

A voice for the visual arts

Strategy 2011-14

Turning Point
Yorkshire and
the Humber

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Foreword

We, the Interim Steering Group for Turning Point Yorkshire and the Humber, present you with this Strategy, intended to help galvanise and strengthen the visual arts sector regionally within a changing national context. We are creative practitioners, independent professionals and members of visual arts organisations within the region who volunteered to work on behalf of the sector when invited by Arts Council England Yorkshire in 2008.

Since then **we have consulted widely with colleagues like you and from others in non-arts sectors; we have invited tenders and commissioned essential work from specialists.** We have held events featuring invited speakers, action planning workshops, and even a bus tour of the region. We have worked in Dalby, Gargrave, Hull, Leeds, Richmond, Scarborough, Sheffield, Thirsk, Wakefield, York and points in between. Throughout we have met monthly to oversee the development of the Strategy. We have also

represented our region at meetings of the growing Turning Point National Network.

Although initiated by the Arts Council, **Turning Point Yorkshire and the Humber: A voice for the visual arts is not an Arts Council Strategy. It comes from and belongs to our visual arts sector.** The initiative is in fact an innovative model of partnership working that will become increasingly important as we strive to develop sustainability and resilience in the visual arts regionally and nationally. Arts Council England is a key stakeholder and ally in this, and we will continue to work closely with them.

We live in challenging times, and our work since 2009 has shown that the sector has many strengths but also significant weaknesses. The priorities we have established are aimed at addressing these, while celebrating and promoting what the visual arts already achieve. **Our central objective is to establish an influential new voice, drawn from our sector, and**

perhaps from other sectors, to advocate collectively so we can speak from a position of strength.

We see the Strategy not so much as a document but as **the start of a campaign to promote the visual arts**, and a way of guiding it by creative means to strategic ends.

We need to take this opportunity to have our say and – more importantly – to take action. The Strategy is our best opportunity to do that, and we hope that those involved in the visual arts in our region will send a clear and united message about what we want the future of the visual arts to be.

We are asking you to join in this campaign now. Please read this Strategy and consider it in developing your activities. Refer to it in meetings with current and potential stakeholders, give feedback, and express an interest in joining or supporting the new regional Steering Group, charged with its implementation.

This is your Strategy, so please use it – and turn it into action.

Interim Steering Group members between 2009 – 2011 include:

Roddy Hunter,
York St. John University

Karen Watson, East Street Arts

Sue Ball, MAAP

Sarah Brown, Independent

Rick Faulkner, Chrysalis Arts

Adrian Friedli, Arts Council England

Janet Jennings, Lovebytes

Caroline Krzesinska, Art in Yorkshire – supported by the Tate

Clare Lilley,
Yorkshire Sculpture Park

Anne McNeill, Impressions Gallery

Robert Powell, Beam

Anna Reid, Pavilion

Sara Trentham, Independent

Simon Wallis,
The Hepworth Wakefield

Ann Wallis, Arts Council England

Lucy Dugate, Lumen

**Turning Point
Yorkshire & Humber**

A Voice for the Visual Arts

Executive Summary

Turning Point is a national initiative, led by a network of regional groups who want to galvanise the visual arts sector nationally. It has started to drive regional leadership for the visual arts and encourage greater co-operation, collaboration and communication. There are areas of strength but we feel that a regional visual arts Strategy will help our sector to become even stronger through the development and delivery of a shared vision.

The process for delivering Turning Point in the region has been through a volunteer Interim Steering Group, and through involvement by a wide range of individuals and organisations in a programme of activities and consultations. A Framework Report was produced by Beam in 2009, underpinning the development of the Strategy, which was completed by ERS in 2010.

Our Overview explains what we want to achieve in the current economic climate, focussing on the importance of communication and information sharing, visibility and productivity, innovation and collaboration, knowledge and skills. The section goes on to detail who the Strategy is for, from individual practitioners to the wide range of other professionals who engage with the visual arts. The Strategy is guided by a set of three principles that emphasise the key role of creativity and imagination, the interdependency of the sector and the national context.

Our Vision for the visual arts in Yorkshire and the Humber

- Yorkshire and the Humber will become a place where the visual arts thrive through our collective strength and collaboration, as well as the creative vision of individual artists. The visual arts will be accessible to meaningful participation and enjoyment by the diverse range of people who visit, live and work in our region.
- Visual arts practitioners will be attracted to our region because of its sense of place, wealth of inspiration and the range of resources for the development of skills, and for creativity, production, exhibition and critical debate. We will encourage and support risk and innovation.
- The visual arts sector in Yorkshire and the Humber will benefit from enhanced connectivity, learning and advocacy by working together to deliver shared ambition and priorities across sectors.

Themes, Priorities and Outcomes

Four overarching themes have emerged in discussions, debates and consultations. Within each theme there are Priorities and these guide the approaches and activities to deliver the Vision. They are:

- **Theme 1: The sector's diversity and relationships**
Priority 1: stronger relationships between the visual arts and non-arts sectors
Priority 2: understanding our diversity and connecting to other regions
- **Theme 2: Professional and creative development**
Priority 1: developing a learning environment for the visual arts
Priority 2: resources for practitioners and organisations
- **Theme 3: Collaborative planning and action**
Priority 1: developing connections
Priority 2: creating opportunities through partnership
- **Theme 4: Audience engagement**
Priority 1: reaching our audiences
Priority 2: stimulating the commercial art market

Each theme also includes Outcomes, which articulate what success could look like for the visual arts in Yorkshire and the Humber.

Implementation and Adoption

This section covers the period 2011-14 and describes how the Strategy will be delivered, summarising accountability, leadership and the strategic actions that should be taken. The success of the Strategy will depend on the commitment and participation of the sector itself, as well as the securing of appropriate resources.

Overview

Instigated by Arts Council England in 2006, Turning Point is a national initiative. It is now led by a network of regional groups who want to galvanise and develop the visual arts sector in a national context. In our region the group has been made up of individuals from a range of visual arts organisations. It has started to drive regional leadership for the visual arts and encourage greater co-operation, collaboration and communication.

Why a visual arts Strategy?

The visual arts are an essential part of our lives, communicating ideas, feelings and experiences. We understand that they are dynamic and diverse. They include sculpture, painting, the crafts, printmaking, drawing, photography, sound, experimental film, live art, installation, contextual practice, arts in the public realm, artists' video and new media/emerging technologies.

We feel that a regional visual arts Strategy will help our sector to become even stronger through the development and delivery of a shared vision. Consultations have shown that there are areas of strength but that there are real opportunities to promote a stronger identity as a region. We should also look at developing the good practice that already exists to help us work better with other regions and internationally.

We are grateful for all contributions so far and look forward to working further with a range of partners. The Strategy aims to be inclusive; there will be a process of continual engagement, dialogue and review so that all activity remains current and relevant to regional and national circumstances, as well as demonstrating real progress, benefit and achievement for our sector.

This Strategy outlines our vision. It recognises the diversity of the sector, influenced by the challenges and opportunities of the rural, urban and coastal environments that characterise our region.

Definitions and Scope

The term 'visual arts practitioner' is used throughout the document to include curators, artists and people who work in visual arts organisations. We use 'the region' to mean Yorkshire and the Humber. This document does not refer to individuals or organisations as we could not do justice to the richness of visual arts activity in the region.

What we want to achieve

By working together to deliver this Strategy, we expect that we will:

- Be better prepared to meet the challenges of the current economic climate, with greater efficiency and value for money in the use of resources;
- Have a better understanding of the place and role of visual arts in the wider economic, social and environmental context of the region;
- Have improved communication and information sharing between practitioners and organisations locally, nationally and internationally;
- Build the motivation, inspiration and productivity of our practitioners;
- Improve the visibility of the sector and our capacity to advocate for its importance;
- Increase innovation through joint working, bringing together diverse knowledge and skills;
- Identify and build on existing best practice, promoting the strengths of the visual arts in the region.

Our Strategy aims to maintain focus and momentum for the visual arts community through this period of change. It is a live and active document, informed by consultation with a range of active and engaged practitioners, policy makers and audiences across the region.

Who it's for

The Strategy is for all those interested in the visual arts, including:

- artists and curators
- museums and galleries
- organisations which provide space and development services to practitioners
- producers of visual arts and crafts
- places of learning and critical debate
- event and exhibition organisers
- arts policy makers, funders and investors
- people who enjoy, are interested and participate in the visual arts
- people working in public realm development and in health, tourism and education
- other professionals interested in the role of the visual arts in their work

Principles

- Creativity and imagination are key to the future development and delivery of the Strategy;
- The interests of artists, audiences, and visual arts organisations should be understood as part of a whole, each dependent on the others;
- The Strategy should be developed in relation to the three Northern regions, and the national and international context.

Our vision for the visual arts in Yorkshire and the Humber

- ▶ Yorkshire and the Humber will become a place where the visual arts thrive through our collective strength and collaboration, as well as the creative vision of individual artists. The visual arts will be accessible to meaningful participation and enjoyment by the diverse range of people who visit, live and work in our region.
- ▶ Visual arts practitioners will be attracted to our region because of its sense of place, wealth of inspiration and the range of resources for the development of skills, and for creativity, production, exhibition and critical debate. We will encourage and support risk and innovation.
- ▶ The visual arts sector in Yorkshire and the Humber will benefit from enhanced connectivity, learning and advocacy by working together to deliver shared ambition and priorities across sectors.

Theme 1

The sector's diversity and relationships



Priority 1: stronger relationships between the visual arts and non-arts sectors

We recognise that more interchange between the visual arts and non-arts sectors would be beneficial (some might say vital) to both those working in non-arts sectors and for those working in other art forms and disciplines.

These are the sectors that those developing the Strategy have identified as being important (though this list is not exhaustive): health, business, tourism, education, regeneration and the built environment, and community development.

In addition, the context of local government and regional development is of importance particularly given the value of political leadership in generating investment to meet a range of outcomes. More collaboration with non-arts sectors will promote greater opportunity to share perspectives on the role of the visual arts, as well as supporting funding and investment opportunities for the visual arts.



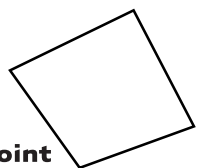
Priority 2: understanding our diversity and connecting to other regions

It is important to understand how the visual arts in Yorkshire and the Humber connect to activities across the North, nationally and internationally. We should also respond to the needs and demands of regional groups in both urban and rural situations. We should promote, celebrate and nurture visual arts practitioners working together across the region and beyond, whilst protecting and enhancing the value of local distinctiveness.



Outcomes:

- Deeper and wider relationships between the arts and non-arts sectors;
- Increased opportunities for visual arts practitioners to work together across the region and beyond.



Theme 2

Professional and creative development



Priority 1: developing a learning environment for the visual arts

An ethic of continuing professional development should be promoted, involving relationships with further/higher education and other organisations and bodies involved in skills and training. Partnership and collaboration will be promoted and supported, particularly given resource pressures faced by educational institutions. Organisations and institutions within the region should be encouraged to respond to the professional development needs of visual art practitioners and arts professionals at different points in their careers. Contemporary arts practice is informed by political, social and cultural contexts. We must therefore encourage critical debate, artistic risk-taking and innovation through the sustained development of relationships with educational and training providers.



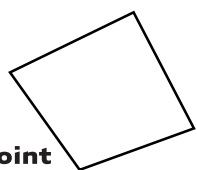
Priority 2: resources for practitioners

We should support a range of resources for visual arts practitioners, including physical space-affordable studios and other workspace facilities- as well as opportunities for experimentation, invigoration, research and development. We also believe that practical support resources – for example in business planning and management, marketing and promotion – are important. Development activity should reflect the diversity of the region and its existing resources. Given the current economic circumstances, we should aim for consolidation, not growth. We should foster models of organisational co-operation involving grass-roots practitioner groups, universities, colleges and local authorities. Good projects, best practice and innovation should be showcased.



Outcomes:

- A closer working partnership with the educational and training sector;
- A range of responses to creative and professional development needs;
- Consolidation of resources to support and sustain the practice of artists and arts professionals.



Theme 3

Collaborative planning and action



Priority 1: developing connections

Turning Point activity in 2009 promoted greater connection and communication, stimulating interchange, discussion and debate. But existing visual art networks in our region could join up further, and understanding how our sector could be better organised will deliver more positive outcomes.



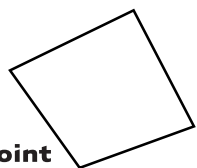
Priority 2: creating opportunities through partnership

Opportunities will arise from our desire for greater cohesion and sustainability across the sector, which must be seen against the backdrop of the current economic climate. There is support for a regional collaborative initiative(s) to raise the profile and strengthen the visual arts in the region, based on broader themes rather than particular media. Our ambition is to join across the region and cross boundaries for collective benefit. It is important to work together to maximise existing good practice, resources and the associated benefits, for example: regional leadership, regional focus, national profile and shared marketing.



Outcomes:

- Greater visibility and mobility of visual arts practice;
- Increased collaborations across the region.



Theme 4

Audience engagement



Priority 1: reaching our audiences

We need to engage with audiences and participants to gather intelligence on the attractiveness and accessibility of visual arts activity in our region. This should include marketing and communication, pricing, locations, buildings, facilities and content. Audiences and participants need to be cultivated and nurtured, engaged and shared, to promote greater understanding and enjoyment of the visual arts in our region.



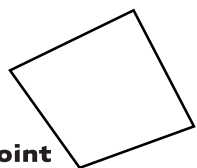
Priority 2: the commercial art market

We should understand the different commercial relationships that exist between artists and consumers, in order to stimulate the collecting, commissioning and buying of original works of art. This will have an important impact on artists' income and the art economy of the region.



Outcomes:

- Greater understanding of and engagement with the visual arts, by new and existing audiences;
- Knowledge of what drives a more vibrant and commercial arts economy.



The table offers a summary of the strategic steps for delivering the Turning Point Strategy in Yorkshire and the Humber.

Theme	Priorities	Actions and outputs	Outcomes
<p>Theme 1: ► The sector's diversity and relationships</p>	<p>Priority 1: stronger relationships between the visual arts and non-arts sectors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Interchange between the visual arts and non arts sectors – primarily health, business, tourism, education, regeneration, built environment, community development. – Interchange with local government and regional development. – Identifying funding and investment opportunities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Be the campaigning and representative voice for the visual arts sector, arts and non-arts decision making and policy development platforms. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Deeper and wider relationships between the arts and non-arts sectors.
	<p>Priority 2: understanding our diversity and connecting to other regions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Articulate and understand how the visual arts in the region connect to and are part of regional, national and international activities. Promote, celebrate and nurture practitioners working across the region. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Map existing models of exchange and networks, assessing provision and opportunities in order to create further links, identify gaps and encourage knowledge sharing across the region. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Increased opportunities for visual arts practitioners to work together across the region and beyond.

Theme	Priorities	Actions and outputs	Outcomes
<p>Theme 2: ► Professional and creative development</p>	<p>Priority 1: developing a learning environment for the visual arts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Ongoing ethic of continuing professional development (CPD) involving Further and Higher Education Institutions and others involved in skills and training. – Respond to visual arts professionals concerned with issues of political, social and cultural contexts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Link relevant local and national agencies, education and art institutions, funders, artists and artists groups to develop a cohesive understanding of CPD requirements and career pathways for visual arts professionals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – A closer working partnership with the educational and training sector. – A range of responses to creative and professional development needs.
	<p>Priority 2: resources for practitioners.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Develop a range of resources for visual arts practitioners. – Activity should reflect the diversity of the region and its existing resources. – Showcase good projects, best practise and innovation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Use technology to create a regional hub of shared information, research and best practice. Explore collaborative approaches to resources, contacts and information. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Consolidation of resources to support and sustain the practice of artists and arts professionals.

Theme	Priorities	Actions and outputs	Outcomes
Theme 3: ► Collaborative planning and action	Priority 1: developing connections <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – A range of infrastructure organisations promoting networking in the region, which could be further joined up. – Identify how the sector can be made more effective by establishing appropriate knowledge. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Map, link, identify and address gaps in existing networks to provide enhanced communication and sharing within the region. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Greater visibility and mobility of practice.
	Priority 2: creating opportunities through partnership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Opportunity to share resources and undertake collaborative programmes, projects and activities. – There is support for a major regional, collaborative initiative(s) based on a broader theme, that aims to maximise regional leadership, focus, marketing, and development of a national profile. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Further research into a regional event for Yorkshire and the Humber linking relevant themes, consulting with artists and audiences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Increased collaborations across the region.

Theme	Priorities	Actions and outputs	Outcomes
Theme 4: ► Audience engagement	Priority 1: reaching our audiences – Explore views on the attractiveness and accessibility of visual arts activity with participants and audiences in the region.	– Working closely with audience development agencies, tourist boards, marketing and pr companies and other relevant organisations, carry out joint research in order to understand more about audiences for the visual arts in this region.	– Greater understanding of and engagement with the visual arts, by new and existing audiences.
	Priority 2: stimulating the commercial art market – Ownership and authorship can be explored to generate relationships between artists and consumers, stimulating collecting and buying.	– Using existing research, nationally and regionally, explore initiatives which support commercial activity in the region.	– Knowledge of what drives a more vibrant and commercial arts economy.

Implementation and Adoption

Leadership is a key theme for the visual arts sector in our region. The Turning Point Interim Steering Group comprised volunteers representing the interests of the sector from higher education, visual arts organisations, practitioners, galleries, curators and Arts Council England. There will be a need to build on the work delivered by them in 2009-10.

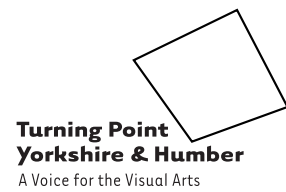
We believe that a volunteer Steering Group, refreshed on a regular basis, will remain key to the delivery of the Strategy – offering advice and guidance, acting as a new voice for the sector, and ensuring that actions are connected and strategic.

Members of the Steering Group will be ambassadors for this Strategy and for the visual arts in our region; they will be advocates for visual arts practice now and in the future.

There is no doubt that financial resources will be scarce during this period – all the more reason for connectedness and partnership. As much as funding, the success of the Strategy will depend on the commitment and participation of the sector itself.

Outcome: Co-ordination and sustainability of Strategy delivery through the Steering Group.

Area of work	Needs	Strategic actions	Outcomes	Timescale
Strategic planning	Effective co-ordination across the region with maximum involvement from organisations and individual practitioners	Confirm the Steering Group's governance structure. Principle areas include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – network co-ordination – established roles and responsibilities for delivery – evaluation of activities – procurement/tendering procedures – investigation of financial resources e.g. grants, Trusts and sponsorship – co-option of individuals to the group based on skills and experience. – review of the Turning Point network regionally and nationally – annual review of membership and participation activity – establish an environmental policy to guide network activities 	Formalised Steering Group will exist and will be responsible for overseeing delivery of the Strategy. Clear ownership of the Strategy and accountability for its delivery. Visual arts practitioners will report positive change through regular feedback and input. Sustainable delivery mechanism of the Strategy through the Steering Group.	Year 1 Year 1 and reviewed annually Year 3 and reviewed regularly Year 2 and reviewed annually
Network activities	Establish a programme of activities, as identified in Strategic Steps.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Identify lead responsibility from within Steering Group and co-opt partners from the wider sector, for the delivery of activities. – Secure time offered by members of the visual arts sector. – Secure financial resources to support the delivery of activities and projects. 	Investment and contribution from individuals and organisations. Wide participation in events, activities and planning by individuals across the visual arts sector in the region.	Annual programme established; milestones reflecting development and delivery of individual activities.



For more information visit www.tpyh.org.uk

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