
An evaluation of sh[OUT] – The
social justice programme of the
Gallery of Modern Art, Glasgow
2009-2010

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Executive summary

Introduction

In 2009, the Research Centre for Museums and Galleries (RCMG), at the University of Leicester's School of Museum Studies, was commissioned by Culture and Sport Glasgow to undertake an evaluation of the Gallery of Modern Art's (GoMA) social justice programme, focusing specifically on sh[OUT]: lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex art and culture.

Research aims and objectives

The aim of the evaluation was to assess the impact, quality and significance of GoMA's social justice programme in relation to the central aim of promoting human rights and providing a forum for visitor and community engagement and debate. The two key objectives were to:

1. Assess the impact of the social justice programmes on visitors and community groups and, in particular, to examine the ways in which these constituencies engage with, and respond to, sh[OUT].
2. Describe the context within which this area of practice has emerged (for example, the motivations underlying the development of the social justice programme and the drivers / factors which have shaped GoMA's approach to this innovative area of practice).

Research methods

The evaluation used a 'mixed methods' research design, combining quantitative and qualitative research methods to generate primary and secondary data from diverse sources and multiple perspectives. This approach provided both breadth and depth to the evidence: quantitative research methods proved remarkably effective in revealing the overall proportions of positive and negative responses to sh[OUT], whilst qualitative approaches were essential for understanding the context in which GoMA's social justice programme has emerged and for assessing its impact for the multiple constituencies involved.

Three separate periods of fieldwork were used to collect primary, qualitative data in the form of case studies and interviews with key constituents. Data was additionally collected in the form of response cards (designed, administered and collected by GoMA); visitor comments and press articles supplied by GoMA; email and telephone contact with participating artists; and a review of existing data, literature and publications relating to the policy context, historical background and political drivers for the social justice programme. Research takes place in a 'real world' context and elements of the research remained flexible, enabling researchers to respond to the changing context of the evaluation.

Key findings

An important contribution to social change

'The boundaries need to be pushed or they don't move'
(James Morton, Scottish Transgender Alliance).

- GoMA's social justice programme makes a very valuable and unique contribution to a broader process of social change by providing a space (with particular qualities and characteristics) within which challenging issues pertaining to human rights can be openly debated.
- The combination of art, politically explicit accompanying interpretation, credible partners and the cultural authority held by Glasgow's largest, most prestigious publicly funded arts venue produces a powerful capacity for engaging visitors and creating a climate in which more progressive and respectful understandings of difference can be presented, supported and fostered.
- The evaluation revealed an important finding – 71% of people who saw sh[OUT] were supportive of the gallery and the project's aims and approach. This is especially significant in the light of the press controversy that erupted later in the programme.
- The artists we spoke to were supportive of GoMA's work in this area but some were (not surprisingly) cautious and especially anxious about the use of interpretation that might be seen to close down possibilities for audiences to engage with their work. At the same time, evaluation with visitors and community groups that do not typically visit art galleries confirmed the need for interpretive materials.
- The social justice programme is a challenging and largely uncharted area of gallery practice which – as the difficult experience of this fourth biennial programme has shown - has the potential to generate negative responses and related management challenges. It can be argued that this controversy itself – the fact that so many groups were challenged and sought opportunities to express their counter opinions – is an important, necessary (though often painful and extraordinarily challenging to manage) part of the process of contributing towards social change.

Changing attitudes – a balancing act?

- There is a difficult balance to achieve concerning how far boundaries can be pushed when the ultimate goal is to engender increasing support amongst a range of constituencies for an issue like LGBTI human rights. There is a need to take a strong stance on the issues (one which can challenge and extend the boundaries of acceptance and tolerance) but where this position is perceived to be too extreme, too far out of step with contemporary values and social norms, then there is a danger that the initiative is perceived as sensationalist and can, perhaps, ultimately undo some of the benefits that are being achieved.
- Significant judgement is required to identify where prudent risk management ends and self censorship begins. The issue of sexual explicitness, as featured in the artworks, is perhaps pertinent here. Some visitors – both those who identified as LGBTI and those who identified as heterosexual – expressed their discomfort with some of the work in the main exhibition, whilst others (e.g. the Advisory Board) viewed the inclusion of certain works as a sign of commitment on the part

of the Gallery to representing them fully and fairly. At the same time, more provocative works may work against the goal of building more widespread public support for LGBTI human rights. This is where the balancing act becomes particularly challenging.

The significance of the human rights frame

- One element that has been consistent across the four social justice programmes is the strapline - contemporary art and human rights - which is important for a number of reasons. Not only does it provide continuity – a brand that helps to distinguish the programme from other GoMA initiatives – but it also performs an important 'framing' function, closely associating these biennial events with a concept – human rights – which, at least in the abstract, has been found to enjoy almost universal acceptance across different cultures, political constituencies and publics.
- *How might the transformative power of the concept and language of human rights be more fully drawn upon to enlist public, community, political and media support for future social justice strands?*

Integrating the different elements of the social justice programme

- Part of the success of the social justice programme lies in the comprehensive approach which brings together all parts of the gallery and its staff to work on different elements under a single theme. At the same time, the different elements of the programme appear to be fairly compartmentalised in terms of both process and product; one consequence of this is that displays arising from community engagement are clearly marked as such by their placement in the balcony area.
- *What might be gained by blurring the boundaries between the work that is displayed in the balcony area and the work in the main galleries? Co-creative processes might provide an opportunity to stimulate exciting new approaches in GoMA's future social justice programming.*

Strengthening links with the education authority

- The particular problems surrounding schools involvement which occurred early on in the sh[OUT] programme curtailed valuable opportunities for working with schools. Strengthening links with the education authority could be enormously beneficial for planned future work.

A space for debate and dialogue

- A key element in the success of the social justice programme is the capacity for the gallery to facilitate (to host *and* to inform) public dialogue and debate. Visitors make extensive use of the dwell space to share their own comments, feelings, and other reactions via comments cards and books.
- *What might be gained / lost by embedding the process and outcome of public debate more fully within the physical and intellectual space of the exhibition? Can the debate itself be more fully drawn into the exhibition and related programming? What are the dangers associated with doing this?*

1. Research design: aims, objectives and methods

Introduction

In 2009, the Research Centre for Museums and Galleries at the University of Leicester's School of Museum Studies, was commissioned by Culture and Sport Glasgow to undertake an evaluation of the Gallery of Modern Art's social justice programme, focusing specifically on sh[OUT]: lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex art and culture.

Figure 1: Gallery of Modern Art, Glasgow



This report documents the process of the evaluation (research design, methods, analysis and so on), presents the findings from the study (focusing primarily on the impact of the programme on visitors, public opinion and community participants) and concludes with some suggestions and questions that might be used by GoMA in thinking through their approach to future strands of the programme.

Research aims and objectives

The aim of the evaluation was to assess the impact, quality and significance of GoMA's social justice programme in relation to the central aim of promoting human rights and providing a forum for visitor and community engagement and debate. The fourth programme on this theme - sh[OUT] - provided a focus for addressing two key aims within the evaluation, which were:

1. To assess the impact of the social justice programme on visitors and community groups and, in particular, to examine the ways in which these constituencies engage with, and respond to sh[OUT].
2. To describe the context within which this area of practice has emerged (for example, the motivations underlying the development of the social justice programme and the drivers / factors which have shaped GoMA's approach to this innovative area of practice).

The major controversy which developed part way through the sh[OUT] programme led to some adjustments to the research focus and objectives with additional emphasis given to identifying and analysing the impact of the programme on different groups. In particular, it was agreed that we would give additional attention to capturing the ways in which a variety of users (visitors, community groups,) perceive, understand and respond to GoMA's aims to promote LGBTI rights and to engage users in debate in this area.

Research framework and methodologies

The evaluation used a mixed methods research design, combining quantitative and qualitative methods to capture and generate primary data from diverse sources and multiple perspectives. This primary data was augmented with secondary data from a number of sources relevant to GoMA's programme. Such a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods is becoming increasingly familiar in social science research and a number of approaches have been identified.¹ Elements of the research remained flexible, enabling researchers to respond to the changing context of the evaluation and take opportunities to gather relevant and useful information as it arose.

Quantitative research methods proved remarkably effective in revealing the overall proportions of positive and negative responses to sh[OUT]. The remainder (and largest part of the evaluation) utilised research methods that were qualitative in nature. Qualitative research is based on interpretive philosophies,² where the focus is on understanding specific events in specific settings. This approach was essential to understanding the context in which GoMA's social justice programme has emerged and to assess its impact for the multiple constituencies involved. Qualitative research recognises that there are multiple interpretations of events and diverse responses to social settings. It has a particular concern with the meanings accorded to situations – it seeks to understand what Mason calls 'intellectual puzzles.'³ While there are many forms of qualitative research, all have in common an emphasis on holistic understanding of events in their contexts, and a concern with meanings and actions.

Three key aspects of the processes of qualitative research are *description* (context, processes, intentions, events, multiple meanings); *classification* (breaking up the data, categorising it, and reassembling it through appropriate conceptualisation);

¹ Robson, C. (2002) *Real world research* (second edition), Oxford, Blackwell, p372.

² Glesne, C. and Peshkin, A. (1992) *Becoming qualitative researchers: an introduction*, White Plains, NY, Longman.

³ Mason, J. (1996) *Qualitative researching*, London, Sage.

and *connections* (finding patterns in the data, linking the evidence to broader themes, patterns or theories and so on). Research processes proceed through progressive focusing – as the context, actors and issues within the context become familiar, themes begin to emerge, and the research puzzles are progressively refined and addressed.

Researchers were aware of their position within the research; the experience, skills, knowledge of the research team was critical in the gathering of evidence and the analysis of the data. This influenced the selection of what to look at, what to search for, what might be significant in the analysis of the intellectual puzzle, and the explanation of this significance. Where possible, researchers carried out their research together rather than individually. This enabled a comparison of perceptions and notes in the analysis, providing a more detailed and rounded experience for each occasion. When it came to analysing and interpreting the data, it was essential to have more than one approach to understanding events and outcomes.

Research ethics

The evaluation raised a number of ethical issues, bringing researchers into contact with young people and community members, as well as individuals in a professional capacity. All research was carried out within the University of Leicester's Research Code of Conduct, Data Protection Code of Practice, and Research Ethics Code of Practice (<http://www.le.ac.uk/academic/quality/Codes/index.html>). The following guidelines also provide a framework for RCMG research:

- Statement of ethical practice for the British Sociological Association, <http://www.britisoc.co.uk>
- Ethical Guidelines, Social Research Association, <http://www.the-sra.org.uk/>
- Revised Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research, British Educational Research Association, <http://www.bera.ac.uk/>
- Legal and ethical issues in interviewing children, www.esds.ac.uk/aandp/create/guidelineschildren.asp
- Guidelines for research among children and young people, Internet research guidelines, Qualitative research guidelines and The responsibilities of interviewers, The Market Research Society 2000, <http://www.mrs.org.uk>

Researchers required standard disclosure for researchers from the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and from Disclosure Scotland. It was acknowledged by researchers that the theme of *sh[OUT]* – the promotion of LGBTI human rights – could potentially be an emotive and challenging subject for individuals, which required researchers to be sensitive to the background and context of research participants. Language can be used (intentionally and unintentionally) to discriminate and stigmatise and therefore interview questions were carefully developed and piloted to ensure that they did not cause unnecessary distress to participants.

Researchers were aware of the Child Protection Law in Scotland and operated within the confines of that Law. At the time of the research, the Law in Scotland was being revised as to whether it should be a legislative requirement that evidence of underage sexual activity by children should be disclosed by professionals. In the

light of this, a disclaimer was included in the information sheet, adapted from one used by the Scottish Law Centre (<http://www.sclc.org.uk/Conf.htm>):

'What you tell us is confidential - that means we won't tell anyone - UNLESS we think you are in real danger. Then we may have to tell someone so that they can help you. If you are not sure, you can ask us about this before you tell us anything. You do not have to answer any questions that you do not want to answer and can leave the interview at any time.'

Young people were selected in careful consultation with the key agencies responsible for their welfare. In order to protect participants and researchers, young people were interviewed in small groups and with two researchers or another adult present (such as a teacher or community group leader) so that there was never a situation whereby a young person was left alone with a researcher. Young people were informed that they did not have to answer any questions that they were uncomfortable with and interviews would be suspended if participants wished.

Names of participants have been changed where individuals have requested that their real names are not published or linked to their words.

Methods of data collection

A number of research methods were used to generate primary data and to gather secondary data, to provide both breadth and depth of evidence. Three separate periods of fieldwork were used to collect primary, qualitative data in the form of:

- Case studies (semi-structured interviews, observations) with individuals and groups involved in the outreach programmes
- Semi-structured interviews with representatives from collaborating organisations
- Semi-structured interviews with participating artists
- Semi-structured interviews with the senior management of Culture and Sport Glasgow and a Councillor.

Additionally, data was collected in the form of:

- Analysis and interpretation of visitor response cards designed, administered and collected by GoMA during the programme.
- Additional responses to the exhibition in the form of visitor comments (telephone, letters and email) and press articles also supplied by GoMA
- Email contact with a selection of participating artists (local, national and international)
- Review of existing data, literature and publications relating to the policy context for the work, historical background, political drivers etc.

The research methods are described in greater detail in the following sections.

Data collection at GoMA

The periods of data collection at GoMA were a critical part of the evaluation, essential for collecting evidence of the impact of sh[OUT] and understanding the

context within which the broader programme has emerged. Two main periods of data collection were carried out by the research team (Richard Sandell, Jocelyn Dodd and Ceri Jones) between 12-14 May 2009 and 26-29 October 2009. In addition, Richard Sandell attended the opening of the exhibition and conducted research (interviews and focus group) between 23-24 July with the Scottish Transgender Alliance and participants in the TRANSforming Arts group. Tables 1, 2 and 3 give an outline of the research activities carried out during each research period.

Table 1: Research activities 12-14 May 2009 and 9 June 2009

Date	Research Activity	Researcher(s)
12 05 2009	<p><u>Interviews with GoMA staff</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Victoria Hollows, GoMA Manager • Sean McGlashan, Curator • Frances McCourt, Learning and Access Curator • Annie, Visitor Assistant <p><u>Interviews with visitors to GoMA</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alastair, in his 50s, student, from Glasgow • David, in his 40s, care worker, from Glasgow • Elididh and Marie, both students • James and Harry, from Falkirk and Glasgow 	Richard Sandell Jocelyn Dodd Ceri Jones
13 05 2009	<p><u>Interview with community representative</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hugh Donaghy, Glasgow Team Leader, LGBT Youth Scotland /Advisory Board <p><u>Interview with senior management</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mark O'Neill, Director of Museums and Galleries, Culture and Sport Glasgow <p><u>Interview with local politician</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councillor Archie Graham <p><u>Interviews with GoMA staff</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Katie Bruce, Social Inclusion Coordinator, and Jenny Bell, maternity cover • Chris, Visitor Assistant <p><u>Interviews with visitors to GoMA</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Claire, in her 20s, art student from Glasgow • Claire, in her 40s, University administrator from Strathclyde • Ryan, in his 20s, call centre worker, from Glasgow 	Richard Sandell Jocelyn Dodd Ceri Jones
14 05 2009	<p><u>Interviews with GoMA staff</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ben Harman, Curator <p><u>Interviews with outreach programme participants</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Declan and Felix, LGBT Youth Scotland 	Richard Sandell Jocelyn Dodd Ceri Jones

Date	Research Activity	Researcher(s)
	<p><u>Interview with community representative</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dianne Barry, Artist and filmmaker, Our Story Scotland /Advisory Board • James Morton, Scottish Transgender Alliance/Advisory Board <p><u>Interview with social justice programme partner</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heather Lynch, Education Programmer, Tramway <p><u>Interviews with visitors to GoMA</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kevin, in his 30s, from Perthshire • Martin, in his 50s, logistician • Peter, from Glasgow 	
09 06 2009	<p><u>Interview with senior management</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bridget McConnell, Chief Executive, Culture and Sport Glasgow 	

Table 2: Research activities 22-23 July 2009

Date	Research Activity	Researcher(s)
22 07 2009	<p><u>Interview with community representative</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • James Morton, Scottish Transgender Alliance/Advisory Board 	Richard Sandell
23 07 2009	<p><u>Focus group with outreach programme participants</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kristi, Finn and Amy, TRANSforming Arts 	Richard Sandell

Table 3: Research activities 27-29 October 2009

Date	Research Activity	Researcher(s)
27 10 2009	<p><u>Interviews with GoMA staff</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Victoria Hollows, GoMA Manager • Jackie Craven, Museum Supervisor • Joan, Ross and Annie, Visitor Assistants <p><u>Observation of session and interview with outreach programme participants</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depot Arts <p><u>Interviews with visitors to GoMA</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daniela, 30-45 years, teacher, from Portugal • Marie, 45-60 years, councillor, from Glasgow 	Richard Sandell Jocelyn Dodd Ceri Jones
28 10 2009	<p><u>Focus groups with outreach programme participants</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aspiring Young Women – key workers and participants • Kristi, Finn and Amy, TRANSforming Arts <p><u>Interviews with visitors to GoMA</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marie-Claire, 20-30 years, fine arts student, from New Zealand 	Richard Sandell Jocelyn Dodd Ceri Jones

Date	Research Activity	Researcher(s)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jane and Frank, both retired, from Cheshire • Tom, aged 45-60 years, self-employed, from Glasgow • Renee and Thomas, 30-45 years, from Canada 	
29 10 2009	<p><u>Interviews with artists</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chad McCail • Dave Sherry 	Richard Sandell Jocelyn Dodd Ceri Jones

Interviews

Selection of participants for interview was made by researchers with the support and judgement of GoMA staff and permission was sought from appropriate 'gatekeepers' (e.g. teachers, community group leaders) in order to gain access to potentially vulnerable young people.

Visitors were selected at random for interview during their visit to the Gallery, although an attempt was made to reflect the diverse characteristics of visitors to the exhibition including local, national and international visitors and representing a variety of ages and social backgrounds.

Case studies

Case studies facilitate the exploration of events and situations, and an understanding of the issues and contexts that produced them. Case studies were carried out with individuals and groups involved in outreach projects and individual participants were recruited in collaboration with GoMA. Case studies were selected on the basis of criteria, which included type of activity, duration in programme, diversity and type of participants.

Response cards

The response cards were designed, distributed, administered and collected by GoMA to be self-completed by visitors. A resources space was provided as part of the main exhibition in Gallery 4 where visitors could complete a response and pin it to a publicly displayed board. The response card asked visitors to respond to the following statement, 'Please let us know your thoughts on the sh[OUT] exhibition and programme'. It did not ask for any demographic information.

Response cards were photocopied by GoMA staff and sent to the research team between the months of June-November 2009 for analysis and interpretation. In response to the controversy and in discussion with GoMA, a far greater number of response cards than was originally anticipated - 1362 in total - were eventually analysed. To give an overview of visitor responses to sh[OUT], the response cards were categorised into two broad groups:

- Positive - to distinguish responses which were predominantly positive in terms of support for the exhibition or the theme of LGBTI human rights
- Negative – to distinguish responses that were predominantly negative in terms of a lack of support or objections to the exhibition or to the theme of LGBTI human rights.

A third category, 'obscure', was included to distinguish those visitors responses which were judged to be irrelevant to the exhibition or the theme, or could not be interpreted without the input of the writer. This included comments that were:

- Illegible or entirely irrelevant
- Written in a foreign language
- Drawings.

Such 'obscure' comments are by no means unique either to the sh[OUT] exhibition or to GoMA. For example, GoMA visitor assistants explained the many ways in which visitors to other GoMA exhibitions and displays make similar use of comments books and cards and these are commonly found in other RCMG studies.

The categorisation of comments cards as either 'positive', 'negative' or 'obscure' inevitably relied on the researcher making a judgement regarding 'best fit'. From the total of 1362 visitor responses categorised in this way, 714 response cards from Gallery 4 were analysed in greater depth with the assistance of the computer package for qualitative analysis, NVIVO7. These were supplemented with a further 63 comments from the comments book entitled 'Your Stories', which was designed to capture visitors' personal stories, giving a total of 777 individual visitor responses.⁴

Response cards were excluded from this qualitative analysis for the following reasons:

- Where responses had been photocopied more than once, these were eliminated to avoid repetition
- Responses in a foreign language were excluded where it was not possible to translate them
- Responses identified as being irrelevant, drawings or too ambiguous (and needing additional interpretation) were excluded.

Response cards were further organised in groups depending upon which month they had been received from GoMA. Table 4 shows that for each month a relatively similar proportion of cards was analysed in NVIVO7, with November and 'Your Stories' in particular having the lowest proportion of analysed comments.

Table 4: Breakdown of response cards for each month analysed in NVIVO7

Category	Number	Percentage
June	202	26%
July	177	23%
August	192	25%
November	143	18%
'Your Stories'	63	8%
Total	777	-

Visitor responses were entered and systematically analysed in NVIVO7. Firstly they were categorised with 'free nodes' based on key themes developed from the

⁴ The book 'Your Stories' was made available in the response space in Gallery 4.

content of the responses given by visitors. Visitor responses were coded with multiple 'nodes' or categories to reflect that visitors often cover a number of themes in their responses. These 'nodes' (categories) were then adapted and refined, seeking patterns and similarities in order to make broader categories of explanation, giving an overview of the main ways in which visitors responded to the sh[OUT] exhibition.

Desk research

Desk research was carried out in order to review existing data and publications relating to the policy context and theoretical framework for the work, historical background, and political drivers behind the social justice programme.

Responding to the context of the research

Research takes place in the 'real world' context and therefore researchers and the research plan needed to be flexible in order to respond to unexpected changes and developments within that context. Developments around the sh[OUT] exhibition, including the response in the media and controversy surrounding two of the balcony exhibitions, necessitated the following changes to be made to the research methods:

- sh[OUT] was originally intended to feature an education programme for secondary schools. However the early controversy surrounding the exhibition (in particular, based around inclusion of photographs by Robert Mapplethorpe) meant that the Education department of the City Council decided that they would not be sending their schools and no other schools visited.
- The challenges of making contact with vulnerable young people and having to access them through their key workers meant that researchers had limited influence over developing and maintaining relationships with potential participants in the research.
- The changes in circumstances for the schools and outreach programmes enabled more emphasis to be placed on visitor responses including interviews with visitors in the galleries and analysis and interpretation of a much greater number of response cards than had been originally intended.

2. The social justice programme – background and context

Factors behind the emergence of the programme

GoMA's social justice programme emerged out of what Mark O'Neill describes as a 'combination of opportunism and principle'. Around 2001/02 Glasgow City Council agreed to take and house approximately 10,000 asylum seekers. The negative press coverage surrounding this prompted the Council to ask departments to enhance access to their services for asylum seekers and refugees and to contribute towards improved perceptions of these groups amongst the community at large. At the same time, Glasgow Museums was approached by Amnesty International about a selling exhibition and discussions began around the possibilities for developing a more significant partnership.

The opportunities posed by these events fitted in well with Glasgow Museums' desire to engage with contemporary social issues and to build on its strong track record of innovation and excellence in working with diverse, often hard to reach, audiences. An organisational restructure (following a Best Value Review) had seen education and learning (informal as well as formal) much more embedded into the museum service. An opportunity was identified to develop a new identity for GOMA, one which could move on from the model on which it had been founded (and which had alienated many artists) to combine accessibility and community engagement with art of the highest quality.

The social justice programme, conceived by Mark O'Neill, was designed to distinguish GoMA from other galleries in its approach, values and practice. The programme was intentionally designed to embody and represent the civic values of the City Council and, at the same time, to demonstrate that it is possible to blend artistic and curatorial integrity with presentation of art of the highest international quality. The programme was designed to be specifically 'anti sensational'. It emerged after the infamous *Sensation* exhibition and set out to present art not to shock but as a vehicle for a serious political commentary about social justice and human rights.

'we want to challenge people to think and feel differently, but we are not about trying to outrage people... it is not serious politics if you alienate most of your audience, you do not generate a dialogue... discussion... thinking... We want to raise issues - but responsibly' (Mark O'Neill).

Partnerships

The social justice programme relies on a collaborative approach through which gallery staff learn to understand more about the complexity of the social issues with which the programmes engage whilst drawing on expertise from a variety of relevant external agencies.

Although the approach is collaborative, the clear and stated view from the outset is that the gallery has the final say. Advisory groups are viewed as critical to the

success of the programmes but the language here is critical – external partners offer advice but do not have control.

It appears that the mechanism of the advisory group proved more problematic with sh[OUT] than it had been with the previous programmes. This may stem from the issue of LGBTI rights itself – a topic which encompasses a wider variety of views, opinions and perspectives than those which exist around, for example, the subject of violence against women. Alongside the internal complexity and fragmentation of views within the communities that comprised the sh[OUT] board, is the fact that LGBTI rights are an especially contested and timely topic. This means that some within the LGBTI community, for example those with a more radical identity politics, are keen to present one set of ideas – based around emphasising difference and demanding respect for those differences – whilst others wish to emphasise sameness and a mainstreaming of LGBTI culture. This played out in very specific ways, for example in relation to the way in which the inclusion of the Mapplethorpe images was viewed.

For some members of the advisory board, the inclusion of the Mapplethorpe images was enormously significant;

‘When the council said yeah you can have the Mapplethorpes... that’s when I saw the council was 100% behind it - that was a real turning point for me.’
(Hugh Donaghy)

For others, they were deemed ‘unhelpful to the cause’ and seen to represent aspects of difference which some in the gay community were uncomfortable with being associated with. (These tensions surrounding, on the one hand, the celebration of difference and on the other, the shared experiences between LGBTI and non-LGBTI communities, were also strongly present in visitor responses. See section 3).

Figure 2: Headline from the *Daily Mail* highlighting the inclusion of images by Robert Mapplethorpe in the sh[OUT] exhibition



Shifting perceptions of GoMA

One motivation behind the development of the social justice programme was to help to shift perceptions of GoMA, especially amongst contemporary artists in Glasgow and beyond.

Victoria Hollows saw the start of the social justice programme as a significant gamble, especially as GoMA was beginning to build relationships with contemporary artists;

'It was a make or break situation... when we were first asked to do something on refugees and asylum seekers we thought – 'do we have to?'. We were just getting support in the art community and thought it would be perceived in completely the wrong way... we wanted it to be big scale, to embrace international practice and to raise (GoMA's) profile, not to be the final nail in the coffin, not to be seen as doing something very political and very tick boxy and do goody and not be respected with any credibility in the art world... We had a strong belief that you could have good quality art work, embracing contemporary art practice and have strong audience support (Victoria Hollows).

Interviews with participating artists (local, national, international) revealed wide ranging views - significant support for the social justice programme amongst most interviewees combined with some caution, circumspection and, in one instance, strong negative feelings (although these were linked to the subsequent controversy and accusations of censorship rather than antipathy towards the idea of socially engaged gallery practice *per se*. See section 5).

The social justice programme was also intended to make the gallery more accessible and relevant to the City Council and to elected members as well as to visitors and communities. Interviews with Bridget McConnell, Chief Executive of Culture and Sport Glasgow and Archie Graham, Executive Member, Social Care and the Commonwealth Games, suggest different views on this issue. Archie Graham claimed that, since GoMA was borne out of close engagement with City Council policies, the social justice programme has not led to a shift in council perceptions of the gallery, but instead represents a continuation of its original founding principles. Bridget McConnell, on the other hand, highlighted the distinctive role that the social justice programme has had;

'The social justice programme has given the gallery a unique niche with the best of contemporary art linked to social justice... a mix which often does not work too well with allegations of 'dumbing down'... it has created a unique space where two divergent audiences can come together... neither is compromised but are enhanced and augmented in coming together' (Bridget McConnell)

Glasgow's complex (and sometimes contradictory) moral values

Understanding the social/political context of Glasgow is critically important to understanding the social justice programme as a whole, the conflicting responses to

sh[OUT] in particular, and the controversy it generated. As Bridget McConnell explained;

'It shapes the position that many people are taking at a local level... We should not make too many assumptions about people's understanding... we need to be much more self conscious in the future of the potential for different reactions and viewpoints'.
(Bridget McConnell)

Glasgow City Council's long standing commitment to issues of equality and justice has provided a fertile ground in which institutions like GoMA (and, of course, Glasgow Museums more broadly) have been supported to develop and implement progressive policy and practice. The city council's radical left wing politics have resulted in an extremely strong set of equality policies grounded in human rights.

Bridget McConnell, however, explained that this commitment to equality stems from a particular legacy, based on a history of discrimination of Irish Catholics in the west coast of Scotland. Whilst political power in Glasgow is not always explicitly based on religion, it is nevertheless often strongly rooted in Catholicism. This leads to a series of contradictions which, it might be argued, were surfaced and thrown into sharp relief by the particularities of sh[OUT] - a programme which sought to lend support not simply to human rights (in the abstract) but to LGBTI human rights in particular.

Bridget McConnell describes Glasgow as being subject to a form of *social conservatism*, which is often latent and means that the issues explored in sh[OUT] around LGBTI human rights are ones which many in the city are much less comfortable with than the abstract (and arguably less controversial and challenging) concept of human rights.

Social conservatism might begin to explain why Edinburgh (which in many ways is more staid and conservative) is more comfortable with, for example, a major Mapplethorpe exhibition while the more radical and socially progressive Glasgow has struggled.

The issue however is a complex one. Bridget McConnell argues that the city's social conservatism has many positive elements – it results in policies and a political position that is supportive of women and defends the working classes (for example, a position of zero tolerance on prostitution and lap dancing clubs in Glasgow whereas these are tolerated in Edinburgh). At the same time, it helps to explain why – of all the potentially challenging social justice themes that GoMA has tackled - LGBTI rights has been by far the most inflammatory.

This curious mix of strong support for equality issues combined with discriminatory and regressive reactions to some rights issues appeared in a number of places in our evaluation. Hugh Donaghy from LGBT Youth Scotland, for example, explained that whilst his organisation received financial support from Glasgow City Council (via Culture and Sport Glasgow) – reflecting the city's support for an equality focused organisation - the city's Education authority is the only education authority across Scotland that will not participate and refer young people to them.

3. Visitor responses and engagement

Introduction

This part of the report is in three main parts. The first – VISITOR RESPONSES OVERVIEW – provides a primarily quantitative analysis of visitor reactions to sh[OUT]. The second - GENERAL COMMENTS AND REACTIONS – examines the most significant themes using a qualitative analysis to probe more deeply. The third section - ATTITUDES TOWARDS LGBTI HUMAN RIGHTS – focuses on the impact of sh[OUT] on the ways in which visitors engaged with and discussed the issue of LGBTI equality and rights.

i) VISITOR RESPONSES OVERVIEW

An analysis was undertaken of the 1362 response cards supplied by GoMA that came from the response space of Gallery 4 to give an overview of the proportion of visitor responses that were positive or negative. This revealed that a significant majority of those who visited sh[OUT] responded positively.

Table 1 shows the number of cards assigned to each of the three categories. Just over half (51%) of the cards could be categorised as 'positive' and only 20% could be categorised as 'negative'.

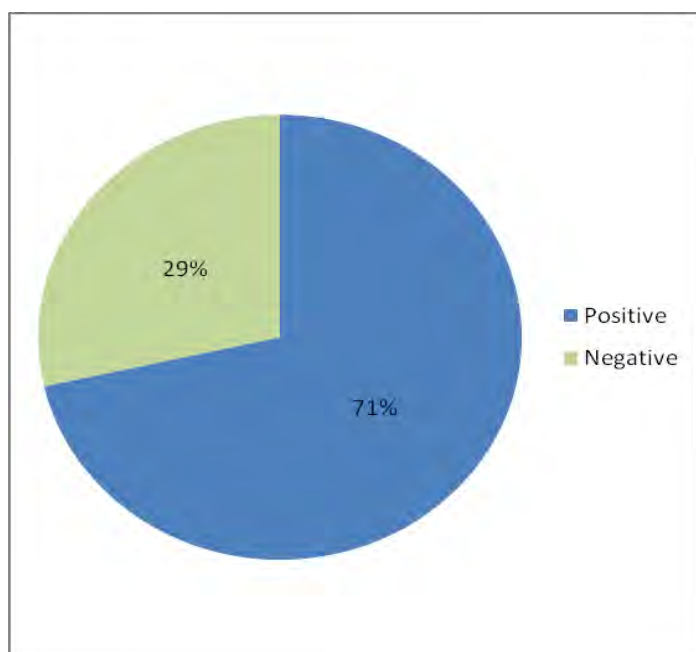
Table 1: Breakdown of response cards into positive, negative and obscure

Category	Number	%
Positive	693	51%
Negative	277	20%
Obscure	392	29%
Total	1362	-

Removing the 'obscure' category gives a much clearer picture of the proportion of positive and negative reactions. 71% of visitors expressed their support for the exhibition and its aims compared to 29% who expressed their objection to the exhibition and its theme (Figure 3).

This is an important finding for the evaluation, especially in light of press controversy that erupted later in the programme, and helps to put the apparent opposition to sh[OUT] in context. The scale and tenor of the press controversy might be taken to imply widespread public opposition whereas the detailed evaluation offers evidence to the contrary, with greater than 70% of visitors in support (see also, the concluding section of this report).

Figure 3: Overview of response card categories from Gallery, June-November



N= Positive (693); Negative (277)

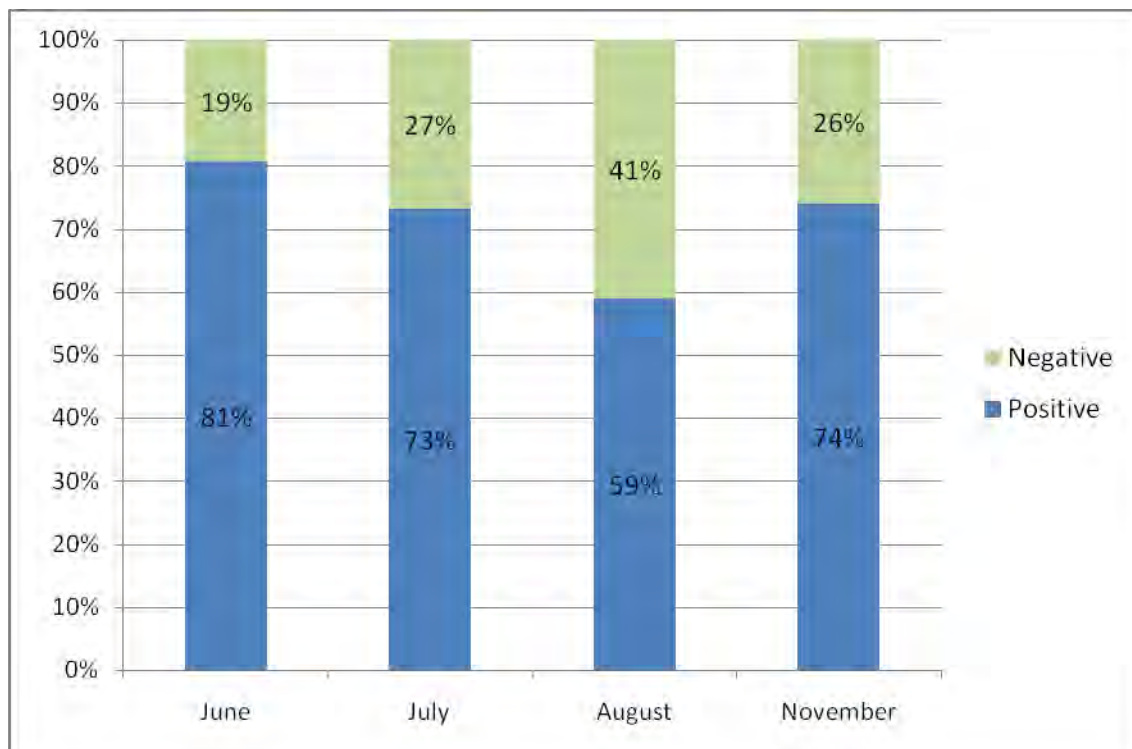
Looking separately at the response cards received for the months of June, July, August and November, a trend emerges in the proportion of 'positive' and 'negative' comments. Table 2 shows that, in June, the exhibition attracted the highest proportion of positive comments (61%) and the lowest proportion of negative comments (15%). These proportions fluctuated over the months, with the lowest percentage of positive comments (19%) and the highest number of negative comments (27%) occurring in August.

Table 2: Monthly breakdown of response card categories, June-November 2009

	June		July		August		November	
Positive	204	61%	196	51%	153	39%	140	57%
Negative	49	15%	72	19%	107	27%	49	20%
Obscure	84	25%	116	30%	135	34%	57	23%
Total	337	-	384	-	395	-	246	-

By removing the 'obscure' comments it can be shown more clearly how the changes in positive and negative responses were reflected over the months of the exhibition (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Monthly breakdowns of positive and negative responses, June-November



N= June (253); July (268); August (260); November (189)

The substantial increase in negative comments in August can be attributed to the temporary exhibition in the balcony area, *Made in God's Image* which attracted a huge amount of controversy in the media and outrage from many who visited. The criticism of the exhibition, however, was also a product of direct intervention by faith groups and campaigners some of whom did not view the exhibition but came into the Gallery to ask for comments cards that they could complete and submit to GoMA. Visitor assistants reported several occasions where individuals who did not go up to the gallery, requested multiple copies of blank forms. It is likely therefore that the increase in negative comments was a result of both genuine discontent from visitors who saw the exhibitions as well as a reflection of the efforts of campaigners angry at GoMA's display of the artworks.

ii) GENERAL COMMENTS AND REACTIONS

Introduction: analysing the response cards and visitor interviews

The previous section shows that visitors were predominantly positive towards sh[OUT] and to the theme of LGBTI human rights. This section will look more closely at the ways in which visitors have responded to the exhibition and the human rights theme, both positive and negative, based on a detailed analysis of the response cards and visitor interviews collected as part of the research process.

A total of 777 response cards from sh[OUT] were analysed and coded in NVIVO7. Response cards that had been on public display in the response space in Gallery 4 were supplemented with further comments made in a comments book entitled

'Your Stories' which was designed to capture visitors' personal stories and reflections related to the theme of LGBTI experience. This was also provided in the response space in Gallery 4.

The interviews carried out with 20 visitors (in pairs and separately) were transcribed and analysed to identify emerging patterns and attitudes that could be developed into broader categories that would reflect visitor responses to sh[OUT]. They enabled the research team to probe more deeply into visitors' motivations and responses, their thoughts on individual works and on the themes within the exhibition – a process which helped to elucidate and further interrogate, the patterns emerging from visitor response cards. During the process of analysis it was noted that the patterns and attitudes identified in interviews were very similar to those emerging from the response cards.

Context to the visitor responses

Emerging from the visitor responses were myriad ways in which people engaged with the exhibition. Whether they responded positively, negatively or lukewarmly to the artwork on display or felt moved to write details of an affective response which drew on their own personal experiences of the issues being explored, through their responses visitors were subtly highlighting their views on whether museums and art galleries like GoMA should tackle social justice issues like LGBTI human rights. On the whole, a significant number of visitors were supportive of GoMA's approach to the subject and the idea that art could be used as an effective medium through which to communicate often complex and challenging themes to visitors. There were also negative responses and comments from those who were rather less certain about the effectiveness of GoMA's approach to tackling social justice issues.

From the response cards and interviews it can be gleaned that sh[OUT] attracted a diverse audience who found relevance in its presentation of LGBTI human rights. Through their comments visitors identified themselves as young, old, local to Glasgow and from far flung places such as Canada, Italy, Argentina, Portugal, Eastern Europe, South Africa, Mexico and Thailand. The exhibition attracted many members of the LGBTI community too including visitors who identified themselves as gay, lesbian, bisexual, Queer, and trans.

Characteristics of responses

Taking the responses as a whole, the research team considered that these were characterised by especially thoughtful and deep levels of engagement (evidenced by the numbers of very substantial and lengthy responses) and by high levels of debate/ dialogue (evidenced by the many comments that directly refer to other visitors' views). Moreover, responses were sometimes inventive, creative and poetic, sometimes drawing on other sources (one visitor quoted Sappho, another visitor used the lyrics of a song by Christina Aguilera) to connect with the themes they identified as emerging from the exhibition.

The following sections will look firstly at visitors' modes of engagement with the sh[OUT] exhibition and, more broadly, with the idea of GoMA as a public space for debate before moving on to examine in more detail the impact of the programme

on the ways in which visitors thought about and discussed the subject of LGBTI human rights.

Key themes

- ***Diverse views and opinions on the artwork***

The works on display as part of sh[OUT] attracted a range of responses from visitors; they were considered interesting, thought-provoking, of high to poor standard, challenging, disgusting, too explicit, not explicit enough. The more positive comments were in the majority, with most visitors finding something that appealed to their tastes or interests or to support the use of art as an effective means of conveying and communicating social issues. One visitor wrote that it was an 'Amazing exhibition, really inspiring,' which had a positive impact upon their attitudes towards the LGBTI community because it 'made [me] look at gay people in a whole different light.'

Someone who had visited the exhibition twice found that its power did not diminish with familiarity:

'I have seen the exhibit on the top floor before, and yet it still amazes me how touching it is to see it again...'

One visitor, who identified themselves as heterosexual, was full of praise for what they considered to be 'the most interesting part of the whole gallery' and the awareness it raised around a 'vital' social issue:

'Art that says something both on personal and social level. Much more vital than the academic indulgent material elsewhere. If people don't communicate about their sexuality how will we learn about each other and from each other - I am glad I came here'.

Many visitors were full of praise for GoMA for tackling the issue through art. The following comment brings together quite a few of the themes that emerged separately in a significant number of response cards:

'I think it's very encouraging and insightful to present such pictures because it gives a voice through art to a subject that is largely taboo, even today in modern society. Yes it's explicit but nobody would raise an eyebrow if it was heterosexual erotica. Well done Glasgow for highlighting this issue!'

In contrast, a small number of visitors objected to the presentation of art with a strong political message;

'Can't everyone... be themselves and not make a fuss about it? Art only needs to be Art.'

Whilst the majority of visitors praised the art on show as being tasteful, beautiful and inspiring, a minority of visitors commented that it was tasteless, poorly executed or poorly curated - of a poor standard generally. Some of these were the familiar

clichéd remarks which are regularly made about modern or contemporary art and others were more considered:

'I've seen more thoughtful art in urinals. Much of this is offensive and thoughtless',

'HOW COULD YOU RUIN A BEAUTIFUL BUILDING BY EXHIBITING SUCH CRAP? IGNORANT'

'Good effort but quite a weak selection of work. The work by established artists - Grayson, Mapplethorpe, Nan Goldin was excellent but some of the other works were amateurish – especially the penis tree. WTF? Better curation needed'.

'As art it is of poor quality - as political statement it is not much better - could have been a good idea too'.

The perceived censorship of the Dani Marti artwork attracted relatively few comments from visitors, however those that appeared were condemning of GoMA for seeming to counteract the aims, and the success, of the sh[OUT] exhibition by 'giving in to censorship' following the controversy surrounding what many referred to as 'the Bible exhibition'. One visitor wrote:

'The removal of the Dani Martin [sic] work in response to right wing appeals demonstrates a total lack of respect to the tax-paying LGBT citizens of this city. Culture & sport Glasgow-hang your head in shame! The struggle for tolerance and equality in this city goes on thanks to you.'

- ***The need for interpretation***

Data from visitor interviews in particular, revealed the importance of interpretation (panels, labels and so on) accompanying the works on display for visitors' understanding of - and capacity to meaningfully engage with - the exhibition's theme and ideas. Without the interpretation, visitors commented that many of the artworks would have remained obscure. For instance Harry, who described himself as 'someone who doesn't really know too much, well next to nothing about art', found that the information that was displayed next to each painting was crucial to his enjoyment of the exhibition:

'very helpful to just sort of give you a feel what you were looking at, what to look for in some ways so I thought that was helpful'.

He went on to compare the interpretation of the artworks favourably with the limited information offered by other (nameless) galleries, explaining that:

'Often in exhibitions it may just give the name of the work or the painter but you don't really get a background as to the thinking behind it and I thought that was very helpful'.

Alan reiterated the importance of having interpretive support for 'non-art lovers' like himself;

'Because they were slightly abstract in some ways, non sort of art lovers if you like, needed a gentle instruction as to what we were supposed to be seeing.'

- **Affective responses**

Visitors used the response cards to detail their affective responses to the sh[OUT] exhibition, including emotional responses to the artwork on show or descriptions that related some personal relevance or meaning found in the themes of the exhibition. A number of GoMA staff interviewed talked about the aims of the programme in terms of its potential to effect some kind of change in visitors – for example, to give support to someone from the LGBTI community facing discrimination or perhaps struggling with coming to terms with their own gender identity or sexuality.

Visitor Assistant Annie, for example, talks about how she was hopeful that the exhibition would not only help those who were understanding their own sexuality but also opening the minds of those visitors who are less tolerant of others:

'maybe someone's gay and hasn't come out and has been really unhappy, feeling that they can't be the person that they want to be whether it's transgender or anything just coming seeing this and they've thought 'you know what? This has just been the wee push that maybe could change something'. I mean I like to think that it could change somebody's life for the better and it can maybe open up people's minds as well, maybe about things that they didn't know or maybe they were just ignorant to, they didn't realise.'

This belief - that the exhibition had the potential (and the power) to 'make a difference' to people's lives - was supported by the responses from visitors. For some, the exhibition had a powerful emotional impact;

'I thought the exhibition was brilliant! The bravery beauty shown was moving. It also made me sad to feel that so many people are victimised just because of sexuality'.

'Intimate and touching. I love the completeness of the exploration of sexuality, race and gender. It reaches people of all ages and lets them be. Alongside all of the other modern art it made this visit to the gallery very mind expanding. It reached deep into my heart and tenderized it sublimely.'

Visitors also considered that sh[OUT] could have a transformative effect on the lives of others, particularly young people.

'Good exhibit for young gay people who feel stigmatised or afraid - esp. all the brochures, info in this room. So perhaps now I can see the curator's goal!'

Other visitors felt that the exhibition might increase tolerance and respect for the LGBTI community more generally. Using her personal experiences as a frame for her comment, a 17 year old girl from London made the following comment;

'My family live in Glasgow and are all practicing Catholics. I've known I was bisexual for about 6 or 7 years, and wish my family would open their eyes. It's not my own acceptance I long for, I've never cared enough about them to worry about what they thought. What I long for is for them, and people like them to open their eyes and see that love transcends race, religion, age, ethnicity and gender.'

David, aged 50, was much more direct about his hopes for the exhibition, based on his similarly negative experience of being gay;

'I hope many straight people come to this exhibit. As a gay man I had to fight the bullies and the ignorant. Hopefully this insight will let straights see [what] the struggle of acceptance is.'

Other (often older) visitors detailed their negative life experiences expressing the hope that exhibitions like sh[OUT] meant that young people would not have to experience the difficulties they had faced;

'I am gay and 66 years old. I am so glad that young people need not suffer the secrecy and loneliness that I have'.

Another visitor expressed the importance attached to hearing the experiences of others and knowing that their own experiences are shared;

'Having come from a small town, feeling like the only gay in the village, and being victimised for it I appreciate the significance of collections such as these. They hopefully show other young people that they need not feel alone. Thanks!'

Visitors were inspired to leave substantial comments, particularly in the 'Our Story' comments book left in the response space, going into considerable detail about their life experiences. For instance, one visitor left the following story seemingly to give hope to others:

'Growing up in a quiet town it was always easier to hide, rather than face up to the narrow-mindedness all around. It made it so much easier to "fit in," than to face constant judgment. I spent so long worrying about what parents, friends, anyone would think. It wasn't until I went to university and distanced myself from home that I met people I felt I could tell. Looking back on it now, would those friends really be friends if they couldn't accept me? I have also come to realise what people's ideas on what they think of being gay don't always come from themselves but are in fact what they think they should say. So many people I thought would react badly surprised me, including my parents. I guess what I'm trying to say is maybe it's better to take that chance than to live a lie, to be a traitor in your own skin, that you should be true to yourself. It's not easy and I guess I've been lucky and for that I'm truly thankful, but as I said people might surprise you.'

Some comments were very explicit and articulate about the value and impact of GoMA's work;

'When I was younger I would have given anything not to be gay. I used to think "Why me God? Why can't I be normal?" Thank God for LGBT exposure through museums and art to help me realise I am normal, I am blessed and being gay is such a beautiful thing. This exhibition has inspired me to help others through the medium of art.'

'I think that raising awareness and opening minds through *sh(out)* is fantastic. As a gay guy growing up in Glasgow was tough and I felt very alone most of the time. Glad to see young LGBT issues are positively being recognised. Well done sh[OUT]!'

'You become so used to living life a particular way that sometimes you are allowed to forget that the rest of the world doesn't see your sexuality the way that you do. A glance in the street can rip that from you. This exhibition reminded me that others have the same experience daily. The bronze sculpture and its description made us both cry.'

This visitor found their feelings validated through the exhibition, the sense that progress is being made to greater acceptance in society:

'I'm 42 and I'm gay, I've always known that even before I knew anything about sex. I stumbled across this exhibition yesterday and I enjoyed it so much I came back again today. When I left yesterday I saw 2 teen boys holding hands, so I just thought "bring it on Glasgow".'

The desire to be accepted by society emerged from several comments made by visitors who identified as part of the LGBTI community. The desire to be accepted by the 'mainstream' conflicted with the desire of other sections of the LGBTI community to be different and respected for it. The tensions between these two positions were evident in the comments of one visitor who commented

'On coming here I never thought I would like it. It made me feel very lucky to be in a situation where I don't need to hold back my gayness. I'm not saying that I put it out there so everyone knows, but I am really glad I live in a place where if I am asked if I am gay, then I don't need to lie and this exhibition has reinforced that for me.'

- **The social role of museums and galleries**

Throughout the comments described above runs an underlying theme which links the role of the museum and the art gallery to its role in society. Many of the comments described above attribute the museum/gallery with the ability to change minds, transform attitudes and increase awareness and tolerance towards the LGBTI community. There was a value placed on visibility for the LGBTI community in the museum / gallery, linked to the value it conferred upon the issue in a public building, symbolic of the trustworthiness and authority that is invested in museums and galleries by the majority of the public.

In the same way, the media controversy over the Mapplethorpe images and other contentious artworks reveal the importance attached to what the museum / gallery puts on public display, the values it upholds and whose values are reflected in its

exhibitions. Clearly for many visitors, the gallery has an important role to play in communicating to society the 'lives of others' in an informative, but non-threatening, way. They may have been challenged by some of the artworks but generally visitors saw the message of the exhibition as a positive one, promoting tolerance and acceptance for LGBTI human rights and equality specifically and, more generally, promoting acceptance of difference. This was a message that most visitors could agree with. The following comment illustrates the positive reaction from visitors who understood the importance of having such an exhibition in GoMA;

'Excellent to have such a high profile venue and quality of exhibition. Hope that by making it extraordinary people will realise that we are all ordinary but contribute to diversity.'

Some visitors directly commented on what they regarded as the museum's stance against those who were perceived to be rejecting or only 'conditionally accepting' the LGBTI community. One visitor called it 'A very distinctive and courageous exhibition' and went on to say:

'open[ly] and without shame you show us the taboos which seemed to frighten the so-called Christians who's only attitude is to drag down the human right of being what everyone wants to be! Really congratulations to your courage'.

Another visitor said in a similar vein;

'I didn't realise that homophobia and transgender prejudice was so prevalent in our city. Thank you for making me aware and thank you for having the courage to challenge this type of hate crime'.

For some visitors, GoMA was courageously tackling an issue that was neglected or ignored elsewhere, including this visitor who obviously said in response to a negative comment from another visitor;

'You are wrong. It is human nature to want to collect, document & classify. We NEED to see representations of all our selves. Thank you Glasgow'.

'Great work. Please know that your on-going commitment to social minority and awareness is so appreciated and important.'

The role of the museum as a space to enable reflection on the 'sensitive' and 'provocative' issues raised by the artworks was reflected in the comment of the following visitor who said:

'This exhibition has made me reflect more on the issue of LGBT rights and I feel that the artwork on display is engaging thought provoking and controversial in a beautiful way'.

Some visitors attributed the environment of the gallery as especially conducive to consideration of social issues because the message (however strong) is conveyed (in their opinion) more subtly than other media such as the newspaper media or television. The museum or gallery was also seen as more trustworthy than other types

of media. For example, David considered that the museum does not have such an obvious agenda, that visitors have a greater sense of autonomy in deciding for themselves what they want to take away from their experience of the exhibition. As he described it in relation to the artworks on display;

'I think doing it through art gets the message across without shouting at people... when you come into the gallery you can have a look, inform your own views and they're not shoved down your throats'.

David talked about how he saw that there was 'fairness' in how the museum presents and enables visitors to engage with issues like LGBTI human rights - 'You're left to your own, to make up your own judgement and your own mind whether you like it or not, or what you can take from it or not take from it'.

For another visitor, Alasdair, the gallery provided a quiet, reflective space where it was made possible for him to look at the artworks in his own time; he did not feel 'hassled' or expected to take a particular stance on the issue. There was no interference which he personally found effective;

'I think it gives one, a space that is a reflective space for the individual coming in to confront those issues and is not hassled by either a commentator or any other person to take a view or move on from a position. It's a reflective space that allows for a contemplative, qualitative time to reflect on what the images say to you. It's essentially about what your eye sees without being any interference through your ears from somebody else telling you what to think.'

The following visitor was incredulous that the exhibition had created such a fuss in the media particularly when young people are exposed to images of war and violence on a daily basis;

'I find it amazing at a time when so many young men + women are dying at war (not to mention children of those countries) that people are "SHOCKED" by these works of art! To think school children were stopped of seeing such work, yet they learn history of fighting and see BBC news reports is ridiculous. The work is a positive step forward for Scotland and the press/feedback reflects just how long the journey to equality will be. A FANTASTIC EXHIBITION'.

Some visitors saw the visibility afforded to LGBTI issues by GoMA as part of a process towards greater acceptance by society, further strengthening the social role that museums like GoMA can play in shaping (as well as reflecting) the changing views of society. Other visitors wondered why the media had created such controversy around the exhibition, reinforcing the fact that much of the controversy took place *outside* the gallery rather than from visitors to the exhibition.

One visitor used the exhibition for 'sparking a discussion' with their 11 year old 'who walked in embarrassed and left enlightened. Thanks'. In a similar spirit, this visitor considered the exhibition would help to enlighten the next generation of young people;

'Very educational. Many school children could benefit from this type of education maybe then people wouldn't be so homophobic'.

Whilst the majority of comments reflected support for the idea of galleries tackling difficult social and political subjects, there were also visitors who were uncomfortable with the adoption by GoMA of a political stance on a social issue, complaining that it was 'preachy' and removing the visitor's autonomy in making their own mind up. These comments take the extreme opposite viewpoint to visitors like David and Alasdair who found the gallery space conducive to individual exploration of an issue. For instance, this visitor directed their concern towards the social programme in general;

'Have always found the social exhibition odd. Claim to be about rights, free expression, freedom speech. But then you seem to preach to people what they should think. Surely people if they are to have rights and freedom should be allowed to think or feel what you want. Not be told what to think'.

They clearly objected to the strong stance they saw the museum taking on LGBTI human rights. Another visitor used the language of 'political correctness' to express their dislike of the exhibition, suggesting that the gallery was being dictated to as to what they 'should' be showing to visitors;

'Where's the modern art? Politically correct self promotion funded by quangos ain't art - it's a cop out from the real world! Let's have some interesting, creative and above all inspired and enjoyable works on display!'

Finally, some visitors made comments that reflected the stock arguments used in the tabloid media to express their dislike of the museum being used as a space to explore social issues. Reflecting only a very small minority of comments overall, these visitors complained that the exhibition was a 'waste of tax payers money', mainly because in their opinion it is only relevant to a minority of the population.

iii) CHANGING ATTITUDES TOWARDS LGBTI HUMAN RIGHTS?

There was evidence from some comments cards that the exhibition had significantly changed individuals' attitudes and opinions;

'Didn't realise that it is such a difficult / confusing situation. Good luck to all who go through it much respect for those who have'.

Drawing on categories of analysis identified and used in other studies of audience reception and engagement, visitor responses to the themes of LGBTI human rights embodied in the sh[OUT] exhibition can usefully be identified as fitting into one of four main categories:

- **Confirmatory** – this category includes responses that express support for the exhibition and its aims.
- **Oppositional**– this category includes visitor comments that express their objection to either/both LGBTI human rights and GoMA's support for this issue (in the most extreme cases using the comments card as a platform for viciously homophobic comments).

- **Negotiated** responses – this category refers to responses that (explicitly or implicitly) suggest support for human rights in the abstract but an unwillingness to extend their support to include LGBTI groups – at least in the ways represented in sh[OUT].
- **Tensions and points of debate** – this final category brings together comments that are less concerned with expressing support either for or against LGBTI rights but instead taking the opportunity to debate more complex themes and issues posed by the exhibition - for instance the tension between the desire to celebrate difference and the value of being part of the mainstream.

Confirmatory responses

As shown earlier in the quantitative analysis of responses, the majority of visitors were supportive of the themes, ideas and message put forward in sh[OUT]. Here, those supportive responses are further broken down to reveal the main ways in which visitors expressed their support.

- ***The language of rights and equality***

Frequently, visitors expressed their support through the language of rights and equality. One visitor expressed a common sentiment when they wrote:

‘What does it matter if someone is gay, straight, a different race or religion? If it doesn't affect you in any way or hurt anyone then let them live their lives in peace and with equal rights’.

Other visitors spoke about the need to allow individuals to have the ‘the right to choose their own living style.’ For other visitors there was a sense that the acceptance of human rights for the LGBTI community was either ignored or neglected by society, that the exhibition would help challenge that stance. One visitor expressed their support for the exhibition commenting that it was:

‘portraying issues that otherwise get ignored by society. Definitely not offensive, but expressive and thought provocative. We all need to stand up for LGBT rights.’

There were relatively few comments that expressly commented on the information provided by Amnesty International, however one visitor considered that more information should be provided about this aspect: ‘I feel there should be more of a human rights abuse reflection. Thanks!’

In a riposte to some visitor comments that complained that the exhibition was a waste of taxpayer's or public money a visitor questioned, ‘I pay equal tax so why have I had to fight to be equal?’

Another visitor reflected on the long process of securing human rights of different groups, commenting that acceptance of different elements of the LGBTI community was at very different stages:

‘Very interesting and thought-provoking. Recognition and acceptance of homosexuality (and bisexuality) has come a long way in the past 50 years,

and with hope will continue to progress. The rights of intersexuals still have a long way to go'.

- **Shared / universal experiences**

Another group of comments revealed visitors who were less specific about praising the exhibitions through the language of rights, instead adopting more universal, more abstract ideas about the need for the acceptance of difference. Here, rights and equality are predicated on the idea that everyone is human – humanity is diverse but, essentially, people demonstrate universal feelings and needs. The feeling of 'love' for instance was seen as a universal aspect of human character and the many diverse forms that love can take should be accepted:

'I thought that this was a very worthwhile and imaginative exhibition, anything that promotes the acceptance of human diversity is worthwhile. Nature creates differences'.

Another visitor expressed their incredulity that some sections of society still experienced anxiety when faced with the LGBTI community:

'It is about time that people opened up to the world around them. People are all different and are all unique. You who discriminate against them - would there be so many complaints if this had been heterosexual?'

'Loved the exhibition - can't believe in the year 2009 people are still hung up on who other people are having sex with. Live your own life - let others live theirs'.

One visitor drew on the shared experience of humanity to express their support for the acceptance of difference, whilst acknowledging their limited prior knowledge or understanding of LGBTI identity:

'Eye opening, and for me, with little exposure/interaction with LGBT people, somewhat surreal; however, great to see people are becoming more accepting of different sexualities, because, in the end, being human is about acceptance or at least it should be'.

- **Visibility**

Many visitors welcomed the visibility which GoMA was bringing to a neglected, sometimes hidden topic. Marie, a young woman interviewed in the gallery, saw sh[OUT] as 'a celebration of kind of a taboo subject in a way' - a subject that was 'not something you would see normally'.

The importance of having visibility and the voice the exhibition gave to the LGBTI community was reflected in a number of comments, including the following which focused on the perception that the theme of the exhibition continues to be a taboo subject within society:

'It reaches out and pinpoints what we are all afraid to talk about. It opens people's eyes to something that had been hidden away'.

What these comments have in common is the importance they attach to seeing issues associated with the LGBTI community represented in the public sphere – in a mainstream, publicly funded gallery.

Several visitors who identified as part of the LGBTI community expressed their pride and enthusiasm for the exhibition; one visitor commented: 'I am a gay and proud of it! To be gay is not an abnormal thing so people should just learn to accept what they are and also be proud of it!' Another visitor wrote:

'Thank you for organising such an amazing series of exhibits! This is the first time I've seen a public gallery devote itself to LGBT out in all its diversity. I feel proud, humbled, enlightened, and, most important, visible!'

Lastly, this next visitor implicitly linked the mounting of the sh[OUT] exhibition with broader social changes towards greater acceptance of LGBTI rights;

'My name is Daniel I am proud to be gay in Glasgow. So much is changing. It is good to be able to walk hand in hand with my boyfriend Robert'.

Oppositional responses

Here, the ways in which visitors expressed either their rejection of the moral standpoint they perceived in the exhibition or their opposition to the way in which LGBTI people were represented are further broken down into key themes.

- ***Why focus on LGBTI?***

A minority of comments challenged GoMA's decision to focus on the theme of LGBTI human rights or the LGBTI community in general. 'There is way too much stuff on gays, lesbians etc' wrote one visitor, 'People should know better'. Another visitor wrote, 'Why is this whole place about gays?', whilst one went further and suggested that it was 'unfair' to be giving space to a minority at the apparent expense of others when, in their perception, the issue was already resolved:

'In this day and age homosexuals are accepted, why is it still thrown in our face? Where is the straight exhibition or is that not enough?'

Another visitor was less openly hostile but seemed to reject the idea that the LGBTI community should be singled out for attention:

'Equal rights is not fragmented to Gays, Blacks, Orientals, age it is for everyone'.

- ***Concerns about sexual imagery and content***

Some visitors – both those who identified as LGBTI and those who identified as heterosexual men or women – expressed their discomfort with the work in the main exhibition that was deemed to be sexually explicit or biased in its emphasis on sex and sexual practices. The following are examples of comments from visitors who explicitly identify themselves as outside of the LGBTI community:

'Sex sex sex morning noon and night. Why can they only put their message over by being sexually explicit?'

'Very disturbing. The sexual images highlight how abusive and dehumanising homosexual acts can be'.

In addition, a few visitors who identified themselves as members of the LGBTI community objected to the artwork because, for them, it reinforced unwanted stereotypes about the LGBTI community. The anxiety was expressed that the artworks concerned with sex or sexual practices were 'giving the wrong messages' to the rest of society.

'Being controversial has always interested and excited people. Being gay myself I believed I would appreciate this exhibition. However I cannot pretend I have despite a few pieces which were thought provoking enough to capture my interest. The majority of the exhibition was seedy and rather distasteful. It is ironic how an exhibition attempting to raise awareness results in perpetuating and reinforcing stereotypes'.

A 'Deep sighing gay young man' also despaired at the need to shock and provoke people through artwork:

'Please please tell me there is more to gay art than butch lesbians and camp gay men - isn't there beauty in two average gay people showing love - I hope someone is brave enough to not try and shock again and again but to impress and woo us'.

- **Homophobic responses**

Homophobic responses ranged from the subtle and implicit to the overtly vicious and offensive.

This visitor subverted a contemporary gay right's slogan to make what some would regard as an offensively stereotypical comment;

'If you're gay get over it. Or become a hairdresser'.

Other visitors were more explicit in expressing their intolerance towards the LGBTI community. One visitor commented that, 'I think that this is very disturbed and sickening - I don't get the art!' Other explicitly homophobic comments included:

'Absolutely disgusting! Homosexuals deserve abuse and should not promote it. Shame on GAYS, shame on GoMA.'

'There is more to love than this rubbish. And so much more to Art. A real waste of taxpayer's money so that perversion can be spread'.

'People like that are a part of nature also [but] it is the sick part. Healthy members of population are able to multiply. They here cannot. It is not an opinion. I am sorry. Even if you are still beautiful'.

Arguments based on religion were sometimes invoked to justify homophobic comments;

'The love of God is great but he also expects certain things of us like man shall not lay with another man or a woman with a woman or with an animal. God says marriage is between man and woman Gen 2 V 18 – end'.

One visitor was even more explicit about their views when they wrote, 'Your [sic] all going to the bad fire.'

Such comments reveal the presence of deep-seated prejudices and hatred that still exists towards the LGBTI community, although some sections of the community were singled out for negative comments more than others. There certainly appeared to be greater levels of homophobia than transphobia. Despite the high profile inclusion of artwork from the Transgender and Intersex communities, most visitors who complained directed their ire towards the controversies highlighted in the media as Ross, visitor assistant, explained:

'To be honest with you the most negative comments I've had would be, you would think of them as being homophobic rather than transphobic... most people have seemed to be if they're complaining about anything it is the Robert Mapplethorpe... it's more about that'.

It should be reiterated that these negative comments were in the minority. However, the fact that people feel that they can express these views in a public setting suggests that it is still deemed 'socially acceptable' by some to reveal such prejudices.

Negotiated responses

'Love is a Human Right' but all the behaviours out of love are not necessarily right.'

In other studies of audience responses to right-related issues, negotiated responses are generally characterised by expressed support for human rights in the abstract combined with a concern to restrict that privilege to certain (morally deserving) groups.

With sh[OUT], many negotiated responses could be seen to take on a particular character based on tolerance of LGBTI people rather than full acceptance, understanding and respect. This was sometimes manifest as a willingness to confer human rights on members of the LGBTI community – but with the imposition of conditions placed on their behaviour and in particular their willingness to either conform (to behave, look and act in particular ways deemed acceptable to the rest of society), and/or to keep their identity and experiences hidden from the mainstream.

'When I see all this [transgender] angst coming out on canvas/video/word I realise how intolerant I really am. I nearly sympathise but don't. I nearly empathise but don't. Why not just keep it to yourselves and don't fill our walls with your problems.'

For some, members of the LGBTI were acceptable as long as they conform to particular standards of acceptability. Several visitors had problems specifically with what they regarded as the explicit nature of the artworks, which made them uncomfortable. One visitor wrote:

'I am not against gay people but I don't want to see explicit sexual acts. Don't you think sex is a private matter of love between two people? Are some of these exhibits just pain? I didn't like'.

Other visitors were uncomfortable with the perceived emphasis on sexual practices. In their responses, visitors sometimes revealed distinct stereotypes about the LGBTI community:

'Stop the "label of yourselves" - you only sicken otherwise with your whining - be an individual first. Think of other things than sexuality'.

Other visitors emphasised the 'strangeness' or 'unnaturalness' of LGBTI experience which tested their tolerance. One wrote;

'Why LGBT show must be strange stuff? Maybe it can be demonstrated from a more healthy aspect!'

Another wrote, 'I tolerate gays but I do not accept it. It's just not like it should be. It's unnatural'. Such comments betray the deeper prejudices held by visitors.

These visitors were not always necessarily wholly opposed to the (abstract) concept of LGBTI rights but did not like to be challenged or confronted with some aspects of the LGBTI experience – to the research team this appeared to reflect the 'social conservatism' highlighted by Bridget McConnell. For instance, this visitor seemed to accept the existence of the LGBTI community in abstract but did not like to be confronted with it in a public setting:

'I don't mind the gays but I don't like it shoved in my face just because they are 'different'.

A couple of visitors called for censorship of the exhibition, including this visitor in the spirit of 'public decency':

'I do think that there should be some form of censoring or a way to stop minors viewing explicit images: Not that I'm calling for the censorship of "Gay" art, but to maintain public decency. A heterosexual man.'

This is despite the fact that the Gallery did place a warning at the entrance and had two visitor assistants to ensure that 'minors' did not see the exhibition without their parent's or guardian's consent.

Tensions and points of debate

This last category of response to the issue of LGBTI rights includes comments that are less concerned with expressing support either for or against LGBTI rights or the exhibition itself but instead taking the opportunity to debate more complex themes and issues posed by the exhibition, many of which connect with broader debates around LGBTI rights and equality.

- ***The question of 'difference'***

A tension identified in visitor comments was between the desire for visibility (from some sections of the LGBTI community) and the desire from others to emphasise sameness, to not be marked out as different.

'Roll on the day when exhibitions like this one are not needed because art is fully embraced and enjoyed alongside all other - but while we still learn and hope - Well done GOMA a thought provoking place to be'.

The following comment warns also about the dangers of being seen as 'too different':

'PRIDE IS NEVER A GOOD THING, BE IT NATIONAL, RACIAL OR SEXUAL. PRIDE IS DIVISIVE. HOWEVER, THE RIGHT TO SELF-EXPRESSION IS NOT. THE ONLY CATEGORY I FIT INTO IS HUMAN; THIS IS A CELEBRATION OF HUMANS, IN MANY FORMS, ALL BEAUTIFUL.'

One visitor wrote in angry upper case letters that the exhibition had actually led to them becoming less tolerant towards the LGBTI community because of the 'shocking' nature of the art on display:

'I NEVER JUDGED PEOPLE BY THEIR APPEARANCE. NOW I WILL. THIS IS NOT ART, THIS IS NOT THE RIGHT WAY TO CLAIM HUMAN RIGHTS. IF WE'RE EQUAL, WHY DO YOU HAVE TO BE SO DIFFERENT? TASTELESS? THIS KIND OF SHOCK THERAPY IS NOT MAKING A GOOD INFLUENCE ON PEOPLE WHO WANT TO KNOW MORE.'

Other visitors resisted what they regarded as the unnecessary categorisation of individuals by their sexuality rather than their essential humanity:

'Sexuality and sexual identification is one of these confusing things. Society is constantly putting pressure on people of all ages to be what they might not want to be. Remember it doesn't matter if you're Gay, Lesbian etc. In fact, you don't need a label. You're not necessarily gay/straight. YOU ARE JUST YOU!'

A similar sentiment was expressed in this comment:

'Why are we always going on about what separates us and splitting us into sub groups. Until we stop segregating ourselves by identifying ourselves by sexuality colour religion history geography there can be no true equality - only when we are simply human will there be equality'.

James, an older visitor who openly identified as gay questioned GoMA's aim to change attitudes towards LGBTI and human rights issues through an art exhibition. Framing his conversation though his own personal experiences of political activism in the 1960s and 1970s, he regarded the exhibition as retreading old themes, covering subjects that were – to him at least - 'nothing new'. There was also the sense, similar to the comments described above, that he believed that the visibility afforded to LGBTI through the exhibition may even be counter-productive:

'Do you know what I think dear, what I think is that so many people in the particular world that we live in are taking themselves too seriously. They should be getting on with life, getting on with their professions and things like that and the rest falls into place.'

- **Sex as part of LGBTI experience and identity**

Related to the broader questions of sameness and difference, discussed above, a strong theme in the comments referred to the value and perceived appropriateness of including works which depicted or were concerned with sexual acts and practices. The extent to which these were welcomed (as representative of an important part of LGBTI identity and experience AND a sign of the commitment by GoMA to honestly and bravely represent all aspects of LGBTI experience, including those that might challenge mainstream conventions) or believed to be unhelpful (by conflating sexuality with sex or emphasising stereotypical or negative images of sexual minorities as sexually deviant or perverse) was hotly debated.

A couple of visitors commented that, by displaying such controversial artwork, the gallery would be playing into the hands of the bigots:

'Though I was not shocked some pieces were shocking. Homosexuality isn't really about oral sex any more than heterosexual is. I did enjoy this but wonder if the more shocking elements only serve to alienate the bigoted even more. Shock and titillation rarely educate the way truth and intimacy can'.

However, for every comment that expressed anxiety about the message it conveyed to society, there were visitors who considered that the exhibition did not reinforce stereotypes but instead gave a diverse and honest representation of the LGBTI community. One visitor enthusiastically wrote:

'This is a fantastic exhibition. It reflects a wide range of people and our lifestyles. It's great to see something about Queer issues that doesn't only feature Kylie Minogue and gender stereotypes. I feel totally represented. Gush, wow, etc.'

This visitor was equally positive about the impact of the artwork; 'Good job on including a wide-ranging intersecting images of LGBTQI... realities, desires, expressions!' The following visitor was pleased to see that the representations on show had not pandered to mainstream tastes:

'I'm glad to see that LGBT people have not been neutered in this exhibition to make it more palatable to the mainstream - an all too common occurrence in [our] culture representation of Queer community'.

- **Labels, labelling and identity politics**

Related to the issues of visibility and difference, were those surrounding the use of labels and categories. The use of L, G, B, T and I, for example was questioned by two visitors, James and Harry, who were concerned about the inclusion of 'Intersex', believing that it added yet another category into an already over-burdened lexicon:

'I've never come across that word Intersex before; I just wondered do we not have enough words, categories at the moment that we need another one'.
(Harry)

This tension between the need to be visible and the need to conform to the rest of society exists because the LGBTI community does not speak with one voice; instead it is a community made up of many voices. Whilst the majority of visitors who identified as part of the LGBTI community were supportive of the exhibition and the visibility it gave them, there were a smaller, but still vocal, number of visitors who preferred to be part of the mainstream rather than defined as a separate, different entity. One visitor who identified themselves as bisexual seemed almost dismayed by the personal stories and experiences on show:

'Where is the space for me as a bisexual with no desire whatsoever to be open about anything with my sexual orientation. I long for the day when it's ok not to come out'.

- **Conflicting rights?**

The controversy surrounding work in *Made in God's Image* inevitably prompted diverse responses sometimes couched in terms of the conflicting rights of LGBTI and religious communities.

One visitor, who identified as Christian, was uncertain about their own attitudes towards the exhibition;

'I don't know what I think about this exhibition yet... it takes me a while to process things... I think it's really important that the Church is inclusive and engages with all people. I'm a Christian 20 years old and my best friend is gay and recently became a Christian. Most of all I believe God loves everyone and wants us to do the same'.

The artwork which invited visitors to write themselves 'back into the Bible' seemed to attract the most controversy from the media and from visitors – including a protest by campaigners held outside GoMA. It was the only balcony exhibition to receive a substantial amount of specific responses as visitors used the opportunity to convey their criticism or support through all means given to them by GoMA. Supportive comments concentrated on the fact that everyone is 'equal in the eyes of God', including this comment:

'I enjoyed the exhibition. People should have rights of all sexualities. I am religious but I believe the Bible is just a book put together by men a few thousand years after Christ. Every man and woman are equal - whatever sexuality in the eyes of God and I don't know why there is such a stigma about being gay!'

Several visitors liked the opportunity to participate in the exhibition, including this visitor who wrote:

'It is a pity you have shut the Bible away. The word of God should live on and not be protected into lifelessness. Writing our life story into the Bible is the right thing to do!'

Other visitors were openly against the exhibition and used Bible scripture to express their views on the artwork and LGBTI community and lifestyle. The following visitor was convinced that the artwork would only inspire negativity:

'Silly-that installation with a lass gobbling up the Bible. It can only inspire hatred, disgust and the only message it gives is just this: You shall not respect your culture. That's sure contrary to reason'.

This visitor expressed a similar theme, although framing it within the context of their faith; 'God's word brings light Hope life Purpose, worth salvation all that is good. Unfortunately this exhibition has the opposite result.' Several visitors complained that the artwork was offensive to them as Christians 'and to people of other faiths also'. The artwork attracted substantial comments from the following two visitors, who were both against the artwork but coming from very different viewpoints, one being Christian and the other being an atheist:

'An exhibition of poor artistic quality and purely focused on expounding a very childlike, uneducated agenda. A dumbing down and determined manipulation of God's Holy words. The Bible should transform your life you should not bend it to suit your current state. An art student and a Christian'.

'Maybe as a straight atheist I don't have much right or understanding of gay people who want to connect to religion but are rejected based on something small as who they want to have sex with but I do think this exhibition was the wrong way to get a message across. It was unmoving, pretentious and very unoriginal and I just can't see how any person gay or straight could connect to it.'

Conclusion

Despite the controversy that surrounded the sh[OUT] exhibition in the media, the analysis of the response cards reveals that – in contrast - visitor reactions were very positive, although there are tensions between the different viewpoints adopted by visitors. The majority of visitors expressed their support for the exhibition, supporting the choice of artworks, the message conveyed that celebrated (for most) the importance of equal rights for everyone in society and the need to extend those rights to the LGBTI community. Visitors found it challenging and provocative but in a

positive way, informing their views and, for some, impacting upon their identity or informing them about an issue they previously knew very little about.

Visitors responded to the exhibition through their personal stories and links, engaging in dialogue with other visitors through the medium of response cards and comments books provided by GoMA with enthusiasm. The social role of GoMA as reflecting and informing on significant social issues was challenged only by a minority of those who saw the exhibition's strong stance on LGBTI issues as alienating, discomforting and offensive to their idea of what museums and art galleries should represent.

4. Impact on community participants

As part of the evaluation, the research team met with people from LGBTI community groups that had participated in GoMA's outreach programmes. This section discusses the significant effects which participation had on people from two separate groups that had - over a period of weeks - worked with professional artists to produce an exhibition of their own work in the Balcony area.

LGBT Youth Scotland – Felix and Declan

- **Acceptance and recognition from significant adults**

The research team met with and interviewed two young people - Felix and Declan – who had each made their own short films as part of the *Vivid Stories* balcony exhibition.

They were both enormously positive about their experiences of being part of sh[OUT] and a key theme in the way they discussed this was the importance of gaining acceptance and recognition. This project acted as a tool for Felix and Declan to gain recognition at many levels – of their creativity, their self expression and most critically of their sexuality.

Approval from significant adults was important for both of the young people. For Felix whose Russian mother struggles with his sexuality, it was necessary to look for approval beyond his family to his English teacher, who he admires very much and whose opinion he values. He really wanted her feedback on the exhibition and his film in particular, in which he had wanted to show a different point of view of Russia (where he is from). His teacher's approval and acceptance of him was critically important because his mother has not offered him such support.

'My English teacher made the effort to go and see the exhibition... In front of the whole class she said it [the film] was really good, she gave constructive criticism, she said I should have talked more, but I think she was happy... I am happy that she thinks so. I think at some level that I know that I am not going to get my Mum's approval - ever- I have passed that stage... but I did want her (English teacher) approval instead.'

Declan was also delighted that his Art Teacher had been to the exhibition (he saw her comments left in the exhibition), but since it is some time since Declan was in school, family approval – in particular from his father – proved far more important. Declan had tried many ways to get his father to really understand him but said he just ignored these – his dad just thought it was a phase he was going through; a product of the way his mother had brought him up. Declan described the exhibition as offering the last straw - through his film he was at last able to express himself in a new way which proved highly effective in communicating with his father. Having viewed his film in the gallery, his father had finally 'got to grips with it' and had told Declan - 'I am proud of you... why am I not in your story?'

- ***New skills and learning***

The extended nature of the project, working with artists and support workers on developing their own stories and films which could capture and communicate these to a wider audience, enabled the young people to learn new skills. They worked on their projects over a sustained period of time and were required to demonstrate their commitment by attending twice a week. (For Felix this meant travelling an hour and a half into Glasgow). This then was something that was significant for them, something which they felt passionate about.

The project enabled them to express themselves in a new way by exploring the potential of a new medium– film. Both the process and the product were important. Over time they began to understand the lengthy and in-depth process involved in paring their own stories down – getting to the essence of what it really was that they wanted to communicate about their own lives and experiences.

Felix commented that ‘We have had enough time since we came out to come to terms with peoples’ opinions and accept them’ but nevertheless had big ambitions for the films and their showing in GoMA. He and Declan talked passionately about wanting to open up people’s eyes and influence a generation to be more open minded to think differently about gay people.

‘it is good to see the end result, after all the work you have put in... the effort you have made... all the stuff you deal with, all the criticism and comments. It is good to see how you can put yourself forward... and for something that potentially that could change someone’s life’ (Felix)

‘I thought I was weird... I thought I was the only one going through this... the films shows that lots of people are in the same situation... they help you move forward and give other people confidence’ (Declan)

Both Felix and Declan could identify and talk about the longer term impact of their participation on their own lives. For Felix, his experience of filmmaking and showing his work at GoMA was important in helping his reach his ambition of being accepted into art college. Declan’s concerns were more focused on his family and he hoped his relationship with his father could continue to improve. They both intended to visit GOMA regularly and wanted more opportunities like this in the future.

- ***GoMA as a prestige and mainstream setting***

Both Felix and Declan were pleased to be part of sh[OUT] which they saw as the first exhibition of its kind - a milestone, something very significant which, they explained, would not have been possible in the past when attitudes towards gay people were very different.

As with many of the responses from visitors, the significance of this project being initiated by and taking place in a city centre, mainstream and prestige venue appeared to be enormously significant. Declan and Felix loved the prestige of having work exhibited in a gallery that also showed the work of international artists. They valued being part of something in such a high profile space with the opportunity to show their films to large audiences.

- **Media controversy**

Felix and Declan had different responses to the early press controversy. Felix appeared quite resilient - 'You expect controversy and negativity' - and thought it was good that sh[OUT] challenged people since 'there are so many closed minded people, they need to have their eyes opened.'

Declan was rather more scared and anxious about the press coverage as the opening of the exhibition approached. He was strongly committed to the project he had been part of and very concerned that negative coverage might jeopardise the balcony exhibitions too.

TRANSforming Arts – Scottish Transgender Alliance

The opportunities presented by GoMA and sh[OUT] as a platform through which to communicate with and influence others was also a key theme emerging from the focus groups carried out with Kristi, Amy and Finn – three participants in the project which culminated in the balcony exhibition *Rendering Gender*.

Kristi, Amy and Finn had rather different motivations for getting involved in the arts workshops but shared a desire to use the exhibition as a means of communicating;

- i) With other trans people struggling coming to terms with their gender identity;
- ii) With a wider public which was largely misinformed or ignorant of trans issues.

- **Trans rights**

Amy's comments on trans equality and the gulf between policy and the daily lived experience of trans people powerfully highlight the importance of sh[OUT] as a vehicle for changing public perceptions;

'Scotland is leading the world but socially the experience is much different... it needs trans awareness of trans rights for trans people to be able to walk down the street with impunity... it needs a test case so that people know they cannot spit on these people and treat them like shite'. (Amy)

Kristi's experiences also highlight the need for public education on trans issues. She could highlight some recent improvements in trans equality – for example a councillor highlighting the employment rights of transgender people – but, at the same time, felt that trans rights were 20-30 years behind those of gay and lesbian communities;

'People would rather live next door to rapists and paedophiles than a transperson'.

Amy concurred - 'We are the lowest, the lowest of the low... worse than junkies'.

- **Self expression and communication**

Sharing experiences with a view to helping other trans people was important to all members of the group. Finn put this in the context of his own '27 wasted years' which might have been different if he had had information earlier or knew other people felt like him. 'It is important to get the message across that you do not have to be stuck'. If he had seen an exhibition like this when he was younger, he might have been able to make the decision to transition earlier.

Similarly, each of the group wanted to communicate ideas about trans experience to a wider public- but the tone, purpose and content of the messages they wanted to convey varied. Amy's position was political and activist and she viewed the work she had produced for display as '*an artistic extension of political activism.*'

'I see it as mischief making. I am a gender commando, I identify as female, but cannot escape my past, part of me wants to grow a goatee to bend people's heads... There is no visible socio/cultural trans entity for people to look at, aspire to and identify with. This was an opportunity to put non-binary identities into the public eye.' (Amy)

Finn wanted to tackle transphobia specifically by conveying a message that; 'Trans people are not freaks'. For Finn, the desire to communicate ideas through *Rendering Gender* stemmed from a desire to correct the negative understandings of trans people. He did not see himself as fighting a cause ('*we are not all in combat with the rest of the world*') but rather wanted to inform visitors;

'It was not about sex and genitalia, being trans is not about changing your genitalia, it is about your whole sense of identity, it is about having lived vicariously... not having an identity... about life opening up and getting a sense of identity... I wanted to show that'. (Finn)

Kristi similarly wanted to counter the misleading representations of trans people that circulate in other (mass) media. She wanted to use her art and the platform presented by participating in sh[OUT] to communicate what it is really like to be trans. She wanted to share the process of transition, which had stopped and started over a ten year period, and stamp her identity on what it meant for her as an individual. The project enabled her to do this.

Amy reflected on the value and limitations of an art gallery as a means of educating visitors about trans equality issues;

'There is too big a message to be conveyed in an art gallery... Globally trans people have a life expectancy of 24 years due to murder or suicide... whilst over 50% of the trans population in Scotland are educated to masters level or above, more than 50% are in the under £10k PA income bracket and 87% have experienced negativity or prejudice in the workplace. The GoMA project can only scratch the surface of these issues'.

She continued more optimistically however – 'BUT reading the comments book one person reached an epiphany writing something like... 'I have found myself '.

- **A public gallery – opportunities and challenges**

For Kristi, Amy and Finn, having the opportunity to have work on display at GOMA was very positive. For Finn it was 'like being a published writer'; for Amy 'it does not make me an artist but it is something that you can say you have done'.

However the fact that the work (which explored very personal aspects of their lives) was being exhibited in a public space also created some constraints. Finn felt that he had been more conservative in his work than he might have been 'because my mum and dad might see it'. Kristi also talked about becoming increasingly anxious about being open about her work on the internet and the implications this might have for her job as a civil servant.

Finn had chosen to remain anonymous in the gallery. Having recently transitioned he did not want to be public property– he wanted to choose who he shared personal information with. Concern about transphobic abuse, for example in his workplace, had led him to be cautious about who he disclosed his participation in the exhibition to.

- **Controversy**

When the research team interviewed Kristi, Amy and Finn for the second time, there was some discussion of the controversy surrounding 'the Bible exhibition.' This did not seem to be uppermost in their minds and some members of the group were fairly uncertain about the details.

Nevertheless, Kristi felt that the rights of trans people had been less highly valued than those of other groups;

'The issue for me was that they were writing homophobic and transphobic comments in the comments book and that went unchallenged and unquestioned, the bible comments were mildly offensive and that caused a huge political stink... our rights were breached but that does not matter... we expect to have transphobic abuse on a regular basis so that is fine' (Kristi)

The group felt that the controversy had been handled badly – they were offended by what they perceived as the Council choosing to back the rights of religious groups over the rights of the LGBTI community;

'That has been a really unfortunate legacy... Ultimately they do an event promoting LGBTI rights... the right wing do not like it, as you would expect... and they deal with that by doing what the right wing want (Kristi).

5. Artists' views on the social justice programme

Background information on the artists interviewed for the evaluation

Dave Sherry - Dave responded to an advert for an artist to work with the transgender community on issues around gender and came in for an interview with Katie Bruce. He knew little about the topic and saw it as a learning experience and an interesting project to work on. He supported the group – organised through the Scottish Transgender Alliance – to develop work for the balcony exhibition *Rendering Gender*.

He had previously done work with GoMA but this was the first time he had worked on a community project with the gallery. He shows his work in galleries but about once a year he tends to work on a community arts project – one that he finds interesting.

Chad McCail - Chad was invited to submit a proposal to make a piece of work for the main gallery show. Chad has shown in GoMA before (a solo show a few years ago) and was aware of the social justice programme before being approached. Chad produced a piece for the main show and led a workshop for adults (the other planned one for children was cancelled 'because of all problems with the show').

Del La Grace Volcano, Grayson Perry and Pattie Cronin were all contributors to the main exhibition.

• **Artists' views on the social justice programme**

Although all of the artists were, in different ways, broadly supportive of the idea of socially engaged gallery practice, their responses ranged from the wholeheartedly enthusiastic to the more ambivalent and cautious.

New York artist, Pattie Cronin, was the most unequivocal in her support. She talked passionately about the importance of programmes like sh[OUT] for public education and for raising awareness of issues that are too often neglected. She felt that GoMA was a 'role model' for how other museums and galleries could operate and the framing of the work on display - using a social justice lens – was something unique that she had not experienced anywhere else.

Dave Sherry commented;

'I just think it's a great thing that they're doing – really fantastic to work in really interesting areas like that and really interesting for artists to come in and work with the community on lots of different issues like that. I think it's quite ambitious for them to do that.'

Chad McCail was similarly supportive and 'glad to be a part of it' but, at the same time was keen to highlight that he felt it was very difficult to do;

'I think the social justice thing is a very interesting thing... it has an enormous amount of potential and it should continue, it's good to do a thorough examination of it... I just think it's a very challenging, difficult thing to do... I'm not sure how I'd go about it'.

Chad, in particular, discussed tensions that he feels socially engaged work creates. His central concern seemed to be around the dangers he felt such an approach potentially presented for over-determining the work on show.

'I broadly support the idea of putting on a show that is based around a political issue... I think it's a very difficult thing to do successfully and I think it is a hard thing to put on a show that's really essentially a populist show and at the same time to please the intellectual cognoscenti... so that it puts GoMA in a difficult position... because they are strung out... they have two different audiences in effect to try and satisfy and making a show that bridges those audiences is a very difficult and challenging thing'.

Grayson Perry was similarly supportive;

'I think it is good for galleries to have all sorts of shows and having a regular explicitly political slot is a good thing'.

And, at the same time, cautious:

'I am wary of being defined by any social or political cause though I feel strongly about many... Often the work gets included because it has the right political message to fit the theme rather than because it is good art. Clunky earnestness can be a real handicap for art that puts politics first. Visual pleasure is always my primary aim. I felt nervous of exhibiting in a show within a social justice setting because such contexts can put too much emphasis on a secondary aspect of the works. I was once in show called 'Protest and Survive' which was a good show but reviews tended to look at it through the title and judge it on its political activism rather than the quality of the art'.

GoMA was seen as well placed to do the work it does as part of the social justice programme. Both Chad McCail and Dave Sherry highlighted the 'heavy footfall' - the fact that lots of people see the work and the way in which the social justice programmes engage diverse audiences;

'Coming and working on this you really get a good idea of what's going on and how much these things go out into the community and people from Glasgow get involved in the exhibition whereas other exhibitions people don't and its maybe just artists that come and check out the shows so from that perspective I think it's fantastic.' (Dave Sherry)

- ***GoMA and the Glasgow arts community***

Chad McCail positioned himself slightly outside of the Glasgow arts community which – he felt – was tied up with producing work that was quite fashionable and 'marketed'. He had had no negative comments from artists about showing his work at GoMA. He felt some might be a bit snobby about it 'but wouldn't turn down a

show if it was offered to them.' He identified two reasons why, in his opinion, at least some in the contemporary art scene might have reservations about GoMA:

A. the Glasgow/Scottish art scene's preoccupation with celebrity/success/the art market over the last ten years meant it was unsympathetic to an approach to art that was socially engaged. Social engagement, he suggested, was out of step with the dominant ethos of the Glasgow art scene;

'the Glasgow art scene is quite ambitious and fashionable and it pays attention to fashion and the fashion has been... [to see the arts] as a way to make money and for the last ten years it's been associated with celebrity and success... quite a lot of us Glasgow artists have been quite successful and the kind of art that's ended up being made as a result of that tends to pander more to the people that buy it rather than to any kind of real examination of what it can carry. The buyers and the rich people who buy art have really conditioned what the market can take and what people produce... so it rather turns its nose up at engaged art'.

B. the origins of GoMA, in particular the collections established by Julian Spalding, which many artists viewed as far too populist and incoherent;

'Well, I'm not really in touch with artists but I know a few. I think 'The jury is still out' is what people say about GoMA. They mean... What was he called... the guy who started the collection?... They don't like Julian Spalding's collection – they feel he made far too populist a collection and maybe rather an incoherent collection... people don't agree with his vision... and that stained GoMA from the beginning so they didn't come because they didn't want to see it and they are still waiting for it to turn'.

For Dave Sherry, he felt that the Glasgow artists 'broadly welcomed' GoMA's work including the social justice programme. His artist friends had come along to see *Rendering Gender* and really enjoyed it.

- **'Community' exhibitions and the main gallery**

At the same time, Dave Sherry highlighted the distinction between the 'main' show and the 'community' exhibitions. He felt that you can lose a lot of artists and artists' support when a community project looks like a community project and he acknowledged that the placing of *Rendering Gender* in the balcony clearly marked it as such ('it's definitely in the community project area'). Nevertheless, he was full of praise for GoMA's commitment to presenting the 'community' work in such a high quality fashion;

'The team that work here are really professional and I don't think there are many galleries in the country that would have a team that is really committed [to community based arts]... All the structure is there so it couldn't be any more professionally done... This project – right through everything – is really professionally done – so I think that's one of the reasons why it was really enjoyed by the artists' community as well as by the public... That effort really does make a difference'.

- **Perceptions of censorship**

Pattie Cronin, Grayson Perry and Del La Grace Volcano were all interviewed after the controversy surrounding Dani Marti's work. Pattie Cronin and Grayson Perry made no mention of the controversy or any references to censorship.

However, Del La Grace Volcano, whilst positive about the idea of exhibiting in an exhibition framed by social justice, was angry about the experience. Del La Grace Volcano's main comments are set out below.

'I am pleased to exhibit and participate in social justice exhibitions and have had extremely positive experiences with all of them EXCEPT for this one. I was not treated with respect, nor were some of the other exhibitors, The FACT that all publicity for my talk was pulled (until I discovered this and complained), the FACT that my name was removed from the list of exhibiting artists are just two examples of how I was treated badly... They also tried to persuade me to NOT give my talk, which had been planned for months.

Educational programmes that run in conjunction with the exhibits are of paramount importance. Due to the high level of homophobia and misinformation that is out there a context needs to be created in which the work can be fully understood and appreciated. ALL the artists, not just the blue chip artists, should be given the chance to speak about their work within the context of a parallel programme... I wish more art institutions were truly committed to the principles of social justice rather than, like GOMA, using it for politically correct purposes but withdrawing their support as soon as there is any adverse publicity from the right wing'.

In response to the criticism levelled at the sh[OUT] exhibition, and questions as to whether or not it had achieved its aims, GoMA put on an exhibition exploring the reaction to sh[OUT] from 24 September – 1 November 2009. Compiled from press cuttings, emails, letters and comments written by the public, the exhibition, curated by the artist Anthony Schrag, aimed to provide a 'balanced and detached' view of the exhibition and the responses that it provoked. In a Culture and Sport press release of 29 September 2009, Schrag commented:

"This exhibition is an opportunity for everyone to examine the sh[OUT] programme and some of the reactions it provoked. I was invited to put together this exhibition as someone who not only had first-hand experience of some of the controversy, but also as an outsider to many of the discussions. Indeed, much of my work looks at the power of dialogue and the framing of debates into proactive experiences. I felt this was a chance to find a way to celebrate the successes of sh[OUT], while understanding and reflecting on some of the strength of opinion it formed."

The exhibition was very open about the criticism that GoMA faced over the Bible incident and Dani Marti, and invited visitors to make comments and contribute to the discussion. Representatives from Culture and Sport Glasgow and Glasgay! – who were represented on the advisory board – commented that the exhibition signalled "the beginning of a facilitated process of reflection and joint learning about the issues involved".

6. Conclusions (and questions for the future)

This evaluation has captured a substantial body of material which provides evidence of the social impact and unique value of the social justice programme. This concluding section offers some overarching conclusions and poses questions which might be of use in thinking through the approach taken with future programmes.

An important contribution to social change

GoMA's social justice programme makes a very valuable and unique contribution to a broader process of social change by providing a space (with particular qualities and characteristics) within which challenging issues pertaining to human rights can be openly debated. GoMA not only facilitates this debate but offers authoritative and credible ways of thinking, seeing and talking about rights issues which help to move both public opinion and many individual visitors towards a more respectful understanding of difference.

The evaluation revealed an important finding – 71% of people who saw sh[OUT] were supportive of the gallery and the project's aims and approach. This is especially significant in light of the press controversy that erupted later in the programme. There is a danger that the press controversy might be misread to reflect widespread public opposition whereas the detailed evaluation offers evidence to the contrary, with greater than 70% of visitors in support. In effect, one newspaper campaigned against the celebration of LGBTI people and mobilised hundreds of people to write complaints which, in turn, put pressure on local politicians. Although these protests were highly visible, in themselves they give no indication of how dispersed or how deeply held the prejudice is outside of these active protestors. In contrast, the evaluation reveals extensive public support.

The combination of art, politically explicit accompanying interpretation, credible partners and the cultural authority held by Glasgow's largest, most prestigious, publicly funded arts venue produces a powerful capacity for engaging visitors and for creating a climate in which more progressive and respectful understandings of difference can be presented, supported and fostered.

The artists we spoke with were supportive of GoMA's work in this area but some were (not surprisingly) cautious and especially anxious about the use of excessive or clumsy interpretation that might be seen to close down possibilities for audiences to engage with their work. At the same time, evaluation with visitors and people from community groups that do not typically visit art galleries confirmed the need for interpretive materials like those provided in sh[out]. Visitors and artists alike were supportive of the current approach to interpretation taken by GoMA.

Whilst other studies have helped to highlight the role that museums can play in shaping the conversations which society has about difference, this evaluation has revealed a distinctive role for contemporary and modern art which appears to engage visitors in diverse and powerful ways.

At the same time, this is a challenging and largely uncharted area of gallery practice which – as the difficult experience with this fourth biennial programme has shown - has the potential to generate many negative responses and related management challenges. Whilst – with hindsight – some of these might have been more fully anticipated and managed differently, it is also important to recognise that a programme which addresses and lends support to rights issues around which there is considerable contestation will *inevitably* generate conflicts. In fact, it can be argued the controversy itself – the fact that many groups were challenged and sought opportunities to express their counter opinions – is an important, necessary (though often painful and extraordinarily challenging to manage) part of the process of contributing towards social change.

It is also worth noting the important role of the internet in generating and sustaining the controversy. The capacity of the web to generate news, to put people of like mind in touch and to mobilise them to action is a relatively recent phenomenon. At the same time, there is growing interest in the international museum and gallery sector in the potential that Web 2.0 and social networking holds for building and sustaining support for human rights issues. This is an area that GoMA may wish to investigate further.

The fact that many discriminatory comments openly challenging the rights of LGBTI people could be made - not only by members of the public in a gallery but by a range of constituencies in the media - attests to the need for the exhibition to have been staged in the first place. As James Morton, Scottish Transgender Alliance, succinctly remarked;

'The boundaries need to be pushed or they simply don't move'.

Changing attitudes – a balancing act?

At the same time, there is a difficult balance to achieve concerning how far these boundaries can be pushed when the ultimate goal is to engender increasing support amongst a range of different constituencies, for an issue like LGBTI rights. Qualities of tolerance, respect, acceptance and support for rights and equality issues operate on a continuum and there are most likely tipping points along the way. This presents a challenge – there is a need to take a strong stance on the issues (one which can challenge and extend the boundaries of acceptance and tolerance) but where this position is perceived to be too extreme, too far out of step with contemporary values and social norms, then there is a danger that the initiative is viewed as sensationalist and can, perhaps, ultimately undo some of the benefits that are being achieved.

Of course this requires significant judgement to identify where prudent risk management ends and self censorship begins.

The issue of sexual explicitness, as featured in artworks, is perhaps pertinent here. Some visitors – both those who identified as LGBTI and those who identified as heterosexual men or women – expressed their discomfort with some of the work in the main exhibition that was deemed to be sexually explicit or biased in its emphasis on sex and sexual practices. There are a number of reasons why the Gallery may wish to include such works; not least because some advisory board members

interviewed explained that they viewed the inclusion of certain works (such as the Mapplethorpe photographs) as a sign of commitment on the part of the Gallery to representing them fully and fairly. At the same time, more provocative works may work against the goal of building more widespread public support for LGBTI human rights. This is where the balancing act becomes particularly challenging.

The significance of the human rights frame

Since its inception, the social justice programme has explored four very different themes and rights issues pertaining to diverse social groups. One element that has been consistent across the themes and programmes is the use of the strapline - contemporary art and human rights – which is important for a number of reasons. Not only does it provide continuity – a brand that helps to distinguish the programme from other GoMA initiatives – but it also performs an important ‘framing’ function, closely associating these biennial events with a concept – human rights – which, at least in the abstract, has been found to enjoy almost universal acceptance across different cultures, political constituencies and publics.

How might the transformative power of the concept and language of human rights be more fully drawn upon to enlist public, community, political and media support for future social justice strands?

In particular:

- Are there possibilities for extending the nature of the partnership with Amnesty International in ways which will assist GoMA in managing future controversies?
- Might the advisory board be more fully utilised to assist in anticipating and managing negative responses?
- What might be gained or lost by integrating elements of the interpretation relating to the human rights issues affecting different groups, more fully into the spaces in which artworks are exhibited? In what creative ways might artists be enabled to engage with and respond to this material and these concepts in their work?

Integrating the different elements of the social justice programme

Part of the success of the social justice programme lies in the comprehensive approach which brings together all parts of the gallery and its staff to work on different elements under a single theme. The social justice programme is much more than a single (main gallery) exhibition but includes public and outreach programmes, balcony exhibitions, education programmes, marketing, staff training and so on – all elements working together to ensure that the programme reaches and engages wide ranging audiences over a significant period of time.

At the same time, the different elements of the programme appear to be fairly compartmentalised in terms of both process and product. One consequence of this is that displays arising from community engagement are clearly marked as such by their placement in the balcony area.

What might be gained by blurring the boundaries between the work that is displayed in the balcony area and the work in the main galleries? Leading edge practice in the performing arts, for example, is exploring what can be achieved

through co-creative processes which bring together professional artists and members of the community to jointly create theatre, dance and opera of the highest artistic standards which elicits positive reviews from arts critics and, at the same time, sets new standards in audience and community engagement. This approach has yet to be explored in the visual arts but might provide an opportunity to stimulate exciting new approaches in GoMA's future social justice programming.

Strengthening links with the education authority

The particular problems surrounding schools involvement which occurred early on in the sh[OUT] programme curtailed valuable opportunities for working with schools. This was especially regrettable given that the City's Education Department was, at the time, working on introducing its own LGBT policy. As Mark O'Neill commented, this meant that instead of being a resource for this work, it was a missed opportunity.

Moreover, the sh[OUT] programme chimed with recent education policy developments at a national level

(<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/11/04154235/5>).

What opportunities might then exist for a higher level strategic partnership between GoMA and education authorities and agencies at a city and national level? This could be enormously beneficial for planned future work around the theme of health.

A space for debate and dialogue

A key element in the success of the social justice programmes is the capacity for the gallery to facilitate (to host *and* to inform) public dialogue and debate. Visitors make extensive use of the dwell spaces to share their own comments, feelings and other reactions via comments cards and books.

Figure 5: The dwell space and resource area in sh[OUT]



What might be gained/lost by embedding the process and outcome of public debate more fully within the physical and intellectual space of the exhibition? Can the debate itself be more fully drawn into the exhibition and related programming and what are the dangers associated with doing this?

Of course, this approach was trialled at short notice with the balcony exhibition that sought to interpret the debate surrounding artworks in *Made in God's Image*, but how might the process of debate and dialogue be woven into other aspects of the programme including the main exhibition? A recent exhibition at the British Library, for example, used new media interventions to weave opportunities for visitor engagement throughout the displays. What might be appropriate and possible in an art gallery setting?

Figure 6: Visitor comments on display in the balcony exhibition

