Appendix 8
Show Me Yours Project Report
Talbot Rice Gallery, Edinburgh
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Executive Summary

The project in brief

Interpretations

*Interpretations* was an action research project investigating the role of interpretation in breaking down barriers to access to contemporary visual art. *Interpretations* was operated by engage Scotland and was supported by the National Lottery through the Scottish Arts Council and by the Hugh Fraser Foundation.

Four galleries across Scotland were involved in the project, Dundee Contemporary Arts, Piers Art Centre, Orkney, Collective Gallery and Talbot Rice Gallery in Edinburgh. A survey paper, collated by a lead researcher, will combine the findings from all four galleries. This overall report will be published by Engage Scotland.

The summary that follows of the Talbot Rice project, was written by the lead researcher from engage Scotland, Maureen Michael.

Show me yours, I’ll show you mine

Embracing the notion of *interpretive communities*, Talbot Rice Gallery constructed a series of gallery-based events and activities designed to enhance audience access to Ultra Paste - the work of contemporary artist Enrico David. In developing “Show me yours” the Talbot Rice Gallery devised variations of audience engagement that fused interpretive audience responses with the production of film-based interpretation material. “Show me yours” illustrates a responsive model of interpretation practice that navigates challenge and opportunity whilst protecting the integrity of initial concepts.

Interpretive communities were identified for this project with the planning facilitated through collaboration between artists, educators, film-maker and an academic researcher. Various interpretive experiences were facilitated for the different audience communities. These visual and performing arts experiences were captured in video and used towards the creation of a film-work. Available to the general public during the final phase of the exhibition this film-work represents a tangible interpretive output for “Show me yours”.

“Show me yours” is the first time that the Talbot Rice Gallery has used filmmaking as an interpretation strategy. TRG is keen to develop this strategy but more significantly, “Show me yours” has opened up, “…interpretation not as a closed exercise, an educational programme with strict frames and timelines, but as an open process where reflection and negotiation are part of the working methods of everyday practice in the gallery – not just for, but crucially with visitors.” (Show me yours Evaluation Report Page 22)
Introduction

What was it all about?

The Talbot Rice “Show me yours, I’ll show you mine” project centred around the Enrico David ‘Ultra Paste’ exhibition, presented in the gallery from 22 March until 10 May 2008. However, both the preparatory phase, and the end-of-project reporting, final stage, after the closure of the exhibition, meant that “Show me yours” lasted significantly longer than usual education programmes at Talbot Rice. Starting with the first establishment of contacts and discussion of possibilities in November 2007, TRI activity was constant in the gallery until the completion of the reporting and the summative evaluation of the project in mid-June 2008. This meant a prolonged period of work (8 months) during which a range of professionals, students and audience groups actively took part in collectively devising and organising a project idea, which carried at its heart the purpose of enhancing access to the gallery’s exhibitions.

The main actor bringing this idea forward, organising it and continuously ensuring that it was on track was Zoë Fothergill, Curator, Education & Development at Talbot Rice Gallery; together with her, Juliana Capes, artist and freelance educator, worked on leading the workshop development and delivery; Graham Drysdale, film-maker and facilitator with Pilton Video, offered his technical and intellectual support in the development and facilitation of the activities; and Emer Fahey, University of Edinburgh MSc intern student, was a constant source of ideas and support during the whole life of the project. The author, Dr Sotiria Grek, Research Fellow, University of Edinburgh, was responsible for the research and evaluation of the project; she was present and actively contributing to its conception and organisation, whereas during its delivery assumed a participant observation role, coupled with taking interviews and small focus-group discussions.

The structure of the “Show me yours” research and hence of this report is purposely ‘people-centred’, in that it begins with the premise that gallery interpretation is first and foremost dependent on peoples’ ideas and world visions. It adapts the notion of ‘interpretative communities’ to gallery education, suggesting that the process of interpretation in the gallery space involves a range of interpretative strategies that collectively construct, and share meaning and hence ‘understand’ art and its context. This does not imply that the processes of meaning-making are detached from the artworks and the artist’s mind who bore them; on the contrary, artists themselves are members of interpretative communities when they first conceive and create art, and, through the impact of their artworks, they are the ever-present, influential actors in the interpretative communities formed thereafter. The core idea in the notion of the creation of the ‘interpretative communities’ is the negotiation of meaning; the multiple ways that the many, often consensual but also conflicting perspectives of the actors involved in the processes of interpretation (that is both gallery professionals and audience), as well as their differentiated agendas, backgrounds and interests, impact on the ways culture is experienced.

Hence this report wants to reflect on the formation, workings and, most significantly, interaction of a series of interpretative communities in “Show me yours” and examine their impact on the ways Enrico David’s works were accessed. They are interpretative communities because their work constantly involves acts of interpretation, either of the artworks themselves or of the tasks and objectives assigned to them: curators have to create a story; education staff need to interpret the exhibition narrative in order to find ways to pedagogically unlock it to the public; and finally, audiences are there to make meaning, to interpret the artworks themselves. Hence, there were at least four different interpretative communities at work in the “Show me yours” project: first, the artistic/curating one, involving David, his life and works, and the interpretative strategies the curator used to ‘speak’ to the public; second, Engage Scotland and the Interpretations partners’ group, in terms of actively steering and funding the project, as well as creating a group of peers collaborating with each other; third, the five individuals mentioned above, a group who came together for the first time in order to collectively imagine, devise and deliver a series of interpretative activities in the gallery; and of course last, and certainly not least, all those interpretative communities of people who took part in the project and offered their own perspectives on the artworks.

This report focuses on the interactions of these four ‘interpretative communities’ over the 8 month period that “Show me yours” lasted and shows that there is a direct correlation between the levels of negotiation of meaning and access at the management stage of preparing an educational programme, and the quality and nature of the interpretative processes that will be available and used by the audience in the gallery space. In other words, the more meanings and intentions are negotiated and collectively formed at the level of professionals working towards a gallery educational programme, the more easily access is facilitated at the level of audience interpretative groups, and the more valuable and worthwhile their experience becomes. On the contrary, minimal negotiation and lack of collective understanding and communication amongst the interpretative communities leads to reduced audience access and barriers to visiting.

“Show me yours” evaluation specifically aimed to answer the following research questions:

1. How do different audience interpretative communities receive and interpret artworks using a variety of tools and activities, such as writing, dancing or filming? How is this capability most effectively facilitated?

2. How did members of the project team deal with management and interpretation issues during the project? How do different interests and expertise in the gallery space impact on audience interpretation?

The research methodology followed an action research design: therefore, change in practice was the ultimate objective of the research. It starts from the need that specific problems be solved (in our case, access and interpretation challenges) and it is research-focused in that the process of exploring for solutions makes actors (here the interpretative community of gallery education professionals) understand their practice better – not simply what it is that they are doing but crucially the factors that affect what they practise. Key to action research is making informed choices; this is ensured by rigorous data collection and analysis, not just by researchers alone but by the professionals themselves. In other words, action research breaks the divide between academic theory/ research and professional practice by equipping actors with the reflective tools that will assist them to understand their professional action from the inside. For this project, a triangulation of methods was applied, i.e. a range of methods were used in order to illuminate situations from several perspectives. These methods were field notes, semi-structured interviews, questionnaires and photographs.
Enrico David’s works were at the centre of the Interpretations project at the Talbot Rice Gallery. Their lively, questioning, often provocative nature was inspiring and their theatricality proved a useful match to the education team’s ideas for developing a new media education programme around the exhibition: first, artist Juliana Capes would develop a range of interpretative tools and ideas in order to first familiarise the participants with the exhibition, who then, having developed some understanding and thoughts around the works, would work with the film-maker Graham Drysdale, in producing a short film based on their interpretations of the exhibition. Enrico’s eclectic work, which combines performance with nuances of art and theatre history, as well as art deco undertones, represents life on a stage; masks, props, fans and shadow boxes, together with a fine drawing ability, are used in turning visual art into drama, where self-revelation and ridicule as well as elaborate disguise, expose both artist and viewer in a journey from the fantastical to the banal.
The exhibition develops as a game into which the visitor is slowly drawn and then won over – in order to do that, it uses a broad range of artistic techniques: collage, photography, text, drawings and installation. ‘Ultra Paste’ was initially put together for a previous exhibition by the artist in 2007 at the ICA in London and then travelled to Edinburgh for the Talbot Rice exhibition. Therefore, because of the Talbot Rice gallery lay-out (see appendix 1), the first work presented was the installation ‘Ultra Paste’ (above) which many visitors found too bold a statement (the artist representing himself rubbing against a mannequin in his childhood bedroom) to start off with – most could appreciate and ‘read’ it only on their way out of the gallery, once they had had the experience of the rest of the works. Therefore, the ‘story’ of the exhibition started from probably one of the hardest works to interpret, both because of the theme (and the text written by the artist that went along with it) and its grand size – a whole room inside the gallery which visitors were not allowed to enter (see appendix 1). The gallery space compelled such an arrangement; however this was to prove a slightly uneasy starting-off point from an interpretation/education point of view.

Apart from this challenge, creating storylines for this exhibition seemed rather simple – Enrico’s works and his titles accompanying them, were to offer a springboard for many stories and multiple layers of meanings which project participants would use to ‘enter’ his bizarre but charming world.
The Education Programme
Stories created and told

“Show me yours” was conceived and developed after a long series of meetings and discussions, which started in November 2007 when the team was formed for the first time, and continued and until the 29 February 2008 when the first session was scheduled to take place. Ideas, suggestions, as well as emphasis, roles, budgets and timelines for possible ways of working with the participants were at the centre of all these discussions, which concluded in a format that would capitalise on the expertise of all the project members: that would be a combination of art, drama, dance, film-making and research. It was decided that the project team would work with a team of eight young people, four from Pilton Video and four from the Broughton Art Group. The objective of the devised eight session programme (see appendix 2) was for young people to be introduced to gallery interpretation in a more general sense and then move on to an exploration of Enrico David’s work together with the help of the artist and the film-maker. Finally, the young people would be enabled to make a short film which would present their perspective on how the artworks could be interpreted.

All discussions ran smoothly without the project members experiencing any major disagreements about how the sessions should be planned or what they should be about – because of the participatory nature of the project, team members agreed that, although a general framework would be offered, the participants would be allowed to come up with their own unique ways of using film or other similar media (still photography for example) and interpreting the artworks in the gallery space. In retrospect, what then seemed a clear and shared understanding, was to be challenged by miscommunication in the team and a tension between the professionals involved (more on which later).

The meetings held in January and February 2008 had to deal with a new challenge that was presented for the project before the Christmas holidays: although the focus of the project and the successful application accepted by Engage clearly stated that “Show me yours” would be using new media to work with young people, Engage Scotland acknowledged that due to ‘a genuine oversight exacerbated by confused meeting dates and tight timescales’ (email communication 27 November 2007), it had not made clear that young people were not the preferred audience group Engage wanted project members to work with, which had to now change from working with young people to engaging with a broader audience. Engage Scotland agreed that they would fund additional work time for the necessary changes. This, of course, was a major blow to the team which systematically and from very early on had been tailoring the project specifically to young people – above all, the youth groups had been established and contacted and were ready to start with the sessions at the end of February. Although initially there was some confusion and frustration within the group, it was quickly decided that as time was running out an adaptation of the original plan was necessary. This would involve asking the young people to produce a film interpreting the artworks, which however would then be presented to a broader audience in order to evaluate its impact. Engage endorsed this change and Zoë Fothergill reacted quickly and effectively by applying for funding from Show Scotland, in order to organise a one-day event when the film would be launched and tested with the wider public. The application was successful.

The shift of emphasis on behalf of Engage at this preparatory but crucial stage affected the core team’s sense of ownership of the project and as a result, confidence in the overall project direction was lost. Instead of working on details and planning the sessions collaboratively, the focus now had to change to explore how to train the participating young people (who had major access issues themselves) to interpret works of art for other audiences. The research questions also had to be changed, as did the session outlines and the evaluation plan. Considerable challenges were presented to the team already committed to working within a finite time frame and with the established young peoples’ group. In addition, because of the participatory nature of the project, there was no guarantee that the young people would be keen on this new idea, which, as it was discussed, they might have found too challenging or uninteresting. Nevertheless, with all of these factors and risks taken into account it is to their credit that the team resolved to continue working towards a collective solution.
Young people’s Group

The first session took place on 7 March at the Dean Gallery. The objective was that the young people would be introduced to the idea of interpretation. All of the participants appeared interested and quite active in their participation. They presented an on-going interest in art (but less in art galleries), which was thought of as of great value to the project, and that they would be well able to contribute to the task since interpreting artworks would be an activity they would enjoy.

This first session surpassed expectations; moving from discussion to teamwork, to playing games and to learning by doing (see appendix 2 – session 1 plan), participants were made aware of the process of interpretation, its nature to problematise and question both the gallery’s displaying techniques and the artists’ intentions. The young people were successfully led to explore the negotiable nature of interpreting an artwork, on their own and with others. Apart from creating a comfortable working atmosphere where people felt, from very early on, relaxed enough to express their views on Surrealist art, Juliana managed to steer the group towards thinking about alternative interpretative media – mainly video and filming - which can be shared with the wider audience. The young people involved seemed eager to then move on to creating their own interpretative material: this was creating a ‘response’ to an artwork of their choice. The young people worked in couples. This method combined activity-based learning and careful thought and explanation, since at the end of the session they had to present their ‘response’ to the rest of the group and justify it. All of them appeared as very good students of Surrealism; not only were the ‘young interpreters’ inventive and imaginative in their responses, but also very eloquent and descriptive in their presentations - Magritte would have been proud!
The session in the second week of the project (14 March) did not start as well as hoped, since merely three (out of eight) young people were present. In addition, due to miscommunication in the project team, the film-maker Graham Drysdale did not feel that it was necessary for him to be there since his expertise had little to do with the outline of the session. The session began with a tour round the gallery – both the newer part as well as the old. The stark contrast of the GeorgIan gallery with its traditional museum outlook with the white cube gallery attached (in this case totally white, since artworks weren’t yet hung – they were sitting on the floor) made an impression on the young group, who for the first time familiarised themselves with the space they would be working with and the contrasting feel of the two adjacent buildings.

Once the tour around both spaces was over, the three young people (outnumbered by the project team – Zoë, Juliana, Sotiria and Emer) watched a slide show of Enrico David’s previous and current work. The discussion centred on materials, themes, codes and personal experiences that define the artist’s work and that the young people felt that they needed to unlock before they could make sense of the artist’s intentions. The young people seemed keen on unfolding the artworks’ meanings by attempting to interpret aspects of them, as well as particular choices made by the artist that seemed consistent across most works displayed. The interpretation of Enrico David’s work for a wider audience was not at this point useful, since the group required a degree of familiarisation and understanding before they attempted to translate their personal interpretations of the artworks into a collaborative interpretation within the group and then into interpretation material for other audiences.

After the break, the second part of the session involved using large pieces of paper where young people wrote or drew questions that they wanted to pose to Enrico David. Once a number of questions were written and arranged next to each other on the gallery floor, the participating young people were given the video and the photographic cameras in order to enact their questions: this involved dramatisation and performance with usually one young person behind the camera and the others in front of it. As with the previous session, participants were very creative and used their imaginations well, in order to pose questions that they felt were critical to the artist’s work. In addition, humour, and their own artistic interests penetrated in to the enactment of the questions. The session ended with a collective viewing of all the material produced.
Plan Z

After the end of the session, another meeting was held in order to discuss roles within the team and the possible reasons for the low turn-out in the session, given that the first session was very successful and promised continuity. There was evident tension between project members in relation to the focus of the project and where it was going – could we rely on this group of young people, all in their final year at school with difficult and decisive exams ahead of them - would they be committed enough to make the project happen? Were they interested in producing the interpretative work for a wider audience and where does the balance lie between steering a group and democratically allowing them the space to make their own decisions? Was the project film-focused enough and how could the different professionals within the team work together to prepare and deliver the sessions, especially in a changing project that required constant adjusting to the new reality? What initially was a well-thought out and well-prepared project suddenly seemed to be going through a crisis – tension within the team and low turn-out by the participants. Nevertheless, the team agreed that more steering would be necessary both for the project participants as well as the project members. It appeared that a balance had to be struck between shared decision-making and clear direction. The team discussed better ways of communicating and collaborating on planning the sessions.

After a first introduction of the exhibition to the team members by Enrico David on 19 March, the exhibition opening took place on 20 March, with a lot of the young people and their friends coming to see it. Having already had an introduction to Enrico David’s work, some seemed to like it more than others, while all of them appeared curious to explore its meanings further and stayed for quite a long time at the gallery discussing it amongst themselves and with the project members. Everyone in the team was delighted that they had come and showed interest in the project and the exhibition.

The third session was scheduled for 28 March but this time, despite continuous reminders sent to them and most probably due to exams and other commitments, no young people turned up. A radical re-shaping of the project was required. The team had yet another meeting where it was decided to put extra effort into establishing new contacts with a variety of groups who would be invited for a session in the gallery adapted to their needs; this way, having already done some work with the young people’s group, “Show me yours” would adapt to the Engage Scotland requirement of working with other audiences too. In addition, the Show Scotland day on 3 May would turn into a drop-in day for all audiences/keen visitors who would want to take part. During the following two weeks there was a concentration of efforts to establish contacts with new groups, with sessions now scheduled for the week between 21 April and 3 May.

A group of 15 S1 pupils from Liberton High School was one of the groups who participated, along with La Nua Dance Company (6 adults aged 25-40 years old) and the Canongate Youth Group (6 young adults aged between 15-20 years old). The drop-in session was very successful, with a large number of families, more dancers, students and other participants, who came and took part in the sessions organised for them.
Liberton High School

The first session with the Liberton High School pupils was led by Sheila Macdougall (Freelance Gallery Educator) and Graham Drysdale, who both used drama, improvisation and film to assist the children’s group to interpret the works of art. The session focused on games that used embodiment of emotions and other physical movements, letting the children explore their understandings and feelings in front of the works of art. This mode of kinesthetic learning is a teaching style in which learning takes place by participants actually carrying out a physical activity, rather than listening to a tour guide or merely watching a demonstration. Pupils became natural discovery learners, exploring the works through actions they collaboratively brought together and in relation to each other; they achieved realisation through moving and action, which then turned into specific postures and poses for producing a film.

Through the embodiment of their emotions when seeing the artworks, pupils came closer to the artworks meanings. They felt relaxed and let themselves go – they learnt how to take risks and to try something different with their bodies and facial expressions. Discussions would follow their movements, in an effort to understand the artworks on the basis of their spontaneous expressive gestures when looking at them. There was discussion about materials, composition, colours and themes. The dramatisation of the artworks would lead smoothly then to the second part of the session, which focused more closely on film-making. Pupils were split into three groups: a ‘browsing’ group, which would focus on discussion of specific works with Zoë; a writing group, with Emer, which would write a small story around *Faït divers*, a series of 10 photographic prints; and a film-making group who would work with Graham in making a short film of three still shots. The groups would change every 15 minutes giving the opportunity to all pupils to experience each activity.
Fig 12,13: Directing and film-making

Fig. 14: More film-making

Fig 15: Discussing and reflecting
La Nua Dance Company

The dance Improvisation group ‘Space to Move’ run by La Nua Dance Company (Friday 25 April), after having been introduced to the exhibition through a discussion with Juliana, were asked to interpret the artworks through movement and dance. The session lasted for two hours through which participants became deeply engaged in a physical communication amongst themselves and with the works of art. After a warm up in the Georgian gallery, the dancers moved through to the Enrico David exhibition where feelings of suppression, revelation and hindrance became the main focus of the dance.

At the end of the session, in a discussion reflecting on their experience, the dancers revealed that they became very close to each other and to the works of art, feeling that the artist must be a strong character whose experiences and messages had now affected them far more than after the initial gallery tour. The dancers said that they often felt aggression and wanted to do aggressive acts, as well as warmth, humour and a desire to reveal and disclose aspects of themselves in response to the artist’s covert and overt messages. The dancers expressed that though they had never approached an exhibition through dance before and that they had found the experience unique and very rewarding.
Another group that participated in “Show me yours” was a group from the Canongate Youth Project. The group consisted of five young people (three girls and two boys) who initially became familiar with the artworks through a question and answer session. All of them seemed interested in discussing with Juliana about the creative process of making an artwork; the theatricality and humour of the works led the young people to reflect on their own situation (“sort of makes you think about your stuff as well”).

The session continued with the young people making masks and film-making, using the masks they had created and other props. They were all very engaged with the experience and were having good fun and learning through activity. Some of them suggested:

“I found the experience today very insightful about the artist. The people we worked with were kind and always willing to discuss different pieces of art. I really enjoyed making the masks and the film and also I really enjoyed walking around the exhibition. The only problem was how long it went on - otherwise the visit was brilliant.”
(female, 16 years old)

“I really enjoyed today. It made me look at art differently and understand other people’s perspectives. I enjoyed making the masks and getting to direct my own art shot - I got a better understanding of contemporary art.”
(female, 15 years old)

“I really enjoyed my day overall. It was a new experience and I found everything very interesting. I especially enjoyed filming the art. I found it very fun and exciting. I also liked making the masks, it really made me think.”
(male, 15 years old)
Fig 21: Mask-making

Fig 22: Graham and young people behind the camera: directing

Fig 23-24: Film-making and acting
Your Take! Drop-in Session

The drop-in sessions on 3 May were successful with 30 participants in total during the whole day (10 am- 4 pm). The session involved a short tour round the exhibition, a first-familiarisation of the visitors with the works led by Juliana Capes. There were a variety of tools and media participants could use in order to interpret the exhibition. In particular, visitors had the option to work on prop-making with Juliana, making masks and fans, while discussing the exhibition and getting ideas of how to use the props if they would like to make a film with filmmaker Graham Drysdale. Visitors also had the option to create an audio recording of their interpretations; with the help of Zoë Fothergill, they could record an informal conversation about a painting, or write a poem, article or story and record it themselves (see appendix 4).

Fig 22-25: Groups and individuals in drop-in session day
Participants had the opportunity to learn film-making techniques and use them in order to create short films with the assistance and constant support of Graham. They used the techniques they learned to create a response to the artist in relation to the ideas of revelation and concealment; most of them used the masks they had already made or other props like fans or chairs. Although a specific space in the gallery was transformed into a studio space for filming, many participants expanded their filming activities into the gallery itself.

Fig 26-31: Groups and individuals from drop-in session 3 May
Most participants worked collaboratively to explore different media and meanings in the exhibition space. When asked about their experience and the extent to which their participation in the educational programme assisted them in the making of their own stories and meanings in the gallery space, some of them responded:

“I thought it was good. It helped us understand the artist more than I would just by looking at it on my own. Making masks was fun and helped us find ideas.” (male, 21 years old)

“It was a fun experience. The main point I enjoyed was film-making, also the information I was told when looking around in the gallery. Yet I think there could have been more time spent in the gallery.” (male, 17 years old)

“I liked it for being calm and structured. Few numbers meant children could speak and when they did they were listened to and not lots of joking but encouraging thoughtfulness and humour. The children I think enjoyed the gallery, the materials and the filming.” (female, 48 years old).

“I liked how we got to make our own masks. I also liked that the artist didn’t really care about making random things.” (male, 10 years old)

“I liked the staff who showed us around and enjoyed some of the mischievous pictures.” (male, 40 years old)

“My experience today was very different from everything I have ever done. I really enjoyed it and I think it is a very good idea. I liked it all, especially making the mask and interpreting the artwork. It was a really good experience.” (female, 21 years old)
“I really enjoyed going around the exhibition in a relaxed and informal way. I enjoyed the lack of pressure to make or do but by the end really wanted to – enjoyed everyone else’s reactions too.” (female, 28 years old)

“I liked the chance to make my own work. Liked the tour of the exhibition.” (female, 35 years old)

“I loved the opportunity to express my feelings on the exhibition. It was very interesting to get to interact with the gallery staff to make masks that reflected my views of the art. It was exciting to be a part of the artist’s vision rather than just an outsider looking in. I thought the organisation was brilliant and the staff were friendly and open to lots of ideas.” (female, 51 years old)

“Bit boring in the beginning, but very good fun in the end. Felt little bit reluctant to be filmed, but once you start ideas kept coming.” (male, 34 years old)

“I enjoyed the exhibition. The hippest fun was joining in when making video work in taking postures from works.” (female, 31 years old)

“Really interesting, I would like to try the editing process with you.” (female, 26-35)

“Good – discussion, not too long, open, meeting people.” (female, 33 years old)

“Very good, film-making was particularly inventive!” (male, 29 years old)

“Very interesting, I particularly enjoyed the format of the group discussion. The gouache paintings were particularly thought-provoking.” (male, 41 years old)

“I liked the tour and different views offered on the pieces. I liked the idea of varied interpretations on the pieces.” (female, 28 years old)

“Communication, process of making the masks, how people presented their ‘characters’, kind staff – so all looked more like a game than a project. I enjoyed it.” (female, 33 years old)

“I liked when we were filmed and that we could make any sort of mask possible. I didn’t like that we had a certain limit of time for when to finish the mask.” (male, 15 years old)
Film Feedback

All the sessions culminated in the production of a film, collaboratively created by the project participants and edited by Graham Drysdale. The film was shown during the last day of the exhibition to visitors in the gallery and received some interesting comments, in relation to future possibilities for interpretation in the gallery. To the question ‘has your appreciation or understanding of the exhibition changed after having watched this film’, some visitors responded:

‘Yes, It gave me new ideas’.

‘It would be interesting to consider the works in relation to dance’.

‘I participated in video workshop and had a tour of the exhibition: it helped make more sense of the artwork’.

‘Engaging people will always help to bring understanding of an abstracted exhibition like this’.

‘It hasn’t made any difference – words work for me, and this is distracting, although interesting’.

‘Music and mime simultaneously distances (aestheticises) and grounds (embodies) the work’.

Fig 31: Filming
Challenges
Fielding the curve balls

“Show me yours”, although successful, was faced with many challenges in its 8 months’ lifetime. The main challenges could be summarised in the following points:

Reality versus planning / unpredictability
This was felt strongly when the first group of young people we were working with could not take part in the project any longer. What do you do in a funded project, that operates in a limited budget and within a limited timescale, when issues like this emerge?

Voluntary participation and long-term educational engagement
How do you establish planning and financing a more long term working situation with a group of visitors when the voluntary nature of the engagement means that they might at any point, due to other more ‘serious’ commitments, pull out? How do we move beyond the ‘one-off’ gallery educational experience?

Communication issues
During different stages of the project, miscommunication emerged as a significant factor in creating tension amongst project members and with the funder. How do project leaders ensure that constant and good communication is taking place?

Participants’ motivation and group dynamics
How do you establish the participants’ motivation to take part from early on so that you can organise the sessions accordingly? How do you negotiate participants’ interests and personalities in order to create a valuable experience for everyone?

Temporary exhibitions
How do you establish a more long-term view on educational programming in a constantly changing gallery environment?

Contracts
Finally, how best can you work with a range of contractors (professionals working outwith the gallery) who have different timetables and work commitments, especially in a situation when the original agreed plans have to change mid-way through the project?
Conclusions & Impact
What difference has the project made?

“Show me yours” was a positive and rewarding experience for most of those who took part, either from a management, delivery and research standpoint or from a visitor’s point of view. Talbot Rice, a university gallery with a core audience base drawn in large part from the university staff and students, is open to new and diverse audience groups, which have a lot to offer the gallery in the development of new approaches to education and gallery interpretation. In terms of the research questions the project aimed to answer, although these are not definitive conclusions, we would suggest that access issues are best resolved through a negotiation of meaning during all the phases of the exhibition life (from mounting it to its end) and that the more interpretative media visitors are encouraged to use the better their experience will be.

In particular, the project findings would suggest the following.

**Integrated cycle of meaning makers**
Audience groups are not to be treated as interpretative communities separate from the process of making meaning, that other interpretative communities, such as the team of curators, the team of educators or any funding group, have the opportunity to explore and define first. In other words, interpretation is not limited to the visitors coming to the gallery and making meaning of the exhibition – all actors involved in the organisation of educational programmes and gallery activities need to be reflective and mindful of their own impact in producing and steering interpretation.

**Slow preparation - smooth delivery**
Professional expertise and interests are also a crucial factor in the ways that interpretation in a gallery unfolds – for example, artists have different interests and objectives and work in different ways from film-makers or community educators. This needs to be taken into account by project leaders. The more meaning and ways of working are negotiated during the preparatory phase, the smoother the programme will run.

**Choice for a personalised experience**
Offering a range of media, rather than focusing on a single instrument, proved positive in our experience of the project. Thus, visitors could apply any of their own aptitudes and interests in exploring an artwork – hence, they would develop their practice (i.e. dancing or writing) and see the ways that their own likes and skills can be linked with appreciating art in a contemporary art gallery.

**Social activity**
Further, exploring art together with others rather than individually seemed to be a very important definitive factor of the extent to which visitors appreciated art. Especially in the case of young people or families, sharing fun and observations or collectively making something, was a way of working with the artworks that they particularly enjoyed.

**The fun factor**
Finding the right balance between having fun and learning seemed also to be of importance. Learning can be fun, but visitors can also enjoy their time without achieving very much in terms of interpretation. This project struck a balance between helping visitors to explore their own meanings without patronising them or giving them too challenging tasks. Indeed, many visitors commented in the project members’ ability (especially Juliana’s) in leading them smoothly and informally into realisations about themselves and the artworks. In a sense, as with one of the main themes of Enrico’s work, the relationship between revealing and concealing is very important in any act of interpretation. Although activities are crucial in letting visitors think in different ways, there is a lot of work that has to be done in terms of preparing the visitors mentally and psychologically for the experience; talking not to them but with them as well as creating a relaxed and friendly environment where they feel ‘at home’ played an important role in the project’s success.
The film factor
Film-making can be a great way to explore art when involving groups of people and when working with individuals: in preparing for making a film, it brings together a range of visitors’ interests, from drawing and writing, making props and using technical equipment, to dancing and acting etc. Although initially it was felt that the technical side or appearing on camera would be a deterrent for most visitors, we quickly found out that a range of activities can be organised around film-making, even for those who are not so keen on film-making itself. At the same time, people with some interest in it, can explore the medium in a place with an abundance of meanings and stories to work with.

If it ain’t broke
Finally, it is important to note that although a range of visitors with access issues enjoyed the new ways of interpreting art, more frequent visitors showed a preference for the more conventional and traditional tools of having a tour or reading press releases and other materials in the gallery space; it is important to be aware of this and offer these audience groups the interpretation methods they enjoy.

Legacy
Where next?

“Show me yours” was a rich and valuable experience for everyone involved. In particular, the gallery established some promising working relations with groups, such as the dance improvisation group and the Canongate Youth Project. Film-making was used for the first time in the gallery for educational purposes; judging from the interest it received by most visitors, it is expected that it will be used as an interpretative instrument in the gallery again and the equipment that the engage project has provided will enable this legacy to continue. In terms of establishing a more long-term relationship with a group (one of Zoë’s main reasons for getting involved in the Interpretations project in the first place), it was shown that it can be achieved if the motivation of the participants is strong and sustained – it was also shown that the temporary nature of the exhibitions arguably means that the engagement of visitors is very much specific to the particular exhibition and its content and themes and the extent to which they like it or not. The elements of the project which could become embedded in future practice in this gallery and possibly in other settings is the availability of a range of media and choice for the participants, as well as the collaborative and informal nature of approaching art. One of the main lessons learnt - that will be tested and explored in future exhibitions - is the negotiated and transient nature of gallery interpretation and the value of reflective practice; in other words, looking at interpretation not as a closed exercise, an educational programme with strict frames and timelines, but as an open process where reflection and negotiation are part of the working methods of everyday practice in the gallery – not just for, but crucially, with visitors.
Appendices

1. Gallery Plan
2. Session Plan
3. Evaluation Plan
4. Writing material produced by visitors
5. Consent Form
1. Gallery Plan

QuickTime™ and a TIFF (LZW) decompressor are needed to see this picture.
# 2. Session Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session 1</th>
<th>Introduction Session</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Session Aims</strong></td>
<td>Introducing the group and introducing the aims of project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exploring what Interpretation can mean.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Having fun and get to know each other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3-330pm</strong></td>
<td>Introductions and Introduction of Project Aims. (Dean Education Room)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>330pm – 4pm</strong></td>
<td>Gallery Based Interpretations Session, Surrealist Room.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Writing Questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Giving Answers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Asking each individual to come up with one question relating to a work of art in the room and putting all questions in a hat. Read out the questions one by one and get group to answer them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4- 410pm</strong></td>
<td>Discussion about what information you need when you look at a work of art, from the results of questions and answers session.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>410pm – 420pm</strong></td>
<td>Discussion and Investigation of information available in the Gallery. Did it answer all our questions? What didn’t it answer and why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>420pm – 430pm</strong></td>
<td>Discussion of Interpretation vs information? What is the difference?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>430pm – 445pm</strong></td>
<td>What is interpretation? How can you interpret art in a gallery? Juliana interprets 3 works, by words, by song and by images etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>445pm – 5pm</strong></td>
<td>Splitting group into 4 teams and asking them to chose and analyse an artwork.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5pm – 6pm</strong></td>
<td>Dean education room. Using props, art materials, role play etc, each group interprets a work. Group discussion and evaluation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session</td>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Session 2 | 07/03/08 | Talbot Rice Gallery | Introduce Enrico David’s work (slide show possible?)
|         |          |                 | Discussion and Interpretation.                                            |
|         |          |                 | Prepare questions for Enrico David in the next session                   |
|         |          |                 | Introduction to available equipment. What is new media? Quick and fun experiments |
|         |          |                 | Introduce concept and develop plan for producing an initial interpretations project |
| Session 3 | 14/03/08 | Talbot Rice Gallery | Enrico David interview.                                                  |
|         |          |                 | Producing interpretations interactive document for initial use in exhibition |
|         |          | Private View    | Group to be invited and encouraged to come                               |
| 20/03/08 |          |                 |                                                                          |
| Session 4 | 28/03/08 | Talbot Rice | Tour of exhibition                                                       |
|         |          |                 | Analysis of interpretations document.                                    |
|         |          |                 | Planning and Ideas for final project                                     |
| Session 5 | 04/04/03 | Pilton Video | Introduction to Pilton Video                                             |
|         |          |                 | More planning and experiments in making.                                 |
| 11/04/08 |          |                 | Week break to allow resources and preparation for production to be prepared |
| Session 6 | 18/04/08 | venue tbc | production                                                              |
|         |          |                 |                                                                          |
| Session 7 | 25/04/08 | venue tbc | production                                                              |
|         |          |                 |                                                                          |
| Session 8 | 02/05/08 | venue tbc | Production/rehearsal/installation                                        |
| 03/05/08 |          |                 | public event –Show Scotland day                                          |
## 3. Evaluation Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session 1</th>
<th>Introduction Session</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date - 29/02/08</td>
<td>Session Aims -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location - Dean Gallery and Dean Gallery Education Room.</td>
<td>Introducing the group and introducing the aims of project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timescales 3-6pm</td>
<td>Introducing the idea of research: an exploration of expectations, interests, reflections and practices in the gallery space – in other words, critical thinking: the 'why' and 'so what' of educational practice in the gallery space. Using simple words, an introduction to self-evaluation: asking interesting and provocative questions, gathering evidence, finding reasons, exploring different perspectives, reflecting, learning about oneself and others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art materials, Paper and pens, Props and costumes (possibly borrow from Dean education room) Video and cameras for documentation.</td>
<td>Exploring what Interpretation can mean.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-330pm –</td>
<td>Having fun and get to know each other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>330pm – 4pm</td>
<td>Introductions and Introduction of Project Aims. (Dean Education Room)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gallery Based Interpretations Session, Surrealist Room.</td>
<td>Focus group discussion (20 minutes): questions about a) the participants' former experiences of gallery-visiting, if any; b) their reasons for taking part in the project etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Questions</td>
<td>Participant Observation for the remainder of the session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving Answers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asking each individual to come up with one question relating to a work of art in the room and putting all questions in a hat. Read out the questions one by one and get group to answer them.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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6 Name, age, interests  
Familiarisation with gallery visiting?  
Familiarisation with digital media?  
What kind of art do you like? Music, cinema, painting etc...  
What about museum visiting? Best/ worst experience?  
How did you find out about the project?  
What do you expect to get out of it?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>445pm – 5pm</td>
<td>Splitting group into 4 teams and asking them to choose and analyse an artwork.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Session 2**  
07/03/08  
Talbot Rice Gallery  
Introduce Enrico David’s work (slide show possible?)  
Discussion and Interpretation.  
Prepare questions for Enrico David in the next session  
Introduction to available equipment. What is new media? Quick and fun experiments  
Introduce concept and develop plan for producing an initial interpretations project  
**Evaluation:** audio recording of the discussion, photographic evidence and notes – participant observation

**Session 3**  
14/03/08  
Talbot Rice Gallery  
Enrico David interview.  
Producing interpretations interactive document for initial use in exhibition  
**Evaluation:** Video-recording of the session – participant observation

**Private View**  
20/03/08  
Group to be invited and encouraged to come

**Session 4**  
28/03/08  
Talbot Rice  
Tour of exhibition  
Analysis of interpretations document.  
Planning and Ideas for final project  
**Evaluation:** 10-15 min interviews with individual participants on their views on how the project is progressing (formative evaluation)

**Session 5**  
04/04/03  
Pilton Video  
Introduction to Pilton Video  
More planning and experiments in making.

11/04/08  
Week break to allow resources and preparation for production to be prepared

**Session 6**  
18/04/08  
venue tbc  
production

**Session 7**  
25/04/08  
venue tbc  
production

**Session 8**  
02/05/08  
venue tbc  
Production/rehearsal/ installation  
**Evaluation:** participant observation and 15 min summative interviews with participants

03/05/08  
public event  
**Evaluation:** participant observation and interviews with members of the public
Note:

The evaluation tools to be used the gallery are audio and video recordings, photographic evidence and documentation material – the reporting methods will use all this material, as appropriate.
4. Writing material produced by visitors

1. First measure
   the area of what it is you have discarded
   (without even realising)
   Those years spent on hold
   on the telephone or,
   idling. A pool of minutes,
   Unfixed and spreading seconds.

2. Then plot
   the points on a graph of waste
   against value.
   (You will end up with a line, wavy
   or jagged, steep or perhaps placid)
   Co-ordinate
   Calculate the percentage of matter,
   and no matter.

3. Finally, divide yourself
   into finite and recognisable segments.
   (Show your working)
My fat friend.

Visceral
proven
resigned
invoking
sly + violated.

I love you because we are friends but I want to show you how I feel about you. I want to show you who you are and who you can be. I will hold you through the pain of this violation, I know you won't like it. I am afraid you are empty.

I will allow this violation. I know you need to do this. I know you enjoy this, the pain, anxiety + exhibition of it. I know what I am. I can hear you.

Lisa
- CURTAINS
- BUTT XCU
- THE END
- PART BUBBLE
- RUN BACKWARDS
- LINES F
- NEWSPAPER EVENT (NURSE) F
- CHAIR WOMAN PEAKING
- NEWSPAPER EVENT (PIE FACE) F
- RUN UPSTAIRS
(THE BEGINNING)
5. Consent Form

Informed Consent Form for “Show me yours” Project Participants

Project Title: “Show me yours, I’ll show you mine”

I agree to take part in the above gallery project. I have had the project explained to me.

I understand that agreeing to take part means that I am willing to:

- be interviewed by a researcher
- allow to be photographed/ videotaped/ audiotaped
- make myself available for a further interview should that be required

Data Protection

I understand that any information I provide is confidential, and that no information that could lead to the identification of any individual will be disclosed in any reports on the project, or to any other party. No identifiable personal data will be published. The identifiable data will not be shared with any other organisation.

I understand that I will be given a transcript of data concerning me for my approval before it is included in the write up of the research

I consent to the videos/ photographs of me being shown to other researchers and interested professionals.

Withdrawal from study (this clause must be included in all consent forms)

I understand that my participation is voluntary, that I can choose not to participate in part or all of the project, and that I can withdraw at any stage of the project without being penalised or disadvantaged in any way.

Name: ........................................................................................................ (please print)

Signature: ..............................................................................................

Date: ......................................................................................................
Appendix 8a
Show Me Yours Contemporary Art Context

Note

The review material contained within this appendix does not necessarily reflect the thoughts or position of the Talbot Rice Gallery. The material is included to offer the reader additional perspective on the art works that contextualises the Show Me Yours project.
Enrico David
Ultra Paste

Exhibition opens 22 March 2008
continues until 10 May 2008

Talbot Rice Gallery is pleased to present Ultra Paste, a major solo exhibition by Italian born artist Enrico David.

Enrico David first came to attention in 1999 with a series of large scale, embroidered canvases, one of which was exhibited as part of the group show Girlpower & Boyhood at Talbot Rice Gallery in 2006. David’s practice has since further diversified with a sculptural element becoming an important part of his work. Always using drawing as a backbone but also borrowing from traditional craft techniques and stylistic design, he employs these with mischief, playfulness, and a certain knowing crudeness; setting before us a cast of characters in theatrical situations and mock stagesets.

This exhibition demonstrates the breadth of David’s imagination and output, but also his influences. Gouaches, photography and large canvases sit alongside sculpture of varying scale, with clear links to a strong Italian design tradition which is in itself uncompromising and bold.

Central to the exhibition is the work that bears it’s title. Ultra Paste (2007) is a re-imagined facsimilie of the artists childhood bedroom. Taking his inspiration from a 1935 photo-collage by artist Dora Maar, we see a teenage Enrico engaged in a perverse embrace with a generic anatomical mannequin. Encountering this work through a roped off doorway, we are forced into the position of voyeur. The work has links with another smaller piece, Sweet Seizure (2002) in recalling the Victorian phenomena of the shadow cabinet (often made as a memorial to a dead child) and which itself is inspired by a ludicrous photo-story spied within the pages of an adult magazine.

Meanwhile, elaborate, florid titles become a key part of deciphering the work; within a series of gouaches that occupy the upper part of the gallery, the viewer encounters works including Mudhippy turns mother and two daughters into mature cheddar. These often mysterious mini-tableau hint at situations on the verge of instability, insanity, or crisis.

David’s work is impertinent, questioning and vital, reacting to a world of hysterical correctness and etiquette that demands that we comply to social normality.

Enrico David is presented in collaboration with the ICA, and supported by the Arts Council England. The Elephant Trust has contributed to the artist’s fee.

extracted from
http://www.trg.ed.ac.uk/current.htm
last accessed on 03 July 2008

Appendix 9
Example of researcher visual reflection
Example of researcher visual reflection project summaries for CG and DCA