

Hybrid Articles

hybrid:arts

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a new species of training provider in the creative industries

culture art youth technology partnership learning communication people service

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inspiring success

Hybrid Arts are proud to announce that we are one of the first organisations to have been awarded a licence to use the 2012 'Inspire mark' for our Cycle Dance project. Mirroring the London 2012 brand values, only the most accessible, participative, inspiring and stimulating projects and events will achieve the mark – across sport, culture, education, environment, volunteering and business skills. Chosen projects will be granted the right to use the 'Inspire mark' on various project materials, such as posters, brochures and websites. The Inspire mark is part of the London 2012 brand family, recognising that a project has been 'inspired by London 2012' and reflects the values of the Olympic and Paralympic Movements.

The Beach Boys reunion concert Lutterworth, Saturday 12th July

Special Report by Neville Coxon

I had the honour and privilege to spend the day working as the sound engineer for Stephen John Kalinich and Richard Durrant at the Beach Boys reunion gig in Lutterworth, Leicestershire. Kalinich is a singer/songwriter and poet, and has worked with the Beach Boys over the years, and Durrant is an exceptionally talented guitarist, who's virtuoso style has wowed many audiences in many counties including concert appearances with the Royal Philharmonic and BBC concert orchestras. My job was to help set up the P.A and rigging, and then be the sound engineer for the gig, operating a digital mixing desk, ensuring the sound quality was optimum and the microphones were free of feedback and distortion. The gig was a success, and a great evening was had by all. The band were pleased with my work, so I am glad that everything went smoothly and the rehearsals paid off!

join us for 'extraordinary cycles' launch

Hybrid Arts are pleased to announce the launch of our inspired partnership with Coventry Transport Museum for our 2012 initiative -

Extraordinary Cycles is an innovative light, sound and projection performance featuring an international award-winning Flatland BMX rider and stunt cycle group. The event will mark a four year celebration of cycling and cycle production. An 'ideas forum' will inform development of the project leading to exhibitions, events, workshops and further performances around Coventry and Warwickshire.

Saturday 27th September -
Coventry Transport Museum
7pm Ideas Forum
8.30 Extraordinary Cycles
Performance



how teenagers are using the web

A study has found that teenagers are using social networking websites to discuss youth activities but not to find out about what's available. The study, carried out by children's information provider Opportunity Links, examined 12 to 15 year-olds' use of online social networks in relation to youth activities such as sport, art and drama. The study got the young people to develop content on social networks but found they preferred to use the websites to discuss activities. Nikki Soyza, research and consultancy manager at Opportunity Links, said: "Young people use the web as a tool in their contact with each other in sharing information about positive activities and their subsequent involvement. The web content itself doesn't generate involvement in positive activities." A second phase of the study will look at how the web can be used to influence young people's participation in activities.

Becta call for an open source rival for MS Office

Becta has announced that the Alphaplus Consultancy of Manchester has been awarded the winning bid of the first tender for office suite software which offers an alternative to existing products. They will develop a research project that could lead to an "open source" (software that can be downloaded for free) office suite to rival that of Microsoft, meaning that schools and colleges could soon be stepping up use of open source software. This research project will support Becta's recommendation to provide schools specific content development on open source implementations. "Schools will benefit from the research results as they will be able to share best practice, benefit from cost savings and gather a wider experience of non-proprietary software to make informed choices as to what type of technology is best."



Left - This fantastic cardboard creation is the result of an inspirational Carr-Mitchell collaboration.

stealth learning

The Guardian recently published an interesting supplement in association with Futurelab, which recognised the value of informal learning. Hybrid Arts are proud to have been ambassadors of this effective method of learning, delivering learning by stealth to young people who find it difficult to concentrate or get motivated, since our inception. 85% of all learning takes place outside school. Informal learning, where young people control what they do, can inspire them. It is important for schools to recognise these different approaches to learning, and they are now urged to look at creative new ways to teach young people and boost their confidence. This is particularly important for disaffected learners who feel alienated from school. "Learning by stealth" occurs when they are not even thinking about what they are doing. Professor Gill Valentine of the University of Leeds has studied the effects of recreational and informal technology use on formal education. "We found that while children are highly competent in the use of computers and can multi-task, in terms of using webcams and chatting online, few were able to pinpoint exactly what skills they were learning, though they were aware that they were learning something. This suggests that they are picking up creative skills such as experimentation and problem solving, which is quite motivational but not tangible. They are also learning how to socialise."

insider view

Blitz open day by Neville Coxon

I attended the 'Lets Play Games' Open Day to gain an informative insight of the inner workings of a large computer games development company. The day was split into sessions to highlight the respective disciplines of the industry, from the business side to designing and developing the games with 2D and 3D animation and audio. I now have a much clearer view of the requirements needed to work within the games industry, and so feel capably equipped to pass on the benefit of the knowledge to those who want to get involved.

Knife Crime Special Report

both sides of the debate...

This report has been stimulated by the rife coverage of the so-called knife crime 'epidemic' amongst young people, which has taken the British media by storm. Hybrid Arts take a particular interest in this issue, as our close workings with vulnerable young people at risk of being affected by knife crime brings us right to the centre of the debate. Some of the young people we work with have already made their feelings about knife crime known to the public domain, producing a music video on the subject to promote safe messages to other young people (see right). It is interesting to learn of other young people's views about knife crime; and particularly about the government's attempts at solving the problem. When Gordon Brown delivered his knife crime manifesto at a recent press conference, a BBC Newsbeat reporter read out text messages from young listeners saying he didn't have a clue.

Sending knife carriers into hospitals to meet victims: One Newsbeat listener texted to say that if he was in a hospital bed confronted by an attacker, he'd want to stab him. Another listener said it would make the wards more like a 'freak show' for criminals.

Home Office advertising campaign: According to a survey commissioned by Children and Young People Now, 48% thought the adverts wouldn't work. Out of the 500 plus young people aged 11 to 19 surveyed, 62% said the ads had made them more fearful of violent crime. Peta Halls, development officer for youth justice and community safety at The National Youth Agency, said ads designed to shock didn't address why young people carry knives. "To stop knife crime you need to deal with the underlying issues of poverty, lack of aspiration and improving education so young people have real alternatives," she said.

There is also a fear that the growing media obsession risks normalising knife crime. Describing it as 'this summer's high profile crime', journalist Frank Furedi said "Public anguish about the flavour-of-the-month crime is a short-lived enthusiasm. Not so long ago it was the epidemic of gun crime that excited the public's imagination. Before that our attention was absorbed by 'happy-slapping', 'date-rape drug' and 'car-jacking'. In almost every case the attention devoted to the latest crime epidemic was determined by its media publicity value."

The government announced that it is investing £30m in third sector organisations that work with young people to tackle knife and gun crime, to be divided between 12 third sector organisations.

We recommend the government take a leaf out of our Young Agent's Staying Safe campaign, which is realistic and hard-hitting without resorting to shock tactics to get the message across. This effort to set the record straight and avoid the media's glossy sensationalist take on a very serious matter needs recognition - along with the hundreds of inspiring projects being conducted across the UK with young people. It would be helpful if the media took a more supportive stance by showcasing these positive steps towards change more widely.



BBC Radio 4 broadcast a knife crime special in July, asking a panel of experts and the general public 'how can we stop knife crime?'

Richard Garside, Centre of Crime and Justice studies, KCL, said "The statistically interesting but socially worrying thing is who is most likely to be at risk of homicide is the poor – these people have seen their risk of homicide rise very sharply. People living in the richest part of town have actually seen theirs fall – so we've seen a social polarisation of risk as well." The majority of contributors to the show concluded the the government's approach was just not working. One caller who had experienced knife crime said: "There is



no point in adding extra legislation - all that's doing is making politicians feel more self-important. We already have plenty of laws to make this behaviour illegal, and if they are already breaking the law by carrying a knife then another law isn't really going to stop them. What will stop them is education."

Another guest on the show, Alexander Rose, 19, raised the point: "The growing consensus on the street from the ground level of young boys in gangs is that when a case comes their way and they get caught is that you can "bust case" i.e. get away with it, and I don't know for the life of me where this has come from; that young people see it as a slap on the wrist – they don't see the justice system as a body that can hold them down."

so what's the solution?

There were accusations that we have created an excuse society and that a more forceful approach is needed. Garside commented that this raises important questions about how we as a society want to resolve these problems. Do we want to solve these problems by effectively trying to brutalise young people, and scare them into being good people, or do we want to engage them?

The programme offered a series of practical solutions, using the technology that we have available. The inventor of the Mosquito, Howard Stapleton, raised the argument that there are more good young people than bad, and that we could look after them by introducing a mobile phone system, where people could text a number when they see someone carrying a knife.

Other issues raised included:

- National service, to channel the normal aggression of young men.
- Lack of positive role models.

•Cities never close: Parents seem to have lost control of their children, there is no bedtime because there is always somewhere for these young people to go.

Violent film, games and music fuelling violent behaviour amongst young people.

- A general streak of culture in our culture as a whole. Much of our entertainment is based on public humiliation (The Weakest Link), degradation (Big Brother), aggression and verbal and physical violence (almost any drama series, most sport) – and so it's unsurprising that adolescents think this behaviour is normal.

the conclusion Hybrid Arts are firm believers that many young people who demonstrate destructive behaviour do so out of a lack of self esteem and positive aspirations, and the sense that they have no control over where their lives can go we need to give the power back to young people, through positive role models and activities. It is up to us, as a society, to get involved and work with our young people to foster a cohesive community where we interact with each other. It is unproductive, dangerous and inaccurate to demonise and ostracise young people - the vast majority of whom are good citizens who enjoy contributing to society. Adam Nichols of Changemakers, speaking about leadership programmes in a recent interview with Young People Now, raises a very interesting point that is valid for this argument. "We need to alter the way the public think about young people as potential leaders. We want to change perceptions and raise young people's aspirations and build their confidence. Leadership can be expressed in different ways, you can be a leader in the family, for example – we want to challenge society's perception of the ability of young people to lead, and get society to take young people seriously."

Interesting call from a teacher...



I recently had a 9 year old pupil try and strangle another pupil. I went to teach him at home and his mother was screaming at me "my son does not have mental health problems", and I said to hear that we all have mental health problems, and asked the boy what kind of animal his anger was. He told me it was a lion that kills its prey.

And the next week I asked, "how's your lion?" and he said that "the lion and me think differently; the lion goes boo and I go eek". And I think that these children are literally hiding behind a part of their mind which has been designed to frighten other people. But if you can see through it, which is quite honestly a challenge, 9 times out of 10 you find a very frightened, vulnerable part that they are hiding.



Dominic Grieve, the Shadow Home Secretary, agrees that early intervention is the key to long-term crime reduction. He took a firm but, worryingly, negative stance: "I know that if I go to a primary school in my constituency that the head teacher will be able to point out to me those pupils in year one who are likely to be those who will be in young offenders institutions 12 or so years later...because they are exhibiting behavioural difficulties which can be managed within the school but in fact, during the course of the child's time at that school, will not be addressed. So I am convinced that early years intervention is a strategy that we've got to adopt. But then we move on to the situation where children and young people are carrying the knives out in the streets, and I think at this point we need to send out an extremely clear message that this behaviour is extremely unacceptable and letting them off with a caution is not going to achieve that. From my experience as a barrister representative, unless you're prepared to implement tough sentences on behaviour that you perceive as completely outside the pail, you will never get the message home." The idea of identifying and tackling 'problem' families is not one that has gone down well with young people or the public at large.