

# Turner Contemporary Youth Navigators Phase IV

## Final Evaluation Report

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Question:

**“What has being a Youth Navigator meant to you?”**

Answer:

**“Everything that I am doing now has come from this. It gave me the tools I needed to push my life forward “**

*Harley, pilot phase Youth Navigator.*

**“I’ve learned so much, I look forward to what my future holds for me”**

*Demi, Marlowe Academy*

## Introduction

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This report provides an overview of Phase IV of Turner Contemporary's Youth Navigators programme Phase IV has been a three year programme funded by the Rayne Foundation and Lankelly Chase. Additional funding from Artsworld South East Bridge supported extended activities for one targeted cohort during this final year.



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## Project overview

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Youth Navigators are young people who have been trained by Turner Contemporary to engage visitors to the gallery in conversation about the artworks. They use an approach informed by practical philosophy to put the visitor at ease, to encourage original thinking and facilitate a meaningful exchange of ideas.

Phase IV aimed to work with three cohorts of between 10-15 young people each year, over a period of three years. In total, nine cohorts from six schools and one FE College took part in the programme between September 2012 and July 2015. The average cohort size was 9. A total of 81 young people aged between 14-17 years were registered for the programme. Girls heavily outnumber boys, with 25 boys and 56 girls taking part. Four of the schools selected pupils based specifically on the following criteria: Free School Meals, Disability and Special Needs and Pupil Premium. These schools also focused on those pupils who had behavioural, social or communication difficulties. The other two schools selected pupils who were studying GCSE Art & Design. The FE College selected pupils with Behavioural, Social and Communication difficulties who had been identified as being in danger of becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training).

Each cohort has worked with the Gallery team, comprised of members of the Learning team, practical philosopher Ayisha De Lanerolle from the Conversation Agency and one of three artists engaged across the programme. A stable delivery team was established during the first two years, with the Schools Officer providing leadership and co-ordination. Staffing difficulties at the Gallery during year 3 created pressure on the delivery team and led to some inconsistency in planning and co-ordination.

A 'graduate' of the pilot phase programme, Harley Russell contributed to gallery sessions with one cohort, offering both her expertise as a Navigator and sharing with participants her positive experience of Youth Navigators.

The cohort of young people in danger of becoming NEET met with artist Jeremy Deller, who was exhibiting at Turner Contemporary. They also were invited to meet the Duchess of Cambridge when she visited the Gallery. They met with potential funders and were instrumental in their decision to fund the next phase of Youth Navigators.

For eight of the cohort groups the young people visited the gallery for three days of training and preparation for their role as Youth Navigators, spread out over a period of several weeks. These gallery sessions were punctuated by after school sessions in their school with members of the Gallery team. At the end of the process, each young person is asked to complete four hours of independent 'navigations' with visitors to the gallery. For the FE 'NEETs' group, visits were of a much shorter duration, taking place over a much longer period of time. An additional day of work shadowing was included.

## Methodologies adopted

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All activities and approaches to gathering information are as outlined in the year one interim report, with refinements detailed in the evaluation process review.

A refined version of the questionnaire was used with all participants at the beginning and at the end of the programme. Increase or decrease of one point or more on the seven point scale was viewed as a notable shift.

Wherever possible, the same seven point scale has been used to measure participants' responses in all exercises.

The data presented has been collected in a number of ways:

- a questionnaire survey of Youth Navigators (YNs), teachers and the gallery team
- End of session feedback from both participants and the delivery team.
- Interviews with young people and teachers from each cohort
- interviews with all those involved with delivery
- interviews with visiting members of the public
- practical exercises to gather information and impressions about the young people and their views about the project
- observation of gallery sessions and of YNs in the gallery, engaging in conversation
- Group feedback sessions with the delivery team and teachers throughout the programme.

This has provided a rich mosaic of evidence against the programmes aims and intended outcomes, with contributions from everybody involved at every stage of the three year programme.

There have been limitations to the scope of this evaluation. It has proved difficult to follow up individual participant's progress after they have completed the programme. Where staff has left a school the knowledge of student's progress in relation to the programme has been lost. For the majority of schools there was little concrete interest in research and development. An effective control group was only really established with the final cohort.

One young person in particular, Harley Russell, provides powerful testimony of the impact of Youth Navigators four years after her initial involvement, and provides a model of the potential for this programme.

## Summary of issues

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Youth Navigators think deeply. They question and challenge what they see. They have confidence in the value of their contributions and feel equipped to communicate their ideas. They are able to empathise with those who may feel unsure about how to respond to work in a gallery and have the skills to engage and make them feel welcome. They have an excellent understanding of working practice in a world class Art Gallery and are proud of the contribution they have made to the organisation. Youth Navigators understand what is required of them in the workplace and have developed a range of employability skills.

This has been a high quality programme which has achieved most of the initial aims, has evidence of real impact and is making excellent progress towards ambitious outcomes.

Despite a number of challenges, year three of this programme has seen continued excellent feedback from participants. There is compelling evidence of real impact on key employability skills, positive community relations and young people's confidence in their future employment prospects. The positive impact on self-esteem and confidence is clear and consistent across the programme.

Evidence suggests that Youth Navigators are more able to employ a wide, sophisticated vocabulary to express their ideas than non-participants. They employ high level thinking skills in response to a range of ideas and stimuli.

Responses from control groups from three cohorts show a positive difference in the progress being made by participants. The control groups registered little or no change against all of the measures used.

The Gallery team have worked closely with participants to refine and hone the programme as part of an ongoing reflective process. The leadership and co-ordination from the School's Officer during the first two years broke down in the third year. This role was taken by a succession of staff, often with no opportunity for handover. Documentation was difficult to access during this period, and key information wasn't available to the team. The continued success of the programme must be credited to the commitment of the organisation to ensure that high quality delivery was maintained, and in particular the stability and excellent practice of Ayisha De Lanerolle, who led the Philosophical Inquiry aspect of the training.

The keys to success have been the responsive reflective approach of the team; skilful management of schedules; clear communication of expectations to and from schools and the high quality practice of all involved in delivery of the programme. Perhaps, most crucially, a sense of ambition and faith in the ability of young people to achieve at a high level.

More making activities enabled participants to empathise and identify with the work in the galleries, and the artists who made it. These processes were made explicit by the artists. Many were more confident in their conversations, and more open in their thinking as a result.

Those starting from the lowest baseline in terms of confidence, team skills, vocabulary and communication made the most striking progress. The value of this programme for the most vulnerable young people is striking.

Where embraced by the young people, Arts Award has been a valued aspect of the programme and has provided some formal recognition of their achievement. There is potential to make Arts Award more relevant and fully integrated into the Youth Navigator experience. The impressive personal development and employability skills are not formally recognised or celebrated through the programme.

Whilst the Gallery team are skilful and responsive, there is a great deal of scope to develop an informed approach to support more complex learning needs. The role of teachers and the skills they can offer have not been fully explored.

This report makes five recommendations in the following areas:

- Confidence building, Listening, questioning and creative skills
- Opportunities for disadvantaged young people
- Workplace opportunities & Employability skills
- Developing transferable practical skills
- Progression

There is a duty of care for all those who work with young people. Where intervention aspires to be transformative, that duty of care is all the more acute. Large numbers of participants and their teachers report the profound impact that this experience has had on their self-awareness and sense of potential. However, it is not clear how those young people can access follow up support and development, or how they might continue their relationship with Turner Contemporary. If 'Youth Navigators' is to go beyond 'Inspiring Change' to enabling transformation, these are issues that cannot be ignored.

# Progress against the 7 Key Performance Indicators

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## 1. Quality of the programme

“I was unaware how this was going to go from the start, but to watch my students grow has been a wonderful experience. Jordan and Tori especially. Patrick has also grown a lot. Without this course, I don’t think our students would have grown into the young confident adults they are.” **Justin Smithers, East Kent College**

“I think it was just brilliant, everything that we did was different to what we normally get to do and I could see how everything was helping me get better. I don’t really do art, but this was so good” **Connor, Charles Dickens School**

Clear expectations were set out for schools in terms of their contribution and commitment. All of the school participants during year three attended well, both for gallery and school based sessions. They all completed the independent guiding at the end of their training and the majority worked towards an Arts Award. It was more difficult to secure a clear line of communication with the potential NEETs group.

Every session built in time for participants to feedback and this informed planning for the next session. Planning was based on this feedback and the observations of the team.

More visual formats were used to capture participant’s progress through the programme, again this helped participants connect the different aspects of the programme.

The team set up structured opportunities for all Youth Navigators to engage in conversation with willing participants, as well as the ‘cold’ conversations that they initiate with the general public. Where young people were less ready to engage with strangers, this gave them a good opportunity to develop their skills in a ‘safe’ context. The gallery team provided ‘cover’ observing and offering ‘on the spot’ guidance. This accelerated progress and more confident conversations.

Participants were visibly energised and enthused throughout the programme. All participants from all cohorts reported an extremely positive experience of the programme and how it was managed.

Great care was taken by the Gallery team to meet the needs of every young person. Feedback frequently referenced how valued individuals felt by the Gallery. The relationships built with staff at Turner Contemporary were extremely important to these young people.

## 2. Young People's ownership of the programme

"I didn't feel like a queen. And then I went there and I felt like a queen. People listened to me" Chloe, **Marlowe Academy**

Every session included time for group feedback as well as one to one sessions with the gallery team. All participants were interviewed individually and as a group by the programme evaluator. Feedback was reviewed in April 2014, and amendments made to the programme and evaluation plan.

Changes and refinements were made throughout the programme following student feedback—for example the introduction of t-shirts and badges to help identify their role. These things in particular helped the young people to feel that secure in the gallery and in their role.

Participants were encouraged at all stages to take ownership of their learning. At times the adult to student ratio felt out of balance, with the result that adult voices could dominate. The team were very sensitive to this, but there were times when teaching staff were less attuned to the negative effect of this dynamic.

An employability skills log was used to record participant's progress. This was not shared with the young people, and there is scope for using this to support peer assessment.

Participants report that they do not have a clear sense of how they might develop their skills further beyond the programme. Whilst the training that they receive develops their skills, confidence and aspirations, there is not sufficient scope within the current programme structure to offer clear progression and development.

To date, youth navigators have not been invited to share their experience and skills with other members of the organisation. This had been an original aspiration of the Learning team.



### 3. Impact on young people

“I believe that the Youth Navigators is a fantastic scheme to develop students’ communication”

**Andrew Lean, Marlowe Academy**

“I’ve learned quite a lot from the beginning of the Youth Navigators scheme and the difference to the end of it, I’ve started to know and see art in a different way, in more quality and more detail. It makes me see art in a good way and it gave me a positive vibe to my life and I see art in my everyday life and I enjoyed it. Like if I see some paint spill on the floor I can see the art in it.” **Jordan, East Kent College**

#### Quality of the Navigations

All of the young navigators initiated independent conversations with visitors to the gallery. These were observed by the gallery team, school staff and the programme evaluator at different stages. A checklist of communication skills identified by the CBI (Education and Skills Survey 2012) has been developed to support these observations. (Appendix 3). All participants were observed to have developed ‘secure’ skills against a range of skills on the checklist.

School staff from all cohorts said that it was ‘Very true’ that young people had developed good communication skills as a result of the programme. Every member of staff commented on the increased self-confidence and ability to express their ideas.

Young people from East Kent College met potential funders at an early stage in their training. Those visitors reported how impressed they were by the level of conversation in which they were engaged.

The young people had an overwhelmingly positive experience of engaging the public in conversation. Visitors reported that they were surprised, impressed and inspired by their conversations with the Youth Navigators.

The training programme focused strongly on introducing the young people to the principles of Inquiry. The aim was to develop open thinking in the participants, and their ability to facilitate 'live' thinking through their conversations.

Before beginning the programme all participants were given a photograph of a Carl Andre sculpture and asked: could you talk about this piece of work to a group of strangers?

Participants were asked again at the end of the programme. **There was a shift across the programme from 8% who felt they could talk about the artwork to strangers before the programme, to 64% at the end.**

In particular, the shift in confidence to discuss this work for cohorts 5 and 7 was striking: All of the young people from these groups felt that they could talk about this artwork after their training.

- Cohort 5 100% 'yes' after a shift from 88% who originally said 'no' or 'maybe'
- Cohort 7 100% 'yes' from 100% 'no' before

A control group of 190 young people from Cohorts 4, 6 and 9 took part in the same exercise, without participating in the programme. Overall the control group 45% said 'no', they could not talk about this artwork when first asked. They were asked again several weeks later. 62% now said 'no', they could not talk about this work. **The confidence of the control groups to talk about this work had actually gone down.** The result may be skewed by the fact that the control group had no interest vested in this task (unlike participants, who had more reason to give a considered response). However, the difference in response is large enough to suggest that the programme has had real impact in this area.

All participants were also asked to write as many words as they could about the work, before the programme began, and again at the end. All participants were able to use a greater number of words to describe their response to the artwork after the programme. All participants were able to use a greater number of words to describe their response to the artwork after the programme. On average participants more than doubled their word count. This was combined by a notable increase in the use of more sophisticated language to express more abstract concepts from just **10%** at the beginning, **79% of participants** were able to do this at the end of the programme. By contrast, there was **no notable increase** in the range of vocabulary recorded for the control groups on either measure. (Appendix 2)

This activity indicates a powerful impact on participant's ability to approach artworks in a more open, questioning way. Participants are responding with a much wider, complex vocabulary which goes beyond descriptive comment. In a number of cases, participants responded with a

series of provoking questions about the artwork, despite the instruction to just record words. One young man filled the page with quazi-mathematical equations.

Observation of each participant by the evaluator, by school staff and the gallery team confirm that the majority of participants are able to engage with the public as well as each other and facilitate 'live' thinking through conversation.

### Risk and Confidence

Ability to manage risk – emotional and practical and willingness to take risk in future was identified as an important life and work skill by both participants and the gallery team. This was less of a focus in year 3 however.

Developing 'self-confidence' was cited by all school staff as an aspiration for their students. The majority of students also identified this as a key priority. However, definitions of confidence varied enormously, as well as participants levels of self-awareness.

This is clearly a complex area, and difficult to measure through self-report. This is discussed at some length in the previous interim reports.

Participants were asked to rate their self –confidence on a scale of 1-7.

Every participant reported feeling a growth in confidence, by their own definition of the term. Interestingly, those individuals identifying as most confident before the programme reported the least growth according to their own definition. On the 7 point scale, there **was a shift from an average self-confidence rating of 3.9 to 5.7 at the end.**

**The students from the control groups reported little or no increase in confidence during the same period.**



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#### 4. Quality of collaborative activity

“My main aim was increased self – esteem and improved communication. I wanted the students I picked to work well as a team and do something completely different. I have been very proud of everyone and how they have moved out of their comfort zones”

**Teresa Schers, Charles Dickens School**

Participants were asked: How true are these statements “I am good at listening to other people” and “I work well with other people”.

All cohorts reported an average increase of 1 point to the second question, after the programme. Cohort 7 reported an extremely positive 2.5 point shift. There was an average one point reported increase in listening skills across the cohorts. Within this however, some groups had a very different sense of their listening skills, with Cohorts 6 and 9 reporting an average **decrease** of 1 point at the end of the programme.

School staff however reported a positive increase in team working and listening skills across all cohorts.

Gallery team observations supported this view



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## 5. Practical skills developed

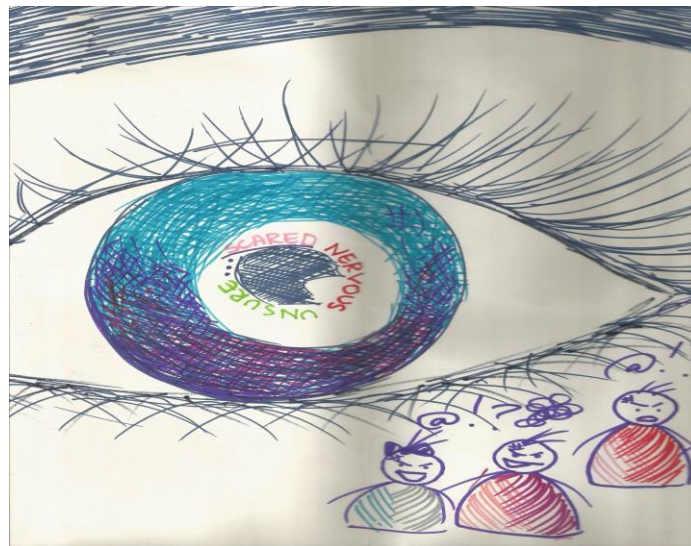
"Yes I would like to be assistant talking to people when they come in what they think about the work because I know quite a lot about the work in the gallery because I've had experience working there. I mean um communicating with the people who came in to see the art. I could tell them about the art works there, who's done it, what's it about, what's the theme about." **Patrick, East Kent College**

Feedback from participants in the first year indicated a strong interest in increasing the amount of creative and practical activity. The programme was refined to reflect this, with the young people working with a range of processes and materials led by the artists.

This approach was very popular with all cohorts and feedback suggests that the majority would like to see even more opportunities for making alongside Inquiry based investigations. Interestingly, this was particularly true for those participants who were not studying GCSE Art & Design

Young people commented that the practical, making aspect of the programme gave them a better insight into the artworks in the gallery. They felt more empathy for the artist as a direct result of spending time making art themselves.

The development of practical making skills emerged as being of lesser importance to school staff, even where this was stated as one of their original aims.



## 6. Level of confidence about employment prospects

"I could come for an interview here now, and think of things to say..."

Victoria, East Kent College

"Her (Harley Russell) interview was one of the best I have ever experienced, and she used her Youth Nav training of asking great questions as a structure for her presentation. She got us talking about a Mondrian painting and she was completely brilliant – engaging, thought provoking. She blew other candidates (including MA students) out of the water! Such a wonderful thing to witness – from an employer's point of view – the skills that she has developed are absolutely what we need!"

Karen Eslea, Head of Learning & Visitor Experience, Turner Contemporary

Participants were asked: How true are these statements: "I'm confident that I will get a good job in the future" and "I know what skills I need to get a good job in the future" **There was an average increase of 1.4 and 1.6 points respectively in response.**

Cohort 6 felt less positive about their employment prospects at the end of the programme, though, perhaps surprisingly, they began with more confidence in this area.

All participants were asked to draw a dream that they had for the future and rate how likely they were to achieve it using the 7 point scale (Appendix 2).

Many of the young people had exciting, aspirational dreams for the future before the programme, which became increasingly ambitious by the end. Some were very specifically about achieving a certain status and material wealth; others were more concerned with career goals or personal fulfilment. **A majority felt more confident that they could realise their dreams after the programme.** Half of those completing the exercise still had the same goal after the programme, half had changed or refined their dream, with more ambitious goals.

This is discussed at some length in the interim reports, and was reinforced by the responses from the year 3 cohorts.

## 7. Community cohesion

“...talking to those young men has made my day. They really made me think! I’ve never come across anything like this before. Fantastic! Thank you”. **Visitor to the Gallery during ‘Provincial Punk’.**

“I used to say that we should shoot people over 50, but I met a really good one today. I’ve changed my mind about that!” **Daniel, Charles Dickens School**

Participants were asked: ‘how true is this statement: “In my experience, I feel that older people respect what I have to say.” ‘

**There was a positive of shift of .8** across the cohorts. Within this however, each group had a very different response, ranging from very negative to hugely positive. This perhaps reflects the nature of the different groups as much as their experiences in the gallery. One young person commented that they didn’t believe that people in the ‘outside world’ would be treating them with the respect that they had experienced as Youth Navigators in Turner Contemporary.

During observation of the youth navigators, the evaluator spoke to gallery visitors, who were overwhelmingly positive about the use of youth navigators in the gallery, as well as the young people themselves. In addition, the gallery assistants noted the positive atmosphere that the young people brought to the Galleries. They felt that they brought a unique dynamic that they themselves could not provide and that this reflected well on the organisation.

## Conclusions

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### **Conclusion one - Confidence building, Listening, questioning and creative skills**

The clearest evidence of improved skills has come through the vocabulary exercise and through observing the young people in the galleries, in conversation with members of the public. In both instances, all participants made great progress. The key to their having the confidence to engage with the public is the transformed approach to engaging with the artworks. This is a direct result of the high quality training planned and delivered by the gallery team.

### **Recommendation**

Ensure that the resources and expertise are developed into a coherent toolkit that can be used as a 'live' resource for the Gallery team, an information point for incoming staff and artists and the reference point for future development and planning.

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### **Conclusion two – Opportunities for disadvantaged young people**

The programme has attracted young people from a range of starting points in terms of personal resources (i.e., confidence, literacy, social background). The majority were selected by their schools because they fell within a number of vulnerable categories. Participants came with a diverse range of needs, which the Gallery team worked hard to respond to, building excellent relationships. The role of teachers was not well defined however, and their ability to support learning not utilised.

### **Recommendation:**

The Gallery team should explore the potential to include teaching staff from participating schools within the delivery team. This could be achieved through pre-programme CPD, joint planning, shared identification of aims and shared responsibility for outcomes.

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### **Conclusion three - Workplace opportunities & Employability skills**

The programme has provided a unique opportunity for young people to gain 'live' experience of the gallery as a workplace, whilst developing high level, transferable skills. These skills can be mapped against the employability traits identified by the CBI. Alongside, a range of 'wellbeing' issues are being addressed for many young people; aspirations and sense of possibility are being raised.

### **Recommendation**

Formalise the assessment of employability skills for those groups where this is a priority. Turner Contemporary can provide a valuable assessment and validation of achievement that will be invaluable for these young people. This would support future applications as well as helping young people to articulate what they have learned. Create platforms to celebrate and disseminate learning from the programme – within and across participating schools, and beyond.

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### **Conclusion four – Developing practical skills**

At its most effective, the programme has been well paced, with a focus on the development of concrete, practical skills – the processing of ideas and application of ‘live’ thinking, effective communication, team work and listening, making of artefacts. In particular, the place of making became clear as the programme evolved – providing ‘headspace’ for allowing thinking to settle, team building, and understanding of the artists being exhibited. The development of skills that can be applied to an Art & Design curriculum has been of secondary importance.

#### **Recommendation:**

Be explicit in communications about the skills that students can expect to develop. Work with schools as appropriate to tailor the model to their curriculum needs.

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### **Conclusion five - Progression**

This programme clearly moves young people forward on a journey of self-awareness, and recognition of the opportunities for employment and personal fulfilment. Beyond their experience as a Youth Navigator however, pathways to further develop their skills, prepare for employment in the sector and to develop an ongoing relationship with the organisation are not clearly defined.

#### **Recommendation:**

Using the model of success seen in former Youth Navigators Harley Russell and Cat Cutler-Mackenzie, develop formal progression pathways that extend opportunities. Ensure that routes are embedded within the training programme so that participants are clear about how to move to the next stage. Arts Award, Saturday club, volunteer schemes and CC Skills links could support this.

Michele Gregson  
Programme Evaluator

September 2015

Appendices:

- 1- Methodology outline
- 2- Data Summary Tables
- 3- Employability skills log