one of those the ED is second-in-command). We are still in the very earliest stage of the joint leadership model in the visual arts sector.

### **Leadership culture in the visual arts**

Having a single leader structure doesn't automatically exclude working in a collaborative way - as described in section one - and I interviewed several Directors who were very collaborative leaders. However, we sometimes find that a single leader structure is occupied by a leader with what Belbin describes as a solo leadership style. Several interviewees described a solo leadership style among some of their peers, often in opposition to their own, more collaborative approach:

*'There's a kind of leadership or directorial style where Directors have to take decisions, don't want to discuss them, think they are being very strong by being very clear - but to me it's a sign of weakness in a way, that's there's a lack of confidence there that means you have to use your authority to impose or to make the decision without there being any culture of dialogue or culture of collaboration.'*

Given the overwhelming evidence of the need for increased strategic management capacity in the gallery sector, and the benefits that a collaborative leadership approach and joint leadership model can offer, why is it that in the visual arts we have hung onto the solo leadership approach and single Director model when all around us other artforms, and other parts of the non-profit, public and private sectors have moved on?

A range of related observations about our assumptions in the visual arts emerged from the literature review and interviews which can be summarised under three main headings:

1. a distorted business model that relies on public subsidy and fundraising rather than being focussed on market needs.
2. a deep distrust of 'management'.
3. a tendency towards a star-curator culture and the consequent role of peer-recognition in measuring success.

Below, I will consider each of these in turn.

### **The audience-free business model**

*'Because most visual arts exhibitions are free maybe that allows us the freedom to imagine our programmes more separate from the business process.'*

Box office income is a critical part of a performing arts business model whereas for most galleries there is no financial incentive to attract audiences, and far less risk in their income projections. In theatre, income from box office means that programming decisions need to be informed by audience forecasting and financial monitoring is required to manage and respond to the risk of not reaching box office targets. Very simply, audiences have to be considered during any programming discussion, as one interviewee put it:

*'in theatre you do not get the same disdain for the market that we find in visual arts, it's part of the equation of how you balance the programme, the building and the money.'*

Therefore, in theatre there has been a need for stronger financial management historically, and a need for those with other areas of expertise (e.g. marketing) to be involved in programming and leadership of organisations. Until now, many galleries have had the luxury of not having to manage such uncertainty.<sup>35</sup>

In galleries and art museums where box office and trading income is an important component of the business model (such as Tate) then we see a marked difference in approach, with programming more likely to be collaborative and EDs heading up customer-focused teams. Championing the need – and developing the ways – to understand, engage with, grow and diversify audiences, to underpin new financial models and achieve our missions, is one of the key roles for EDs in the visual arts. Those already in these roles are making impressive progress in this area, but we need funders and Boards that hold gallery leaders to account for delivering the whole mission (and not just the artistic programme) if we are to see wider change in leadership culture.

### **A distrust and de-valuing of management**

We lack the skills we need to develop more resilient organisations, but unless those skills are valued by those leading our organisations – and many interviewed feel they are not – then there seems little prospect of developing or keeping them.<sup>36</sup> A lack of external recognition and career progression were cited as important frustrations for some in senior management roles, and had led several to leave the sector in search of more ‘rewarding’ roles.

But it was not the structural problems of poor career progression, lack of professional development opportunities and relatively poor salaries and working conditions that most people saw as the major challenge – but a lack of respect for the craft of management. As one interviewee said:

*‘There’s a de-valuation of the profession of management and the primacy of the art gets confused with a cynicism about management and professionalism.’*

Several interviewees were confident that the missing skills and capacity could easily be developed within organisations, if only leaders valued and encouraged this.<sup>37</sup> A false division between the artistic (or creative) staff and managers and an implicit hierarchy with artistic staff at the top were often blamed. We will return to look at how successful collaborative leadership is challenging those false assumptions around the polarisation of curators and managers to achieve more innovative results in Section four.

Partly, management is not valued because understanding of the benefit that good management can bring to an organisation is lacking. Directors and Artistic Directors who were working with EDs and Deputies for the first time in their career clearly recognised the benefits of working alongside a strategic manager who brought additional skills and insights to the joint task of developing future strategy and managing the effective operation of the gallery on a day-to-day basis. Change will only occur when the value of management is better understood, which is challenging against a wider policy context that sees anything that is not ‘front-line’ as an ‘overhead’ and therefore not contributing to the core purpose.

The invisibility, externally, of strategic managers beyond their locality means the small number of individuals in these roles currently often have a low profile nationally. Those currently working in strategic management roles in the visual arts can struggle to describe what they do in terms people understand – often resorting to unhelpful clichés (‘they do the art, I do the business’; ‘they do leadership, I do management’; ‘they do risk and creativity, I make it happen and provide the voice of caution’). This means the benefits these highly valued individuals bring to organisations are not widely recognised and they tend to describe what they do in self effacing terms. The language to describe these roles is simply not there. I suggest in Section three that adopting the term ‘organisational producers’ might be helpful in that this term provides a more accurate description of what EDs do.

### The rise of the star curator

Joint leadership does not work if it is a one-way street: both leaders need to be committed and able to work collaboratively. This includes shaping the vision together – albeit from different perspectives. If the organisation's vision is not broader than the artistic policy, or if that artistic vision is seen as the personal taste of one person – rather than as a coherent, articulated vision – then it's hard to see what role an ED (or anyone else) can play in shaping or contributing to that vision.

However, a strongly individualistic culture in the visual arts, based around the artist and star curators who are also seen as 'auteurs' in their own right, means that leadership of organisations tends towards solo leadership models where individual artistic vision trumps the brand of the organisation.

As one interviewee said to me about the vision for his organisation 'the vision is what the director does' another summed it up as follows:

*'The name is key in the visual arts: the name of the artists or curator. So much of the reputation or brand value is judged on that.'*

This is not the case in all organisations where the distinction between individual expertise and artistic policy is more explicit:

*'Our vision has to be the organisation's vision, and then our vision has to be right for the city, there's quite a lot of other factors that chime in that means that you can't just be the 'I think' model [...] The vision and values should be something that is absolutely right whoever is curating, it can't just be right for you.'*

As this Executive Director points out, vision also has to be about the context in which an organisation works, its location, its audiences – and not simply its programme. However, many interviewees highlighted the tendency of visual arts leaders to be focussed almost exclusively on the artistic programme and how it is received by their peers, plus observing a tendency for curators to seek to control areas beyond their core expertise:

*'Too much of success for visual arts organisations is about peer satisfaction – you just see it time and time again; the whole conversation is around publications, critical review, it's around their fellow curators coming to see the show.'*

Equally however, many thought that change was beginning to occur, with the need to collaborate meaning organisations – and curators – would have to work in different ways to survive. For example some interviewees thought touring (which is unpopular among many curators) would experience a revival to make best use of scarce resources.

Galleries need artistic leaders who can collaborate beyond the walls of their institutions, but also within them: getting the most from their colleagues. A culture which elevates one role above all others runs counter to this and, whilst still fairly widespread, is simply outmoded.

### **Section three: Management and managers in the visual arts**

*One of the benefits of the joint leadership model is that it provides increased strategic management capacity at the top of arts and cultural organisations. This section explores what Executive Directors do, both in theatres and the small number of visual arts organisations currently operating this model, and contrasts this with the more common Deputy Director model.*

*I make a distinction between strategic management and operational management: seeing the ED role being a strategic role. I suggest that there are significant limitations within the Director-Deputy Director operating model. Historically the senior management role within galleries has had various titles including Administrator, Head of Administration and Deputy Director. I suggest ED roles are better understood as 'organisational producers' – predominantly externally-focussed, risk-taking, jack-of-all-trades 'resource investigators' (to use Belbin's team role terminology) – rather than the conventional stereotype of internally-focussed, introverted, administrative staff.*

#### **What is the role of the Executive Director?**

While the responsibilities of EDs vary according to the needs of their context, their roles are very similar. It is essentially a strategic management role: with organisation-wide responsibilities, jointly responsible for developing the vision and leading on creating the organisational framework and processes that underpin the implementation of this vision. EDs report directly into the Board, even if the AD is the CEO.

In functional terms, EDs usually line-manage marketing, communications, PR, visitor services, commercial activities, premises, IT, HR, development and finance. However, this depends on a number of factors including organisational need, their individual expertise, and that of the AD. It is not uncommon to have a senior operations or finance person working closely with a more externally-facing ED.

Just as producers describe the role and relationship with different artists as unique, every AD-ED relationship is also specific to those individuals and their context.<sup>38</sup> Many EDs bring a particular functional specialism (communications, marketing, finance and development were the most commonly cited) to the role but they universally agreed that there were no standard pre-requisite technical competencies – beyond people-skills and communication.

Creating a brand (and organisational culture), managing stakeholder relationships, the wider strategy for the organisation beyond its programme (strategic positioning, business plan) and organisational development were often seen as key responsibilities of the role. In other words, providing the structure and the resources required to achieve the mission is the core business of the ED. But this is not a passive facilitation of a vision that belongs solely to the AD: these same EDs saw themselves as partners in developing and articulating the organisational vision and strategy:

*'As the ED you're making sure that the decisions that are made at the top are actually carried through. It's no good, in my view, let's say you've got a situation where the AD is the CEO, if the AD sets the policy – and policy in the end is what are you going to do, what shows are you going to put on, who's going to present them, who's going to work on them – if the AD does all that and then just simply pass it to the ED to carry it out, there isn't really enough substance in the conversations which then go on. There needs to be a high degree of interactivity between those two people, not just on the practical matters but on understanding the objectives and values of the organisation and being involved in setting them.'*

Jointly developing the vision and strategy is fundamental to how ADs and EDs work together, usually with the AD providing the artistic vision and the ED contributing the wider external vision in terms of the role of the organisation in the community, how it relates to its audiences, the impact it seeks to have in terms of regeneration etc. This description risks oversimplifying a very important and far more complex process, and there are plenty of ADs who contribute perspectives on many of the areas I've attributed to EDs, but in every case this is a jointly developed and owned vision, as the example below demonstrates:

*'The gap between those two things [strategic and artistic vision] is, in the daily way of working, not perceivable. We didn't sit down when we first met and say 'OK we need to develop and artistic policy and strategic plan for this organisation', we sat down and we talked about our vision for the organisation and it was so close and all the things we wanted to change were so easy to identify that it wasn't a strategy it was a connection of two people who then just got on with it.'*

Given their cross-cutting responsibilities, EDs and their teams have to be involved in programming discussions. This is widely accepted in theatre, but in visual arts some EDs (and most DDs) are excluded from these discussions or granted only 'observer' status. One ED said he could 'count on the fingers of one hand' the number of times he'd contributed to programming discussions. When EDs were involved some felt included only 'on sufferance' even though all EDs were clear about respecting the authority of the AD in terms of the quality of the programme.<sup>39</sup> In programming discussions EDs concerned themselves mainly with practical or audience considerations:

*'It's not about saying 'I am questioning the artistic validity of your decision' but I would be involved in making sure it's the right programme from the point of view of mission, value, flow, audiences, cost – and that is a joint decision.'*

The ED role is pivotal in ensuring the resources, structures and assets are available to deliver the programme successfully. Business planning and programming discussions are the places where these inter-related issues come most sharply into focus – and so involvement in those processes are crucial.

### How Deputy and Executive Director roles differ

My research reveals, in some cases, significant differences between the roles of Deputy and Executive Director. Whilst a handful of Deputy Directors interviewed had strategic management aspects to their role, the majority of Deputy Directors in the visual arts sector could be described as operational managers. In contrast, whilst some EDs – particularly in smaller organisations - had some operational responsibilities, on the whole their roles are strategic management positions.

Strategic management is, in a hierarchical organisation, the top-layer of management responsible for developing integrated future strategy (such as the business plan or artistic programme), looking to position the organisation in relation to its competitors and other external factors. By contrast, operational management is more concerned with the implementation of strategies with a narrower focus (such as visitor services or marketing), and the day-to-day functioning of the organisation. Table 3 below outlines the key differences.

**Table 3: Operational and strategic management roles compared**

Operational manager – e.g. Deputy Director	Strategic Manager – e.g. Executive Director
Responsible for one or more functional area such as finance, IT or HR	Responsible for cross-cutting activities (e.g. business/strategic planning)
Manages risks by minimising or mitigating them	Embraces uncertainty and creates an environment in which artistic risks can be taken without significant risk to the organisation.
Internally focussed: ensuring internal compliance with legal and funding frameworks.	Externally focussed: positioning the organisation in relation to external threats and opportunities e.g. policy, artistic and audience trends
Planning for the short-term: responsible for day-to-day operations.	Planning for the long-term: 3-5 year vision for activities.

Arts organisations are relatively small-scale and therefore few roles are clearly purely strategic or purely operational. In fact one Deputy Director I spoke to characterised her role as encompassing both aspects: ‘I have to be very, very strategic and then follow that through to the detail of the delivery’. However, another interviewee from the visual arts saw this tendency to overload DDs with operational responsibility as problematic because it reduced their capacity to engage with more strategic issues:

*‘Some of my peers don’t have any strategic space at all in their jobs. That time and space is made often for the Director – if you don’t make that for the Deputy Director or whoever is in that management role then you’re missing out on that dynamic, that joint leadership [...] They are not always sufficiently empowered to make decisions within what should be their remit. That also stifles their effectiveness and you end up not getting the benefit*

*of their skills and experience, and the different perspective they can bring to the running of the organisation. You need a challenging friend type relationship.'*

The tendency to over-specify Deputy Director roles, expecting technical skills and experience across a range of functions in one person (for example finance, HR, buildings management, development), can cause difficulties in recruitment and result in very task-heavy, operational roles. This contrasts sharply with the approach to joint leadership roles described in Section five where a 'role clarity: task ambiguity' approach is recommended.

One interviewee talked about problems her company had experienced when the Executive Director role was combined with a more administrative, operational responsibility – roles which she felt needed different mindsets and skillsets. An ED, who had previously held operational roles, described how she felt in her element now she was in a more cross-cutting role:

*'What I've realised is that this role really sings to me. When I was General Manager or Finance Director I was in a too narrow band for my skillset, so even though I worked strategically and I was able to do the job, and I achieved I hope good things in those organisations, I was somehow constrained by the role and I could see potential of how that might be better but I didn't know how to change things from that narrower role.'*

This highlights the difference between more operational roles and the strategic nature of the Executive Director's brief. A DD position then is rarely a strategic management one, unlike the ED, which means that galleries with this model firstly do not benefit fully from the additional senior and representative capacity that joint leadership brings and secondly miss out on the support and challenge that a joint leadership structure entails.

### **Benefits of the Executive Director role**

Isolating the benefits brought by EDs, as opposed to the wider benefits of the joint leadership model, is not an exact science. However, for those organisations that have only recently created this role the benefits come into sharp relief. One interviewee who had led the organisation for over five years before an ED was appointed to support him, had found moving to a joint leadership model enabled him to spend more time on artistic programming and research, as the ED led on external relations with local and regional public agencies and fundraising:

*'One of the areas where the ED has done a lot of work is lobbying, particularly locally and regionally; so for example with the North West Development Agency we've got a much better relationship with them now, same with the City Council – that's one area where it's really worked because just how many meetings can you go to? [...] It would be very difficult for one person to do all that.'*

For another organisation, the ED's arrival had improved the performance of marketing and development which also contributed to a major growth in profile for the gallery. In the words of the AD, this 'additional support for advertising and marketing really enhances what we do and our reach.' The



higher profile exhibitions and commissions that have resulted from these partnerships have attracted additional sponsorship and financial support from private and public funders, resulting in new income streams. Whilst it is hard to single out the direct impact of a leader who works collaboratively, as the results are seen as much in what others do as in their own direct outputs, several leaders I spoke to could point to major, positive changes in the organisation that had occurred since their appointment:

*'There has definitely been a huge gain for the organisation as demonstrated in the kind of shows that we've been able to curate since then and the impact they've had. Earned income has gone from 20% to 45% as a proportion of all income, all sorts of other things internally have improved and the gallery's relationships, its external partners, have moved on 100% and that's partly about capacity in having more time, more people.'*

*'What we're seeing is a big growth in people coming through [audiences] and more to the point if you look at the demographics we're within 1-2 % points of matching national demographics C2, D, Es as well as A-Bs.'*

*'Admissions has gone from 10% of our income stream to 50% because of the nature of the exhibitions we now do.'*

So increasing capacity at a senior level has enabled a stronger role in external relations and business development activities that build a stronger audience and supporter base for galleries and museums. It has also created new and increased income streams, which directly address the key challenges facing the visual arts sector outlined in Section one.

### **What makes a good Executive Director?**

For both ADs and EDs *how* EDs approached things was seen as important as *what* they could do – as this description from a highly experienced ED illustrates:

*'I once described the role as being like a nursery teacher [...] because you are changing subject every ten minutes, so you've got to be a Jack of All Trades and you've got to be able to bring in the master to work with. I think you've got to be somebody who likes flying by the seat of their pants – you've got to be comfortable waking up everyday not quite knowing the answer to the questions you're going to face.'*

Being able to respond to wide-ranging challenges is a key aspect of the role, and EDs are more likely to be generalists than specialists. One AD I spoke to said, having appointed two EDs to work alongside her before, that she had learned to appoint more on outlook (style and values) than on experience.

Being comfortable with uncertainty, and not seeking to control is also important. Being able to trust others to deliver, and the ability to constantly learn new things were singled out as key requirements according to one highly experienced ED:

*'I think really successful EDs are people who get out of bed in the morning with a slight sense of trepidation of what they*

*might be facing and hopefully a sense of pleasure when they switch the light off at night that they managed to cope with it all. That needs to be in your DNA.'*

### **Executive Directors as 'organisational producers'**

EDs are usually extroverts, 'Resource Investigators' in terms of Belbin's team roles, outward-facing people who make things happen, not the traditional accountant or administrator stereotype. In theatre the role of ED is often linked with that of Producer. Some ED positions incorporate being the lead Producer in the organisation, or in a trading subsidiary.<sup>40</sup> Many people now working as EDs have been producers earlier in their careers. When talking about what made a great ED, one AD I interviewed explained it in terms of the producer role:

*'What you need in a producer is someone who's extroverted, who likes to get on the phone, get out there... Producers have to be risk-takers and have to have a rashness about them [...] An OK producer just makes it happen, a brilliant producer exploits it; they get international touring, they get people excited about it. The producer is doing the external identity of the company. You need to have someone who's good at external relations, so that you can do that thing you're good at which is direct plays.'*

EDs, and some Directors/CEOs, often spoke about their role in terms of 'producing' or 'facilitating' rather than in terms of administration and management:

*'I've always perceived my position as being closer to that of a producer [than an administrator] – as in film producer or executive producer – where you have the vision and you know what that is and then you create that – which doesn't mean you have to select the actors. I don't need to choose the artists in the gallery just as the producer of a film can hire the actors, can hire the writer, can hire someone to do the casting. But what I build, in my mind, is I'm building a place, a sense of place and that's driven in large part around people and engagement around place and the artistic product.'*

There is a major difference between the role of an administrator looking at the day-to-day running of the organisation and the far more strategic 'organisational producer' role which helps shape and market ideas, and enables their successful realisation through securing the resources and creating the conditions required.<sup>41</sup> Viewing EDs in these terms – as organisational producers – offers a better understanding of what EDs do, the benefits a good ED brings and the competencies required to do the job well. It may also help in enabling curators to see how their competencies can be developed for these leadership and management roles, as well as make the ED role more attractive to a range of other visual arts professionals.

### **Artform knowledge of Executive Directors**

Many EDs bring an understanding of creative practice to the role having trained as artists or musicians (e.g. Mark Osterfield, Sarah Preece, Loveday Shewell, Tom Wilcox). Others, such as Baroness McIntosh, Vikki Heywood and Nick Starr had worked their entire careers in theatre, starting in casting, stage management or press and publicity respectively before moving into senior management. This understanding of how artists work, and the professional business of the artform, is a huge asset and, in theatre at least, was seen as a pre-requisite for all EDs.

Making the vision a reality – through producing or facilitation – requires an understanding of the artform: the mechanics of how it works: how artists are commissioned, how exhibitions are organised, the role of different agents (lenders, dealers etc). Producers are usually artform specialists and see this understanding of the artist's vision as their starting point, as theatre director Emma Rice advises: 'Tune in to what it is somebody is trying to do and work from that'.<sup>42</sup>

However, many visual arts Executive and Deputy Directors have not studied art nor do they have prior experience in galleries or museums. As there are relatively few senior roles across the country, and even fewer progression routes into executive leadership, former Deputy Directors in the visual arts move onto become Executive Directors in performing arts and other sectors including the wider non-profit (e.g. universities) or into freelance consultancy. Only one former Deputy Director is now leading an organisation: Emma Morris, former DD of The Photographers' Gallery and De La Warr Pavilion who has recently become Director of Photoworks.<sup>43</sup> This appointment is exceptional, and it is also unusual to find a Deputy Director who has such depth of experience in galleries at a senior level.

Developing the management and leadership abilities of visual arts professionals – including curators, but also education officers or general managers – will ensure our future leaders understand our core business and that we develop senior managers from within our ranks. It is striking in theatre how versatile ADs and EDs were, to the extent that many partnerships had overlapping skills and expertise even if their specialisms were distinct. This leads me to conclude that we are not looking to develop two breeds of people in visual arts: managers and creatives. Instead we should be looking to develop more rounded, hybrid professionals, who can offer a wide range of leadership and management skills alongside core specialisms in curating, learning or audience engagement. As one interviewee put it: joint leaders 'have to be able to ride both horses'.

## **Section four: The benefits and implications of joint leadership**

*In this section we look at the advantages, challenges and implications of joint leadership structures and ask specifically whether they enable and encourage a collaborative leadership approach.*

*I suggest that the greatest value joint leadership models can bring to the visual arts sector is an explicit recognition of the need for a stronger audience and business focus at executive leadership level in our organisations, and the increased capacity to achieve this change. Joint leadership models provide the capacity and expertise to bring together the historically divided ‘creatives and suits’ mentality, and, through better use of our existing resources, discover new models to support artistic practice and audience engagement.*

*This section focuses on the leadership structure, which is only one aspect of successful leadership. The question of the systems, competencies and attitudes required to make collaborative leadership a reality is addressed in Section five.*

There is no ideal leadership structure, it depends on the context: both in terms of the organisation’s needs but also the strengths and weaknesses of the potential candidates. For example, the joint leadership model has often been introduced during a period of major change and growth – such as a building redevelopment – when business and organisational responsibilities increase. The joint leadership model has proved particularly suited to leaders moving into their first executive role as it provides a more supportive learning and operating environment, whereas if there was greater difference in experience between candidates this parity might not be as appropriate and deter more experienced candidates.

Similarly, if an organisation is perceived to have lost its distinctive artistic reputation then often Boards will look to appoint a curator into a single Director model. Organisations facing immediate crisis and seeking ‘turnaround’ solutions may fare better under single leaders in the short-term (Redfern, 2007; Belbin, 2010). In periods of crisis Board have been known to appoint a CEO or Director without a programming track record but who offers stronger management and leadership skills, and who can work with a strong artistic team. In fact, it is only in periods of crisis that we have seen this latter model emerge and it is often considered as a ‘last resort’ or a ‘step too far’ by some interviewees.

The type of leaders available to an organisation also has to come into the equation. In visual arts, many Boards would prefer to appoint a single Director because this is the simplest, and best known model. If they are unable to find the requisite breadth of skills and experience in one person then two alternatives emerge: the Director-Deputy Director model or the Artistic Director-Executive Director model. Increasingly Boards enter into an executive search process with an open mind about which structure will emerge, depending on the field that apply. Baltic was one such example where two roles were advertised (an AD reporting into a CEO) but the recruitment pack made clear that whilst they were looking for two leaders they were also open to ‘an exceptional candidate’ who might be able to fulfil the remit of both.<sup>44</sup>

In Appendix 2 we can see the main arguments for and against the main models in the visual arts, and indicators of when a model may be appropriate for any organisational type or life cycle stage. The table also highlights the key implications for Boards to consider in relation to each model. For example, for all its advantages, joint leadership can be a more complex model to recruit into and manage and only certain types of leaders (i.e. collaborative ones) will thrive in that environment. Similarly, if Boards opt for the single Director model then it is essential that they select a leader who has a deep understanding of the whole business and mission of the organisation (not just its programme) and who has the ability to delegate and work collaboratively with colleagues, empowering and nurturing a range of talents within the organisation.

### **The drawbacks of joint leadership models**

The case against joint leadership models consists of three main arguments:

1. Joint leadership is perceived to be more expensive. Doubling the highest salary in the organisation is a major psychological and financial barrier for many organisations: although in reality having an ED rather than a DD is only marginally more expensive. Few organisations are in a position to understand the full costs and financial benefits of employing an ED.
2. Power can never really be shared completely and, as one interviewee put it (quoting Shakespeare) 'if two men ride a horse, one must sit behind.' Differences of opinion and approach are a central, and unavoidable, part of collaborative leadership: as many have previously noted (Archer & Cameron, 2009; Cooper, 2010). Commentators agree that any joint leadership structure requires both the individual capacity to manage difference professionally and constructively, and clear accountability structures and processes for drawing out and resolving conflict if it is to succeed. Shared accountability, rather than split accountability which entails two separate reporting lines, is essential.<sup>45</sup> Split accountability and conflict are not the same thing, although the former will inevitably lead to the latter. Difference, if managed well, plays an important role in collaboration and generating innovation.
3. The ideal model is to find a single leader capable of the challenge, and the belief is that this should be a curator. This latter point is perhaps the most contentious and yet deeply held view, and is considered further below.

### Should only curators lead art galleries and museums?

*'I believe that it's really essential that the leadership of these kinds of organisations is clearly vested in someone who has authority in the field, that has an expertise, that has the capacity to direct a play or curate an exhibition or lead the artistic direction of the organisation. Because without that you often find the institution becoming bland and you find it adopting generic solutions rather than original solutions, and the credibility of the organisation regionally, nationally and internationally diminishes.'*

Perhaps the most entrenched belief about leadership in the gallery sector – and wider cultural sector – is that our organisations should be led by artistic practitioners, and that usually means curators in the case of art galleries and museums. In a single director model this can lead to a situation where candidates who are poorly suited to the role in many ways, and yet possess the key attribute of being brilliant curators, are preferred over more rounded candidates.<sup>46</sup> The arts sector is not alone in assuming that specialists are the best people to run organisations – we also see this in the debate as to whether managers or doctors should run the NHS and academics run universities.

Against a backdrop which has seen increasing numbers of universities in the US and UK being headed by those without an academic track-record, Amanda Goodall of Warwick Business School undertook a substantial research exercise to investigate whether being led by a top scholar had a positive impact on the performance of research universities. She concludes it does: but only as long as those leaders also possess core management and leadership competencies too.

She cites four main factors influencing why universities prefer academic leaders, most of which also apply to the arts sector:

1. Credibility
2. Expert knowledge of the core business which underpins decision-making at top-level;
3. The notion of leader as standard-bearer and ultimate authority for quality control
4. The symbolic value of a leader who represents the 'core business' as they are drawn from its ranks.

These reasons equally apply to arts organisations where people want leaders who share their values and understand what they do. In an interview with a theatre CEO who still directs plays twice a year she cited several of these reasons in her decision to stay closely involved with the 'core business' of staging plays:

*'The real nitty gritty process of making theatre I have my hands on twice a year [...] it's shop-floor stuff, it's not imaginary shop-floor it's real and I think it decays pretty quickly that knowledge. I'm not suggesting that everybody who runs a theatre has to direct plays or if you run a gallery you have to curate shows – but you've got to find ways of developing and keeping that hands-on knowledge. And I do*

*think your credibility is vastly increased if you have a handle on those things.'*

Stakeholders - funders, patrons, audiences, staff, artists – clearly prefer the Artistic Director as the figurehead. This raises problems for a CEO-led organisation, unless the artistic lead can retain a high profile, but less so for the joint leadership model where the ED is usually in the shadow of a higher profile AD.

Having leaders who understand the organisation's core business is important. However, the core business of arts organisations is not just the art product – it is equally the way we engage people with art and yet we rarely appoint learning or marketing experts to executive leadership roles. We might take it for granted that curators have this knowledge of 'the core business', but they do not necessarily have expert knowledge (or a vision) about how people engage with art. Curators should lead art galleries and museums, but so should other visual arts professionals with expertise in audience engagement, such as learning and marketing staff.

Given that producing is a key aspect of commissioning new work from artists we would expect curators to have a strong producer skillset and ethos that could in fact make them ideal single Directors and EDs: if they invest in development of their own management and leadership skills, and build knowledge around audience engagement.

The challenges for developing other visual arts professionals are slightly different, because they need to develop an understanding of the artform alongside managerial and leadership skills and may not spend as much of their career within the visual arts sector. Simply involving these staff more consistently in programming would be an important first step to develop these future leaders as well as improving their motivation and performance in their current roles.

Significantly, Goodall recognises that 'universities could be accused of being poor at training their faculty in management and leadership.' This is equally true of the visual arts sector. As we saw in Section one, management skills are not valued in the sector and opportunities for training and development are few and far between. Even where professional development opportunities exist (such as via the Clore Leadership Programme and Cultural Leadership Programme), visual arts professionals are not accessing them to the same extent as museums and performing arts counterparts. Until these skillsets are valued in the visual arts, individuals will not be encouraged to develop them.

I believe a collaborative Curator-Director leading a visual arts organisation could have a very similar impact to a joint Artistic and Executive Director model in the performing arts, so long as the organisation has sufficient capacity for its senior management and business functions. Across my research I have found examples of organisations making all of these main models work well, and equally heard stories about how all models can fail in other circumstances, with different leaders in post. As we will explore in greater depth in Section five, leadership style, with aligned systems and behaviour, is just as crucial in making collaboration work as the structural model selected.

## The benefits of joint leadership models

The perceived benefits of joint leadership models include:

- **Enabling artistic leadership** to flourish through job-sharing the senior role so that it becomes more manageable.
- **Increased capacity for external relations and business development** – having two Directors increases capacity, particularly in the outward-facing roles of engaging with stakeholders, representing the organisation nationally and internationally, forging new partnerships for co-productions, touring etc.
- **Improved organisational stability** - better and faster decisions are made by two directors working together, providing greater confidence, a sounding board and even a safety net in some cases.
- **A whole that is more than a sum of its parts.** Some argue joint leadership models create a ‘dialogic’ or ‘learning’ space at the heart of the organisation, generating new ideas and the whole is more than a sum of the parts.

We will consider the evidence for each of these in turn, below.

### Enabling artistic leadership

*‘There is a disposition in arts organisations still to want to be led by practitioners, a curator or a director of plays. But Boards have become increasingly anxious to make sure that those people don’t get the upper hand because of the dangers that they perceive in artists being in control of money.’*

In the theatre sector as the quote above illustrates, there has been a tendency to shift power away from Artistic Directors, reducing them to second-in-command posts in favour of ‘safer’ models. Joint leadership models offer a solution that ensures we continue to have Artistic Directors at the head of our organisations, but with support (and challenge) in the form of an Executive Director.

Whilst each partnership is different in terms of the precise areas of responsibility the AD and ED lead on, and the extent to which they overlap with one another’s expertise, this division of responsibilities has been described as a ‘job-share.’ It clearly lifts some of the responsibilities from ADs which otherwise make it harder for them to travel to research the programme and to develop relationships with partner organisations nationally and internationally – or in the case of theatre directors, to spend time in the rehearsal room.

Speaking of the drawbacks of being the organisational leader and the Artistic Director, one interviewee lamented:

*‘I have really very, very little time to direct plays, to read plays, think about plays, to think abstractly rather than pragmatically. And that’s very important – I try and carve some out but it’s very hard. And I think that’s going to get tougher.’*

By contrast, an AD explained how a joint leadership model appealed to him because he wanted to focus primarily on artistic leadership rather than single-handedly running an organisation:



*'My big hesitation, and the thing I was most hesitant about, was - and particularly at that stage in my career - I didn't think I wanted to go and become the Director of an organisation because I knew a lot of my time would be taken in terms of the organisational management and all of those issues...I didn't feel I had the experience or the skills, and I didn't feel like I wanted to be doing that at that point in my career.'*

Several other interviewees explained how incumbent single Directors had found themselves needing more support and, with their Boards, created additional capacity to enable them to concentrate on their 'core' role:

*'About 3 years ago the theatre started experiencing some difficulties. He [the AD/CEO] felt that he needed some more support at his level, not just him trying to direct plays, fundraise for the programme and line-manage everyone in the organisation. That's when he conceived, with the Board, the second chief executive post.'*

Joint leadership has enabled these organisations to retain specialist artistic leadership at the head of the organisation whereas a single Directorship model would have disadvantaged, or discouraged it, in these cases. Introducing a joint leadership model had a direct impact on the quality and impact of the programme in those visual arts organisations using it.

One ED spoke in terms of his AD counterpart having more time to develop national and international partnerships which have led to new ambitious projects, co-production and touring arrangements which in turn share costs more efficiently, enable more ambitious programmes and raise the profile of the organisation.

Another AD, whose time had been freed by the introduction of an ED role, spoke of considerable change to the programme enabling a scale and type of historical exhibition that would otherwise have proved difficult because of the amount of time required to develop relationships with collectors, the artist's estate, lenders etc. In addition to the increased audiences attracted by the stronger programme and profile, new funders (private and public) and earned income have been generated.

### **Increased capacity for external relations and business development**

*'I don't think it's possible for one person to do those two roles. There's so much burden now if you are a subsidised company, such as the amount of fundraising you need to do, so that people are now applying as joint artistic directors as they need support. The amount of things you need to do these days - it's become ridiculous. I just don't think you can do it on your own.'*

The far greater capacity created by two senior roles is particularly useful when it comes to representing the organisation externally to funders, patrons or other stakeholders.

Given that Artistic Directors are often required to travel nationally and internationally to research the programme or develop partner relationships - or to spend weeks in the rehearsal room in the case of theatre directors - then this additional capacity is also important for providing organisational

stability and continuity internally – most EDs regularly deputise for ADs and both avoid being absent simultaneously.

One CEO who was also Artistic Director described ‘trying to do both’ the civic and artistic lead roles as ‘hard graft’, whereas those who shared the load reported they had seen real benefits.

The financial benefits to the business of having joint leadership, as distinct from having an ED, are hard to quantify, but as we saw in Section three those organisations which had recently introduced an ED role had seen increased numbers (and diversity) of visitors and grown box office and trading income.

### **Increased organisational stability**

*‘The single Director model can be hit and miss as it’s absolutely leading from the front and it’s all in one person’s hands.’*

*‘One of the challenges is that it can be a very lonely role and it’s very difficult to find someone in whom you can confide without worrying about exposing weakness. And also it’s difficult to find someone in whom you can confide who is close enough to be able to challenge you rather than just be a sympathetic ear.’*

Interviewees suggested joint leadership offered increased organisational stability on two counts: firstly if one Director leaves then it is less de-stabilising for the organisation and secondly, joint leadership is seen as providing a critical friend for both leaders. Leading an organisation was frequently described as lonely, and having a peer available to act as a sounding-board was seen to offer support, honest and constructive feedback and a ready source of advice for how to approach challenges.

Succession needs to be planned whatever leadership model an organisation employs, and attracting and developing talented colleagues is a key responsibility for any leader seeking to ensure an organisation is sustainable beyond their own period of employment. While for some organisations joint leadership potentially offered greater stability, in others the question of succession after one Director left (usually the AD) raised complex issues, not least whether the preferred new candidate would be either suited, or willing to work with a partner already in post. Given that joint leadership models require very close professional relationships, the question of recruitment is a complex one with many preferring to select AD and ED together, as so many ‘arranged marriages’ have been unhappy.

Within theatre there is a growing tendency to see ADs and EDs as joint appointments, with some candidates applying as a team. During the course of my interviewees I encountered several EDs and DDs who had chosen to leave at the same time, or shortly after, the departure of an AD with whom they had worked very successfully. Recruitment into joint roles is a complex area – which given the newness of the joint model in visual arts we have yet to fully experience. Considerations of fairness, and legality, to incumbent joint Directors whose positions can be jeopardised when a partner leaves need to be balanced carefully with the needs of the organisation. Tailored recruitment models are needed for joint roles, and Boards require expert advice when seeking to recruit executive leaders to ensure they discharge their duty of appointing the right leadership as best they can.

### A whole that is more than a sum of its parts

*'I think the benefit is also about complementarity of skills, it's not just about having more legs as it were, My Co-Director's strengths and mine are different but together they are bigger than either one of us and I think that's ultimately where you get more benefit.'*

*'I think the progress you can make because you're bouncing ideas off one another is massive compared with where you'd be if you were just working alone or much more task-driven as an Executive or more functional, where someone does the arts and someone does the business.'*

Interviewees with experience of joint leadership were clear that the benefits extended beyond increasing the number of hours in the day: in successful joint leadership the whole is definitely greater than the sum of its parts.

Some described this in terms of the benefits of different skillsets or styles, for others it was about bringing different perspectives together. The key concept here is that of *difference* and the new solutions, new ideas and ultimately innovations emerge from this difference, as Archer & Cameron conclude in their study of collaborative leadership:

*'the most fruitful partnerships will tap into their different skills and approaches to create something that goes beyond the individual players' capabilities.'*<sup>47</sup>

Difference is at the heart of how most joint leaders work together - and that can be difference in experience or approach - as these interviewees illustrate:

*'You're working often with someone who has the same objective but probably a different way at getting to it and a different kind of mindset.'*

*'My focus tends to be much more situational and looking outwards, so if we're talking about us sharing a vision, it's also about occupying different parts of ground and that's the foundation for that vision.'*

The 'added value' of successful joint leadership then is that it generates synergy, taking the organisation far beyond what could be achieved through a single leader model. Many of these claims could be made for collaborative leadership more widely, but when it works well, joint leadership appears to embody this collaborative principle in its structures and systems, creating the ideal environment for added value to intensify. This way of working clearly suits some better than others, as one interviewee who liked this structure explained:

*'I tend to find that my best thinking happens in dialogue, when I talk it through with someone it takes me further.'*

But to ensure we can benefit from this synergy we need to understand why it happens and how it works. As we will see in Section five, this has implications for the competencies required of collaborative leaders, as well as the structures and processes that support joint leadership.

## **Section five: Beyond structures: effective joint leadership**

*In this section we look at the conditions of success for joint leadership models specifically and collaborative leadership more widely. Literature about collaboration focuses on the attributes and competencies required (Middleton, MMM, Archer & Cameron) and understanding the dynamics of teams (Belbin).*

*Archer & Cameron employ a three-legged stool model to describe what makes for successful partnerships arguing all three elements need to be in place if a partnership is to be stable. These components are governance (the formal structures, reporting lines, decision-making processes); operations (aligned systems and processes, communications) and behaviour (with a particular emphasis on leaders modelling good collaboration).*

*In this section I outline how the leaders I interviewed have addressed these questions of structure and process as well as the skills and behaviours they have developed to lead collaboratively. Their experiences confirm that collaboration needs to be worked at: it is not a naturally occurring phenomenon in most cases but it can be developed and collaborative behaviours and competencies learned.<sup>48</sup>*

*Common values, and trust, are also highlighted by interviewees and in the wider literature as being very important. Therefore we explore why values matter to collaborative leaders and what those values might be.*

*As I suggested in the opening section of this report, collaborative leadership has become a fashionable concept and the competencies I describe are common to many people's definitions of good leadership. However, the implications of collaborative leadership in terms of the structures, systems and behaviours that underpin it are arguably less well documented or understood.*

*Some will disagree with the values that I suggest underpin collaborative leadership, but hopefully they offer a basis for discussion that Boards need to have with potential, and existing, leaders. I hope that in describing what I believe good leadership looks like this will also help in recruiting and supporting, as well as holding leaders to account as we need our Boards to get far better at playing all three of these key roles.*

### **Structuring successful joint leadership**

*'It the end it's all about the relationship between you, you can't really define it on a piece of paper [...] You really know in your stomach that you can't do it without the other one. I couldn't function without him, he couldn't do that without me and we both know that.'*

Whilst it is common to find a clear delineation of responsibility for functional areas, and line-management, all joint leadership partnerships also worked closely together on certain areas: notably vision, strategic planning and programming (in most cases). One interviewee used the term 'job share' as it is one role undertaken by two people.<sup>49</sup> For another ED the roles were more clearly separate but each took a keen interest in one another's business:

*'At its simplest the Artistic Director looks after the art, and the ED looks after the business – but it only works if you are both*

*fiendishly interested in the other side of the organisation and interfere with it on an almost daily basis. So you have to have huge management experience in your side of the organisation but a huge influencing ability with the other side.'*

A 'high degree of interactivity between these two people' was recommended by another experienced ED and not just on practical matters but also in relation to vision and top-level strategy. These are inter-dependent roles – it is not a transactional relationship where the role is split into two distinct parts so that it can be done separately.

For this reason it is essential that accountability is not split between two leaders in a joint model, they must share responsibility for joint objectives (albeit with different roles in achieving them). Having divergent objectives or accountability routes was cited as problem in several examples as it creates unresolved conflict (which is elevated to the Board); confusion among staff as to who really makes decisions; and decisions then become delayed, avoided or compromised, resulting in inefficiency.

Belbin observes that executive roles tend to be broadly defined.<sup>50</sup> Archer and Cameron also highlight a need for what they term as 'role clarity and task ambiguity' in collaborative partnerships to ensure people have 'wide latitude in how to deal with their task, so they think on their feet, respond quickly to a new situation and come up with creative solutions.'<sup>51</sup> Looking at the example of collaborative teams and role definition in a number of industries including TV and Film production, they conclude that innovation – and motivation - flourishes best when each team member knows what their role is and has discretion in how best to deliver it.<sup>52</sup>

The main source of conflict within many ACOs is the tension between artistic and 'business' concerns. Any oversimplification along the lines of the AD does the 'art' the ED does the 'business' personifies this division. It is inaccurate and, in the words of one interviewee 'very, very unhelpful'.

Ensuring these different parts of the organisation are not divided, and that all staff feel valued is a key task for joint leaders:

*'You've got to communicate that everyone is important not just the artistic team and to avoid defending your own patch; you've got to find ways to join the two responsibilities together so for example, to find ways to ensure those departments managed by the Executive Director or General Manger are really involved with programming.'*

Where joint leadership is working well in ACOs we see innovative approaches to resourcing programmes and new models for delivering missions. One AD I interviewed explained:

*'I found what was brilliant was that in that tension between what I wanted to achieve and what was possible to achieve, in that tension there's something incredibly creative. So when your relationship is working very well you both have very separate areas of expertise and where they meet there's a really creative tension [...] What we're brilliant at in this country is creating theatre that's art-driven but that's accessible. And I think that's because in the structure you're always having to think about what you can afford to do and once you're having that dialogue on a daily basis your choices change and I think that's a really good dynamic.'*

At the heart of successful joint leadership models in ACOs is an ability to dissolve this historical and unhelpful polarisation of the mission and the business model, and bridge those who ‘do’ the art, with those who make the art possible.

### **Collaborative values**

In his study of team dynamics, Belbin develops a system for predicting the likely outcomes of different pairings and groupings in teams, based on analysis of individual’s team preferences. He observed that one factor could disrupt this system: the values held by different individuals. In his own words, ‘these can facilitate relationships normally associated with difficulty or interfere with relationships otherwise likely to be harmonious.’<sup>53</sup> It is critically important the joint leaders share common values. This begs the question: what might those values be?

MMM’s report on collaborative working highlights one important value set, which has parallels with the practice of coaching and facilitation: ‘active listening, positive regard for differences, and the belief in multiple realities’.<sup>54</sup> My interviews also revealed a respect for individual’s creativity, regardless of their job title, was also important to a number of leaders. One spoke in terms of holding ‘a strong belief in the artistic or creative capacity of every individual’ and challenging the notions that artists and management are ‘two different breeds of people’.

Another leader explained why she thought collaboration was successful in her organisation:

*‘It’s about believing, really believing properly, that everyone’s contribution is a) creative and b) central. The minute anybody starts thinking that someone isn’t central or creative then I think you end up with a rift. If instead, you think it requires just as much creativity to sell a story to the press or to raise funds from a private donor or to sort out the technical demands to create an ambitious programme, if you really think those things are mission-critical – and I think they are – and communicate that well to the staff, regardless of what the senior management structure is, and encourage them to be creative in those roles and to take credit for the ultimate success, then I think it works.’*

Valuing equally those staff who are performing important but less glamorous roles such as managing finance or fundraising alongside the artistic team is therefore essential for successful collaborative leadership. If one role in a joint leadership model and by extension one ‘side’ of the organisation is seen as inherently less ‘valuable’, then it will impact on morale and ultimately the contribution of these people. Not everyone I interviewed agreed with this view, and several argued that artistic roles were inherently more important – often using this to justify why if one person is in charge, it should be the AD.

Collaborative leaders recognise that without good management good art won’t happen and ensure this recognition – and responsibility – is shared evenly across the whole organisation:

*'There are ways of involving everyone in the applause and criticism of our work – it's really important that where we've got things wrong we acknowledge that and we've understood it and whose responsibility it is, and when things go right everyone shares in that – and that latter is really important in theatre where the applause tends to happen in one particular room, at one particular time.'*

However, this leader acknowledges we are quite often far from this ideal and it is usually the ED and their wider team that occupy the background.

It takes a particular kind of AD to be able to work collaboratively. Many of those in AD roles in joint leadership models have previously either been single Directors in smaller organisations or held other positions which mean they understand, respect and value the areas of business which are led in a joint structure by the ED.

*'By virtue of my background, I'm not somebody who thinks, or who has ever thought, that I should be allowed to direct plays, if that makes any sense? I don't think anyone is entitled to the resources to make the work they want to make – I think in a number of ways you have to take responsibility for those resources.'*

Respect for one another's areas of expertise and contribution is critical, as is a degree of understanding about it - which those coming from outside the sector (often the case in the visual arts) have to develop on the job.

One final word remains to be said about the competencies of joint leaders, which relates in particular to the artistic vision and how this is conceived, which we discussed in relation to curators in Section two. A number of the ADs I interviewed saw the development of an artistic vision not as a personal exercise, but as an inherently collaborative one, made stronger by open challenge, questioning and external views. Not everybody can, or wishes to, work in this way, and we might argue that theatre is inherently more collaborative than visual arts because of the collective manner in which work is created in a rehearsal room, rather than an artist's studio (although some would argue those paradigms are outdated).

The 'ensemble' approach at RSC, for example, based on theatrical tradition is by its very nature collaborative.<sup>55</sup> But whatever the artform, to be able to work jointly with another executive leader – and more collaboratively with the wider organisation and external partners – this openness, and de-personalisation of the vision appears to be critical. The ability to develop a 'shared vision' is widely acknowledged to be a core leadership competency – and it's particularly important for collaborative leaders. A personal vision cannot be a shared vision, at best others can only subscribe to it. Striving for a shared vision, does not mean programming by committee or a lack of ambition – but it does mean a willingness to be open and share thinking behind decisions widely, as this AD interviewee quoted below, explains:

*'Everyone can say to me – 'that just won't work' or 'I don't want to do it', and I will – and have - over-ruled them, because that's my role as well. Sometimes to push us to be more ambitious to do something that won't necessarily find as big an audience as we might like for financial reasons but could be good for us in other ways in terms of what we learn artistically, or we'll introduce the audience to something unfamiliar. But I think it's*

*more accountable and more resilient to have those conversations in public with everybody who might be concerned with them.'*

Ultimately it comes down to values: a common belief among many leaders interviewed is that the collective mind is better than an individual 'genius'. Given that individual genius is so often a model of creativity celebrated in the arts – and particularly the visual arts – it is unsurprising that not everyone shares a belief in collaboration when it comes to artistic matters – but many of those ADs working in joint leadership models do:

*'When we say someone is a genius or visionary the image is of a solitary man with a single vision which he heroically struggles to achieve against all the odds, whilst actually there is a vision that comes out of the collective mind that is hopefully stronger and better than that of a single mind.'*

### **Systems for collaboration**

When processes are not in tune with the values of the organisation this can very quickly undermine them; for example if equivalent posts are rewarded differently, either financially or in terms of recognition.

Joint leaders are often jointly responsible for developing an organisation's strategy and this is often an area where the shared values are explored and expressed. Therefore one would expect both joint leaders to be involved in developing strategy: and if one is excluded or their views over-riden then this spells trouble.

Of all the operations or systems issues required for collaborative leadership communications emerges as the most critical. MMM found that within successful collaborations, communications tended to be both open and frequent, formal and informal. Interviewees' insights about how they had forged and nurtured their working relationships, confirmed that making time for regular communication was a key theme, as was frequent informal conversations, 'popping in and out of one another's office', texting and skypeing when away from the office.

Some partnerships had ground rules about ensuring they spoke every day, even when one party was travelling for work. I was told a story about how two life-long co-directors of a theatre used to have a chat over a scotch together at the close of every working day. As part of its 'ensemble' approach, RSC has an informal staff get together over tea every Friday afternoon know as 'Cake Friday'.

Keeping one another informed – as a courtesy – was important: 'it's not that you have to be involved in everything but there is a sense that you need to know what's happening.' Regular meetings were standard: ranging from daily to fortnightly catch-ups and regular longer-term planning meetings featured in most working relationships. Being physically located near to one another in the office was often mentioned as this encouraged informal communication. And simply making time to listen to one another was also seen as fundamental:

*'it's very easy to race ahead, but it takes time and you have to create a relationship. It can all be in your head but you have to*



*keep articulating it, and you have to keep listening to what's been said back to you properly.'*

### **What does a good collaborative leader look like?**

*'A collaboration becomes a genuine partnership when each partner signs up to delivering benefits that extend beyond their own institution. A successful partnership leader will focus on these wider outcomes and revisit them constantly with the other partners to build and extend this commitment. So the leader is a facilitator, creating a shared vision and keeping project goals in focus.'* Anne Murch, 'Leadership through partnership' (2010)

*'They lead less by authority rather than by persuasion, building coalitions, developing close personal relationships and learning to understand what motivates their partners and stakeholders.'* Archer & Cameron (2008)<sup>56</sup>

Whether you are a CEO seeking to lead in a collaborative way, leading a partnership between two organisations, or working closely with an executive partner in a 'team of two', the role and the competencies required of collaborative leaders are the same.

Table 4 offers a synthesis of competencies or attributes of collaborative leaders, drawn from my interviews, management and leadership writing on inter-organisational partnerships and MMM's research within the arts and cultural sector on inter-organisational collaborations. I separate beliefs or values from competencies, recognising both are required in collaborative leaders. Of course, specific roles will also bring their own demands for knowledge and experience, but these core competencies are common to leadership roles and offer a starting point for Boards in thinking about the type of leader they are looking for - and what skills might be useful to encourage and develop in our existing leaders.

**Table 4: What does a collaborative leader look like?**

*Values*

Genuine respect for artists and audiences. Believes arts organisations exist to create art experiences for audiences and have responsibility to support and develop innovative artistic practice.

Believes all staff are creative and have mission critical roles: not just the artistic team.

Believes arts organisations play a wider role in society and their local, regional or national context.

Takes pride in collective effort and does not seek lime-light or personal recognition.

Recognises the distinctive role of different arts organisations in a wider ecology – i.e. looking to smaller organisations to profile emerging artists and using the resources of a larger space to develop audiences and to provide curatorially rigorous appraisals of an artist’s career, to offer fresh insights.

*Competencies*

**Determination:** strives to achieve exceptional results; holds others to account; looks to constantly improve; learns from experience and adapts behaviour accordingly.

**Communication:** uses informal and formal communication to build relationships; is able to address conflict constructively and encourages open and timely conversations.

**Emotional intelligence:** understands their own motivations and style and is able to manage and adapt leadership style according to context; actively listen and seeks to understand others; builds empathy.

**Facilitation:** ability to frame constructive and purposeful meetings and conversations which encourage understanding, develop solutions and find consensus, an ability to delegate and does not need to control everything.

**Influencing:** builds shared vision; ability to inspire and engage others.

**Vision:** ability to articulate how artistic mission relates to wider world; ability to see beyond their short-term interest and contribute to wider goals.

**Determination**, coupled with an aptitude to learn, is important for a role where the requirements are varied and challenging. One ED explained ‘everything I’ve learned has been on the job’. An AD, reflecting on her experience of recruiting EDs and General Managers concluded:

*‘If I was choosing again I don’t think I would look for direct experience. The skills side of the job is not that difficult in a small company. It’s about an attitude, a can-do, forward-looking enthusiasm and I would say that the personality is more*

*important than then technical skills. You can learn how to read budgets, you can't learn an approach.'*

**Communication**, including the ability to manage conflict constructively, is also important because, as we noted in Section four, the creativity and innovation that can emerge through the difference of skills, perspectives and approaches embodied in a collaborative leadership approach is one of its greatest assets.

Interviewees were clear that this difference needed to be managed and that meant working with a counterpart who was 'very honest and open' and not someone who would 'start to close up and feel like they are being attacked'. Trust arose frequently as a key topic of conversation, underlying the ability to have 'robust and fundamentally honest' conversations. As the wider literature amply demonstrates, differences will arise in any form of collaboration, and joint leadership is no exception.<sup>57</sup>

**Emotional intelligence:** Meredith Belbin's work on Team Roles also points to the value of difference and consequent importance of understanding and managing differences of style and approach within teams. Through field study he identified nine distinct roles, which he defines as 'a tendency to behave, contribute, and inter-relate with others at work in certain distinctive ways'.<sup>58</sup>

He argues that teams thrive when people have clear roles, and individuals are in a position that suits their strengths and preferences in terms of how they work not just the functional areas for which they are responsible. Some combinations of roles are better suited to working together than others, and in particular teams in which people compete for the same role, or where key roles are lacking, suffer from under-performance.

There is no assumed hierarchy between roles and all have both strengths and 'allowable' weaknesses. The formula for successful teamwork is understanding which role is being played by each individual, that any conflicts are managed and 'a strategy exists for coping with areas of deficiency' both in terms of roles missing from the team overall, and 'allowable weaknesses' of individuals.<sup>59</sup> Belbin therefore suggests that self-awareness and the ability to regulate and modify your style (sometimes referred to as 'emotional intelligence') are key competencies for joint leaders.

Recognising, from the outset, that disagreement is not only inevitable but actually healthy and productive has to be the first step in making joint leadership work. The ability to not take challenges or questioning personally is critical, as is not avoiding conflict. Fear of conflict, often because conflict can quickly become personal and unpleasant, can prevent contributions which would otherwise lead to finding better ways forward. As one interviewee from MMM's action research project explained:

*'...people tend to personalise their views and it becomes a personal issue or they are unreasonably inhibited about putting their views on the table because they fear people may disagree with them and fail to see that in fact it's often from disagreement that the most productive things come.'*<sup>60</sup>

**Facilitation:** The skill of collaborative leaders is to create an environment, a framework and an organisational culture, in which difference can result in a synthesis of different ideas, rather than a battle between opposing camps-

characterised as ‘creatives vs suits’. It is about being able to foster dialogue in which a deeper level of understanding is reached, and new ideas generated, rather than discussion in which opposing ideas are traded back and forth in competition. Dialogue is not about winning an argument, it’s about discovering new answers.

Facilitation also encompasses the ability to provide a structure, or a framework, which enables others to fulfil their creative potential and is another of the key attributes for all collaborative leaders as many I interviewed recognised:

*‘the key skill I have for this role? it’s about facilitation I think, I see myself as a facilitator whether that’s internally or externally.’*

The ability to nurture talent, and empower colleagues through delegation and support was also seen as part of this facilitating tendency.

A skilled facilitator also avoids one voice dominating others, and ensures dialogue which results in greater understanding. Facilitators build on consensus and challenge assumptions and false consensus, to provide a safe and constructive environment in which to answer questions and find solutions. The most frequent and common source of conflict in ACOs is between these archetypal opponents ‘the creatives and the suits.’ One important way to avoid this unhelpful division is if those leading the organisation challenge this assumption consistently through their actions – and in the final section of this report we will turn to see what this means in practice.

### **Collaborative leadership in action**

While there is consensus about the requirements of collaborative leaders<sup>61</sup>, it is equally clear that to be able to work in this way often runs counter to current practice, particularly the ‘command and control’ approach associated with solo leadership. Many assume that good intentions suffice, but these competencies often in fact need to be learned and developed consciously (Cooper, 2010; Archer & Cameron, 2008).

Table 5 outlines what collaborative leadership might look like in terms of the structures, systems and behaviours within arts organisations.

**Table 5: What does good collaborative leadership look like in an organisation?**

Area	Governance/ structure	Operations/ systems	Behaviour/ culture
Vision	Leaders (Board and Executive) and have ambitious goals for full vision including the audiences and organisational context.  Leaders emerge and are recruited from full range of disciplines relevant to vision (e.g. learning or audience engagement).	Single leaders ultimately responsible for full vision including audiences and resources.  Joint leaders both responsible for overall vision, albeit with different roles.	Whole organisation owns vision and understands how their role relates to it.  Leaders show respect for full range of organisational activity, not just areas of their own expertise.  Leaders able to separate their personal motivations from organisational aims.
Strategy	Strategy developed jointly by those with responsibility for artistic quality, learning, resources (finance/human) and audiences. This includes programming.	Measures of success – and monitoring – reflect full vision.  Regular programming meetings which plan future, and manage current activity.  Planning and performance-management systems support programming (e.g. financial targets for earned and raised income relate to programme).	Specialist staff (e.g. curators, marketing staff) seek and welcome views of colleagues.  Whole organisation understands and supports strategies including: audience development, fundraising, programming etc  Rationale for strategy – e.g. programming decisions openly discussed.
Projects	Cross-organisation project teams develop and deliver together. Not necessarily led by the artistic team.	Regular project team meetings. Formal and informal conversations between teams and individuals.	Allegiance to organisation and focus on projects not functional compartments.
Human resources	Role clarity, task ambiguity.  Staff capacity in different teams reflects requirements of mission.	All staff have equal status: in terms of pay and rewards structures, and benefits.  CPD encouraged for all staff including common areas of competence for managers and leaders.  360 degree appraisals 'Learning organisation'	High levels of discretionary effort and commitment, including volunteering.  Leaders provide timely and specific positive feedback to others.  People encouraged to innovate and take risks by learning culture and lack of blame.
Financial resources	Delegated authority for securing and managing budgets.	Planning systems (budget and work-planning) incentivises entrepreneurial behaviour and value for money.	Financial literacy, accountability developed in all staff and entrepreneurialism expected of all.

Examples of organisations already displaying these characteristics include the following:

- **Vision:** Northern Stage and Turner Contemporary both have a single Director model with a strong collaborative vision; RSC has the joint AD-ED model and its 'ensemble' approach to working emphasises a team-approach.
- **Strategy:** SAGE Gateshead has found shifting aspects of income generation responsibility (e.g. venue hire) from the business development team to artistic teams to produce less internal conflict and better financial returns. Tate has regular programming meetings of all teams involved in presenting exhibitions, including curatorial, learning, marketing, visitor services, where forthcoming activity is discussed and planned together.
- **Projects:** Use of cross-cutting project teams for project development and delivery at British Museum (where they are never chaired by the exhibition curator), Bluecoat, Turner Contemporary, Battersea Arts Centre and Arnolfini.
- **Human resources:** Promoting understanding of one another's roles through job shadowing, e.g. at Northern Stage and RSC, and all staff spending time on the 'shop floor', e.g. at Turner Contemporary. Encouraging innovation by developing a learning organisation approach among its team e.g. Tate's new Learning Strategy.
- **Finance:** Battersea Arts Centre has introduced core finance training for all staff to encourage them to take on more financial responsibility for their activities.

In and of themselves these might sound like small steps, and there are many other examples I could have used, but few organisations are consistently collaborative across all areas outlined in this table. Collaboration is quickly undermined when structures, systems and behaviours are not aligned with the organisation's aims. Therefore it is imperative to ensure our performance indicators capture *how* we are working as well as *what* we achieve.

## Section six: Recommendations

### 1. Boards, funders and visual arts leaders need to revisit our mission and values in the non-profit visual arts

I began this research wondering whether a new leadership structure was the way forward but I conclude that it is only one part of the solution. New systems and competencies, but above all values are critical. These values need to be discussed, agreed and, most importantly, acted on. I suggest those values that we need leaders to embody in the coming decade are:

- Genuine respect for artists *and* audiences. Belief that arts organisations exist to create art experiences for audiences and have responsibility to support and develop innovative artistic practice.
- Belief that all staff are creative and have mission-critical roles: not just the artistic team.
- Pride in developing ‘talent’ and facilitating the work of others rather than believing that you alone can achieve success.
- A vision for the arts that extends beyond the art world and sees a role for arts organisations in the life of the community.
- An understanding of the distinct role different arts organisations play in a wider ecology – i.e. looking to smaller organisations to profile emerging artists and using the resources of a larger space to develop audiences and to provide curatorially rigorous appraisals of an artist’s career, to offer fresh insights.

If these values underpin our organisations, at Board and executive level, then I believe collaborative leadership (and inter-organisational collaboration more widely) will take root. This will enable us all to respond to the enormous challenges that lie ahead, empower our organisations to engage with audiences more effectively, increase our resources and by virtue of this commitment to validate our true impact with those that come to us for stimulus, solace, or simply for enjoyment.

Funders (and principally the Arts Council) also have a role to play in ensuring the organisations they fund deliver their stated policy objectives around audience engagement and the role of the arts in society. Arguably they have failed to do this historically. In particular, ACE needs to hold larger<sup>62</sup> (i.e. receiving over £250K per annum) contemporary visual art galleries to account about their audiences – we should understand who they are, their needs and be able to demonstrate how this informs all aspects of planning and operations.

### 2. Boards need to be select executive leaders who can work collaboratively and bring a strategic vision for the organisation

Beyond the specific requirements of the organisation and role, there is a core set of collaborative leadership competencies and values which apply to all single Director roles and joint leaders and which should be tested during the selection process. These are summarised in Section five.

Given the historic tendency for Boards of visual arts organisations to appoint primarily on artistic credentials it is particularly important that Boards assess

a potential Director's wider vision for the kind of relationship they want with their audiences, who those audiences are and their context. Consequently Boards need to ensure they include Trustees within their ranks who bring relevant expertise to this wider strategic vision. This should lead to future gallery leaders emerging from the ranks of those whose primary experience is in learning or marketing, alongside those who trained as curators.

We urgently need new business models in the visual arts that attract and engage visitors in a new way and generate new sources of income. At the top of the list of requirements for any potential executive leader in the visual arts should be the ability to develop more win-win (mission-money) strategies such as membership, micro-philanthropy, and, if scale allows, income generating visitor services (cafes, shops).

The type of leader, and leadership structure, an organisation might require is determined by needs of the organisation and the potential candidates – as Appendix 2 outlines. There is no single 'right' model and the strengths, weaknesses and approaches of individual candidates need to be considered carefully in relation to the structures provided. Ideally when looking to recruit a new leader, an organisation should be open to a range of possible models including the single Director and the joint Artistic and Executive Director models. This has important implications for the recruitment and selection process.

### **3. Boards need to be able to support and hold executive leaders to account**

As Table 5 illustrates, collaborative leadership is a tall order and we should therefore expect our leaders to need to continue to develop their skills throughout their careers through interventions including peer-peer support, mentoring, coaching and training.

Performance management of executive leaders should assess how effective they are in achieving collaboration. Table 5 suggests some measures of success which might be deployed.

In joint leadership models responsibility needs to be shared, not split. For example, if the AD and ED are jointly responsible for raising funds and delivering an ambitious programme they can agree together what this means in terms of budgets and share responsibility. Therefore, I strongly recommend that in a joint leadership model both AD and ED, and in a single Director model the whole SMT, are jointly responsible for delivering a high quality programme, generating the necessary income and reaching the audience engagement targets they jointly agree with the Board.

### **4. Boards, funders, visual arts professionals and our professional bodies and networks (including VAGA, Turning Point and PlusTate) need to take professional development far more seriously**

Many art galleries and museums invest very little time or money in their staff development. Greater financial investment will yield significant returns (this is a fair assumption as so few staff have ever had any decent training), and there are many free or low-cost opportunities and models available currently from action-learning sets, to work-shadowing to voluntary-sector run



training. Networks are needed for those in first, middle and senior management roles, just as much as executive leaders.

Developing occupational standards for contemporary and modern art curators would encourage curators to value professional development. This will improve both organisational performance and individual professional development.

### **5. Management, and managers, needs to be better understood in the visual arts**

To create extraordinary art experiences we need to make the most of our resources – financial and human. Therefore we need people in visual arts organisations who can make things happen: and in mid-scale and larger galleries that means employing strategic managers. This could take the form of a single Director working with a team of 3-4 senior managers, or an AD-ED model. We also need to develop our commercial and customer-focussed skills – for example, to have the ability to identify new earned income opportunities, to be able to predict whether a new venture will generate a profit and know where to turn for development capital.

All staff, whether technicians, marketing officers, learning professionals or curators need to feel they are equally valued by the organisation; that they ‘own’ the programme; that they contribute directly to the mission. A good collaborative leader can develop this shared vision.

Curators make natural ‘organisational producers’ and there are many other over-qualified, under-utilised people in the visual arts sector who could develop the entrepreneurial skills we badly need. But, in the words of one interviewee ‘to do that you have to convince them it’s a valued career path.’ Shifting the culture of the visual arts so that roles beyond the curator are valued is an essential prerequisite for unleashing that potential.

**Appendix 1: List of interviewees**

Alex Beard, Deputy Director, Tate  
 Vivienne Bennett, Director National Visual Arts Strategy, Arts Council England  
 Claire Byers, Deputy Director, Baltic  
 Martin Clark, Artistic Director, Tate St Ives  
 Caroline Collier, Director Tate National  
 Hilary Gresty, Director, Visual Arts and Galleries Association (VAGA)  
 Christoph Grunenberg, Director, Tate Liverpool  
 Judith Harry, Deputy Director, Ikon Gallery  
 Vikki Heywood, Executive Director, Royal Shakespeare Company  
 Donald Hyslop, Head of Regeneration & Community Partnerships, Tate  
 Julie Lomax, Director of Visual Arts, Arts Council England London  
 Baroness Genista McIntosh, former Executive Director National Theatre  
 Andrea Nixon, Executive Director, Tate Liverpool  
 Emma Morris, Director, Photoworks  
 Mark Osterfield, Executive Director, Tate St Ives  
 Helen Pearson, Director of Development and Alumni Relations, University of Gloucester and formerly Deputy Director Arnolfini  
 Victoria Pomeroy, Director, Turner Contemporary  
 Sarah Preece, Executive Director, Battersea Arts Centre  
 Susan Royce, independent consultant  
 Sir Nicholas Serota, Director, Tate  
 Loveday Shewell, Chair Arnolfini and former Administrator Whitechapel Gallery  
 Roxana Silbert, Associate Director, Royal Shakespeare Company  
 Laura Sillars, Director, Site Gallery  
 Paul Smith, Executive Director, Liverpool Biennial  
 Stephen Snoddy, Director, New Art Gallery Walsall  
 Nick Starr, Executive Director, National Theatre  
 Alex Stewart, recruitment consultant, Saxton Bampfylde Ltd  
 Sir John Tusa, former Managing Director Barbican and Chair of several Boards  
 Alastair Upton, CEO, the Bluecoat  
 Jonathan Watkins, Director, Ikon Gallery  
 Erica Whyman, Chief Executive, Northern Stage  
 Tom Wilcox, former Managing Director, Whitechapel Gallery  
 Godfrey Worsdale, Director, Baltic  
 Sheena Wrigley, General Director and Joint CEO, West Yorkshire Playhouse

**Appendix 2: Leadership structures in art galleries and museums: the options**

Pros	Cons	Contexts	Implications
<p><b>Director or CEO</b></p> <p>Very effective if suitable person can be found.</p> <p>May be easier to unite the whole organisation, avoiding a tendency to fall into ‘suits and creatives’ mindset.</p> <p>Simplest model to recruit and manage for Boards.</p>	<p><b>Director or CEO</b></p> <p>Difficult for one person to bring the breadth of vision, skills and experience required.</p> <p>Can be isolated, lacking critical friends.</p> <p>Organisation can become over-dependent on one individual and fail to capitalise on talent and effort of wider team.</p> <p>Demanding nature of role deters some applicants for professional and/or personal reasons.</p> <p>Perceived lack of artistic identity or leadership if Director not a curator by training.</p>	<p><b>Director or CEO</b></p> <p>Particularly effective in a crisis or turnaround situation when the ability to make decisions quickly is required.</p> <p>Organisations which need to establish a strong profile (e.g. start-ups, after crises) may also benefit from this model.</p> <p>Scale is another important consideration: single Directors models are ideal for smaller, less complex organisations.</p> <p>Suits highly specialised ACOs for reasons of external (and internal) credibility.</p>	<p><b>Director or CEO</b></p> <p>Need to recruit <i>collaborative</i> leaders with both the breadth of ambition/ vision and a full understanding of the business.</p> <p>External ‘critical friend’ support from Chair, a coach or mentor or informal peer relationships useful.</p> <p>Delegation crucial, as is development and empowerment of a range of ‘deputies’ to share responsibilities internally and externally and for succession.</p> <p>Needs sufficient expertise to hold artistic lead and audience lead to account if not an expert in one of those areas themselves.</p>
<p><b>Director-Deputy Director</b></p> <p>Can supplement missing areas of expertise and share workload with single Director.</p> <p>Often recruited from outside visual arts sector, bringing new perspectives as well as skills.</p>	<p><b>Director-Deputy Director</b></p> <p>More commonly an operational rather than strategic role.</p> <p>Areas led by DD perceived to be less important.</p> <p>Lack of status and authority deters some candidates.</p>	<p><b>Director-Deputy Director</b></p> <p>Not recommended as unclear what benefits this model has over AD-ED; can be ineffective and it can be more difficult to recruit into and retain good candidates.</p>	<p><b>Director-Deputy Director</b></p> <p>Career progression for existing DDs needs to be addressed by employers. Recommend moving towards ED model.</p>

Pros	Cons	Contexts	Implications
<p><b>Executive Director/ Artistic Director</b></p> <p>Inherently collaborative model – therefore more innovative and resilient.</p> <p>In-built critical friends.</p> <p>Enables more time to be devoted to artistic leadership and business development.</p> <p>Business continuity – if one person leaves organisation not destabilised.</p> <p>Doubles range of skills, knowledge and reach of the leadership.</p> <p>Job-share potential could give employers and employees more flexibility.</p>	<p><b>Executive Director/ Artistic Director</b></p> <p>Potentially more expensive (although only marginally more expensive than Deputy Director and role should generate additional income and improve performance).</p> <p>Poorly defined roles and mis-matched pairings could be disruptive.</p> <p>Shorthand of AD=art and ED=business has to be avoided or this divides organisation into ‘creatives and suits’.</p> <p>Not all leaders want to (or can) share power.</p>	<p><b>Executive Director/ Artistic Director</b></p> <p>Provides additional capacity during periods of major change or uncertainty – such as major capital projects, periods of growth or merger.</p> <p>Particularly effective for leaders in their first executive role who can learn together in a supportive environment.</p> <p>Should never be used as a structural ‘solution’ for an AD who doesn’t want the full responsibility of leading the organisation.</p>	<p><b>Executive Director/ Artistic Director</b></p> <p>Both AD and ED need to want to work collaboratively and respect and understand their counterparts’ role and expertise.</p> <p>ED and AD need shared values and to be able to work together in terms of their styles.</p> <p>Recruitment into (and succession planning for) these roles needs to take account of closeness of AD-ED relationship.</p> <p>Structures (including reporting and JDs) need to reflect and foster joint responsibility with distinct roles – not separate areas of responsibility.</p>
<p><b>Outsourced</b></p> <p>Offers experience of various organisations.</p> <p>Time-limited injection of skills/capacity.</p>	<p><b>Outsourced</b></p> <p>Relatively expensive.</p> <p>Doesn’t necessarily build capacity of the organisation – can be a sticking plaster.</p>	<p><b>Outsourced</b></p> <p>Works well for clearly defined projects (such as a merger, building project).</p> <p>Not suited to all aspects of ED role – e.g. external relations, developing staff and brand.</p>	<p><b>Outsourced</b></p> <p>Rather than appointing consultants on fixed-term, task-focussed contracts, better results. More effective learning capture and value for money could be achieved through short-term or part-time ED appointments.</p>

### Appendix 3: Bibliography

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Sara Selwood, 2008. *Towards developing a strategy for contemporary visual arts collections in the English regions*, Arts Council England, London, pp.32-33 and Table 1. Selwood calculates subsidy per attendance rising from £3.40 per visit in 2004/05 to £4.35 per visit in 2006/7 among ACE funded galleries.

<sup>2</sup> Arts Council England, 2006. *Turning Point: a strategy for the contemporary visual arts*. London: Arts Council England, p.25.

<sup>3</sup> For a summary of the evidence around capitalisation of the arts and cultural sector see section 3.1 of Margaret Bolton, Clare Cooper, Claire Antrobus, Joe Ludlow & Holly Tebbutt, 2011. *Capital Matters: how to build financial resilience in the UK's arts and cultural sector*, London: Mission, Models and Money. In terms of the visual arts, Susan Royce concludes 'Most visual arts organisations are under-capitalised', in Susan Royce, 2010. *Business models in the visual arts*. Draft published report. Arts Council England: London, p.2.

<sup>4</sup> Bolton et al., 2011, op. cit.

<sup>5</sup> With the exception of the Whitechapel Gallery, which was founded in 1903, most of the exhibition galleries that now form the backbone of the contemporary arts infrastructure emerged since the 1960s. For more information of the development of the gallery infrastructure in England see Claire Glossop, 2003. 'A revolution in the gallery: From the Arts Council to the artist', in *Sculpture in 20<sup>th</sup> century Britain*, vol.1, ed. Penelope Curtis, Leeds: Henry Moore Institute.

<sup>6</sup> Meredith R. Belbin, 2010. *Team roles at work*, second edition. London: Elsevier, p.63.

<sup>7</sup> 'They frequently avoid discussing difficult subjects because they want to avoid conflict. They know that trust is important but they often lack reliable strategies for building it', Clare Cooper, 2010. *Fuelling 'The Necessary Revolution': supporting best practice in collaborative working amongst creative practitioners and organisations – a guide for public and private funders*. London: MMM, p.23.

<sup>8</sup> From an interview with John Yard, cited in David Archer & Alex Cameron, 2009. *Collaborative Leadership: how to succeed in an inter-connected world*. Butterworth-Heinemann, London, p.120.

<sup>9</sup> Cooper, op. cit., p.24.

<sup>10</sup> Rosabeth Moss Kanter, 1994. 'Collaborative Advantage: The Art of Alliances', *Harvard Business Review*, cited in Archer & Cameron, op. cit., p7.

<sup>11</sup> Archer & Cameron, op. cit., p.8.

<sup>12</sup> 'In a world of ever-increasing complexity and change, companies have to innovate or die – and collaboration may well be the answer. Not only do partnerships allow you to create things together that you couldn't alone, but they can also help you innovate along the way', Archer & Cameron, op. cit., p.180.

<sup>13</sup> I discuss the wider context of user innovation, and its implications for the visual arts sector, in greater detail in my article *From audiences to users: changing art galleries and museums together*. London: National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts & Clore Leadership Programme, 2010.

<sup>14</sup> Citing Arie de Geus, 1997, *The Living Company*. Nicholas Brierly Publishing, p.181.

<sup>15</sup> Cooper, op.cit., p.54.

<sup>16</sup> Inter-organisational collaboration is not the primary concern on this research although it is clearly related and many of the skills and attributes required of leaders working collaboratively within their organisations apply equally if there are to work

successfully beyond them. Various studies of partnership working in the arts and cultural sector exist including as 2009 mapping of national museum partnerships undertaken by the NMDC Volition Associates, September 2009. UK Partnerships Compendium: mapping exercise, London: National Museums Directors Conference (NMDC) and Clare Cooper, 2010. *Fuelling the Necessary Revolution*. London: Mission, Models and Money.

<sup>17</sup> Claire Antrobus, Holly Tebbutt & Rohan Gunatillake, 2010. *Developing resilient business models for arts and cultural organisations: research report and case studies*. unpublished report. London: MMM.

<sup>18</sup> Belbin, op. cit., pp.121-22.

<sup>19</sup> Belbin, op. cit., pp.123.

<sup>20</sup> François Matarasso, 2010. *The Art of Uncertainty*. London: National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts & Clore Leadership Programme, 2010, p.7.

<sup>21</sup> David Kershaw and Patrick McKenna keynote lectures at 'Cultural Leadership: Global Challenges' conference, 9-10 December 2010, London; Charles Leadbeater, 2005. *Arts organisations in the 21st century*. London: Arts Council England; Creative and Cultural Skills, 2009. *The Visual Arts Blueprint: a workforce development plan for the visual arts*. Creative and Cultural Skills: London.

<sup>22</sup> Susan Royce, 2010. *Business models in the visual arts*. Draft published report. Arts Council England: London, p.2.

<sup>23</sup> Creative and Cultural Skills, 2009. *The Visual Arts Blueprint: a workforce development plan for the visual arts*. Creative and Cultural Skills: London, p.34.

<sup>24</sup> Arts Council England, 2006. *Turning Point: a strategy for the contemporary visual arts*. London: Arts Council England, p.25.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Visual arts professionals appear to be under-represented on leadership development programmes including Clore Fellowship and Cultural Leadership Programme although at time of publication CLP figures were not available to support this analysis. Analysis of the past four years of Clore short course participants by artform reveals visual arts professional account for only 6%. Even allowing for theatre being a larger sector, this suggests a low uptake of professional development in the visual arts.

<sup>27</sup> As the national gallery for British, Modern and contemporary art Tate plays a leading role across the two parts of the sector and has latterly begun to take on a more explicit leadership role through its national strategy. Arts Council England has also recognised the need to bridge this historic division in *Turning Point*, its ten-year strategy, notably through its work on developing contemporary collections. Hopefully, the forthcoming transfer of MLA functions to ACE will begin to redress this fragmentation and encourage greater sharing of ideas, resources and personnel between these parallel systems.

<sup>28</sup> Renaissance hub members reporting positive growth in numbers (in-line with or better than DCMS-funded museums and counterparts in Scotland and Wales) and improved demographic reach. *Renaissance in the Regions: realising the vision, 2001-2008*, review of the Renaissance Review Advisory Group, 2009, p.10.

<sup>29</sup> Sara Selwood, 2008. *Public Funding, Private Contributions and A&B*. London: Arts and Business.

<sup>30</sup> Sara Selwood, 2008. *Towards developing a strategy for contemporary visual arts collections in the English regions*, Arts Council England, London, pp.32-33 and Table 1. Selwood calculates subsidy per attendance rising from £3.40 per visit in 2004/05 to £4.35 per visit in 2006/7 among ACE funded galleries.



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- <sup>31</sup> Anni Oskala & Catherine Bunting, 2009. *Arts engagement in England from 2005/06 to 2007/08 Findings from the first three years of the Taking Part survey*, London: Arts Council England.
- <sup>32</sup> Susan Royce, op. cit., p.18.
- <sup>33</sup> 'If you don't know your audience then how can you run a sustainable business? The only way the gallery can be sustainable is we create a strong bedrock of a loyal audience that comes repeatedly, that become advocates for you, that recommend you and hopefully invests in you financially.' Anonymous interview with the author. Wider research echoes this analysis: 'The data available on participation by audiences in the visual arts is scattered and the conclusions that can be drawn from it provisional. This places severe limitations on the sector's ability to understand its current audiences and develop new ones', Tessa Jackson & Marc Jordan, 2006. *Review of the Presentation of the Contemporary Visual Arts*. London: Arts Council England, p.55.
- <sup>34</sup> With the exception of the Whitechapel Gallery, which was founded in 1903, most of the exhibition galleries that now form the backbone of the contemporary arts infrastructure emerged since the 1960s. For more information of the development of the gallery infrastructure in England see Claire Glossop, 2003. 'A revolution in the gallery: From the Arts Council to the artist', in *Sculpture in 20<sup>th</sup>-century Britain*, vol. 1, ed. Penelope Curtis, Leeds: Henry Moore Institute.
- <sup>35</sup> 'Any well-run theatre monitors its tickets sales on a day-by-day basis, there's a sense of urgency about what's being generated and the numbers which I don't think we see in visual arts so often. We see an end of show report for what the visitor numbers were - it's a gross generalisation. You need to understand the numbers in theatres because you need to respond to them and if you don't meet your target you're in big trouble.' Anonymous interview with the author.
- <sup>36</sup> 'We have lots of over-qualified and under-utilised people working in the sector who could easily develop the stronger management and business skills the sector desperately needs - but that requires leaders to value what they can offer, which currently is far from widespread.' Anonymous interview with the author.
- <sup>37</sup> 'There's some very bright people working in galleries who could learn those skills but there's no capacity for them to develop them.' Anonymous interview with the author.
- <sup>38</sup> 'It's almost totally different with every artist', David Jubb cited in Kate McGrath, *speakeasy: an inside look at the outside eye*. London: Clore Leadership Programme, 2010, p.24.
- <sup>39</sup> 'My job is to deliver his artistic vision and I'm really clear about that. I can challenge him but it's his decision and I'll back him'. Anonymous interview with the interview.
- <sup>40</sup> Vikki Heywood explained her former ED role at Royal Court including bring the Executive Producer of Royal Court Productions: a trading subsidiary responsible for touring productions into the West End.
- <sup>41</sup> The term 'organisational producer' was coined by Battersea Arts Centre to describe the role of their Executive Director.
- <sup>42</sup> Cited in Kate McGrath, op. cit., p.2.
- <sup>43</sup> Not having studied Fine Art or History of Art, nor trained as a curator, Emma has developed her knowledge of visual arts through working in galleries at a senior level for over fifteen years and works closely with a Head Curator, just as a Director with less business experience commonly works alongside a Deputy Director.
- <sup>44</sup> 'Trustees have not ruled out the possibility that for an exceptional candidate who combined strong management and commercial capabilities with experience as an

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Artistic Director the two roles could be combined.’ Extract from Baltic CEO and AD recruitment pack.

<sup>45</sup> In a non-profit structure where commonly AD and ED report directly to the Board (even when the AD is CEO) this adds another layer of complexity, with the non-Executive Board positioned as the ultimate authority if disagreement arises.

<sup>46</sup> ‘I have a friend who said to me recently that when she’s looking at CEO or Director roles she can tick every box but one on the person specification – and that’s the artistic one – but then she’s seeing curators or senior curators who can only tick one box (the artistic one) but still getting the job over the other person who can tick the other nine out of ten.’ Anonymous interview with the author.

<sup>47</sup> Archer & Cameron, op. cit., p.27.

<sup>48</sup> ‘Unfortunately, most people don’t have the natural collaborative skills [...] collaboration needs to be learned.’ Archer & Cameron, op. cit., p.17.

<sup>49</sup> ‘When we started the job when people would ask me to describe my role then I’d say it’s like a job share with the AD at one end of the pole with the art and me on the other end of the pole with the organisation but it’s two jobs. It’s not that one’s exclusive of the other – but we have our leads at either end and that feels like quite an exciting model.’ Anonymous interview with the author.

<sup>50</sup> ‘Executive jobs at senior levels are governed by a different set of parameters. For one thing, the jobs are less highly specified: indeed the person makes the job, or so it is said.’ Belbin, op. cit., p.62.

<sup>51</sup> Archer & Cameron, op. cit., p150.

<sup>52</sup> Lynda Gratton & Tamara J. Erikson, ‘Eight ways to build collaborative teams’, in *Harvard Business Review*, November 2007. Cited Archer & Cameron, op. cit., p.59.

<sup>53</sup> Belbin, op.cit., p.62.

<sup>54</sup> Cooper, op. cit., pp.32-34.

<sup>55</sup> ‘In its simplest theatrical context, ensemble means no more than a group of actors working together on a series of productions over time’, Robert Hewison, John Holden and Samuel Jones, 2010. *All together: a creative approach to organisational change*. London: Demos, p.46.

<sup>56</sup> Archer & Cameron, op. cit., p.120.

<sup>57</sup> ‘Collaboration requires actively engaging differences, [that] differences generate conflict, and [that] unless people and organisations are equipped to deal constructively with conflict, collaboration will break down.’ Jeff Weiss & Jonathan Hughes, ‘Want Collaboration? Accept – and Actively Manage – Conflict.’ in *Harvard Business Review*, March 2005, cited in Archer & Cameron, op.cit., p 158.

<sup>58</sup> Belbin’s nine team roles are: Plant; Resource Investigator; Co-ordinator; Shaper; Monitor Evaluator; Teamworker; Implementer; Completer Finisher and Specialist. Belbin, op. cit., p.22.

<sup>59</sup> Belbin, op. cit., p.57.

<sup>60</sup> Cooper, op. cit., p.34.

<sup>61</sup> And strong resonance with the five disciplines of organisational learning championed by Peter Senge whose work on systems thinking has been influential on partnerships and collaboration, as previously noted. Senge identifies the five disciplines of organisational learning as: systems thinking, personal mastery, mental models, building shared vision and team learning.

<sup>62</sup> Smaller spaces which are about profiling emerging artists – such as Chisenhale or The Showroom – should not be expected to be reaching a wide or large audience.

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These are clearly incubator spaces whose audience rightly is their peers and 'early adopters'.