

Contemporary visual art and identity construction – wellbeing amongst older people

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Introduction to the project

- May 2009 – May 2011
- Aged over 50 – oldest 93
- Semi-structured interviews
 - Baseline
 - Before and after visit
 - Guided tour from curator
- Placing respondents at the centre of the analysis rather than the art form or gallery

Arts Interventions Identity formation and wellbeing

- Identity processes undertaken in late-adulthood (Kroger 2002)
 - Maintenance processes (commitment)
 - Establishing visible forms of continuity with previous interests, roles and relationships
 - Revision processes (exploration)
 - Re-evaluation and refinement of important identity elements from earlier years
 - Adjustment to change



Arts interventions and social capital

- Specific research with older people has shown that social relations can improve health and increase survival rates (Fiori, Smith, and Antonucci, 2007).
- Strong mutual support amongst some groups enables them to overcome major psychosocial barriers that would otherwise have prevented engagement. Others used the knowledge held within the group to help them interpret the art works.



New Public Management (NPM) and concepts of evidence

- Policy formed by NPM
- In policy terms 'evidence' and 'impact' has specific characteristics
- Evidence is needed that money has been spent effectively - Treasury – *Green Book*
 - Cultural economics – e.g. SORI
- Mapping against policy priorities – such as GLOs/GSOs

Comparing methodologies

- Asked older people to define wellbeing
- Baseline questions – environment, social relationships, former occupations and education, interests
- Ryff's Scale of Psychological Wellbeing (1989) – autonomy, positive relations with other, purpose, personal growth, environmental mastery, self-acceptance
- Invest to Save: Arts in Health (2007)- Quantitative and qualitative.
 - Wellbeing (Ryff's Scale of Psychological Wellbeing)
 - General health (General Health Questionnaire (GHQ))
 - Depression (Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale)
 - Job satisfaction (Warr, Cook and Wall Work and Life Attitudes Survey)
- Music for Life – Quantitative and qualitative. CASP-19

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