

FRED

EVALUATION 2006



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Compiled by:

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Romantic Seduction and Power -
Mark Haywood & Amanda Newall
611 toy windmills (one for every
letter in 'I Wandered Lonely As A
Cloud') on the shores of Ullswater at
Wordsworth Point

AIMS OF FRED 2006:

- To get Contemporary Art into real life, increasing access to it for the public
- To encourage innovative practice
- To help realise projects that might otherwise not happen
- To support and promote the work of artists working in rural environments
- To change perceptions of art produced in Cumbria
- Reduce isolation of art and artists within Cumbria by networking and linking artists across the county and beyond

STRATEGY FOR MEASURING THE SUCCESS IN MEETING THE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- Quality of projects
- Feedback from artists and audience
- Response from media
- Feedback on / hits on website
- Audience figures
- Internal evaluation

1. OVERVIEW

FRED 2006 was built upon the evaluated outcomes of the two previous annual events to deliver a diverse programme of new site-specific work across mainly rural areas of Cumbria, bringing quality contemporary art to culturally disadvantaged communities and challenging the preconceptions of art produced in rural environments. Larger budgets allowed for increased bursary budgets and three high profile works were commissioned as part of the marketing programme. A larger and more locally based management team was one of the most significant changes in the delivery of the event this year.



Scene from the Cab - Jana-ar ar Safanova
Photographs of journeys to the Eden valley taken by wagon drivers from across Europe and displayed at a transport cafe on the A66.

2. TO GET CONTEMPORARY ART INTO REAL LIFE, INCREASING ACCESS TO IT FOR THE PUBLIC

TO WHAT EXTENT HAS THIS OBJECTIVE BEEN FULFILLED?

FRED 2006 realised 32 projects in over 40 locations across the length and breadth of Cumbria. The vast majority of these projects intervened directly with the day-to-day activities of residents and visitors to the county. As in previous years, the exclusively non-gallery setting has become the mainstay of the event and one which results in relatively large audience figures. The value of contemporary art outside gallery environments is being embraced by an increasing number of other agencies and businesses. Over a dozen businesses and organisations approached Fold on the back of the previous years' events to offer hosting space. Artists who worked directly with the public through workshops, drop-ins or were just available for the public commented on how refreshing it was to work with a non-arts audience.

HOW HAS THIS OBJECTIVE BEEN ACHIEVED?

Working directly with landowners – farmers, estate managers, the National Trust etc. removes an entire layer of bureaucracy that would have been encountered if dealt with via local authorities and other agents. Local project coordination enabled greater personal contact with decision makers. The successful track record of

previous years events and their relevance to local communities provides an evidence base with which to attract new hosts.

WHERE HAS THE EVIDENCE COME FROM?

- Media coverage
- Audience figures
- Website & text alert feedback
- Artists evaluation
- Feedback from other agencies

WHAT HAVE BEEN THE FAILINGS IN THE PROJECT IN RESPECT OF THIS OBJECTIVE?

- More remote locations are less visited
- Directions and locations on guidebook were not clear and there was an over reliance on website data.
- Some key agencies, although supportive of the project, weren't taken full advantage of
- Geographic spread still uneven

HOW MIGHT THE OBJECTIVE HAVE BEEN BETTER OR MORE EASILY FULFILLED?

- Clearer directions in literature.
- Road test all directions before publication
- Still more advocacy required in the North of the County
- Local pubs to be used as information points
- Catalogue / print to help explain FRED events to potential supporters



Wild Boar - Jan Hicks
A 100m hill drawing on the site of the last wild boar hunt in England, made from the fleeces of the sheep which now graze the fell. Some of the 500 fleeces were transported by pack-llamas

3. TO ENCOURAGE INNOVATIVE PRACTICE

TO WHAT EXTENT HAS THIS OBJECTIVE BEEN FULFILLED?

FRED 2006 allowed artists the freedom to develop projects in unconventional settings and a wide range of projects – from landscape installations, to temporary performance works, while encouraging risk.

HOW HAS THIS OBJECTIVE BEEN ACHIEVED?

The selection process ensures innovation in concept, construction or delivery. By alleviating some of the stresses of administration and providing a degree of project management, artists are encouraged to develop and reach their full potential in an atmosphere of experimentation and risk taking. Artists are also allowed to fail in their experimentation, relieving some of the inhibitions of risk taking

WHERE HAS THE EVIDENCE COME FROM?

- Artists' evaluation
- Media
- Audience feedback

WHAT HAVE BEEN THE FAILINGS IN THE PROJECT IN RESPECT OF THIS OBJECTIVE?

Some of the projects were not as developed as they could have been, due to time constraints, bad budgeting or unfamiliarity with their location / site / scale of site. Artists don't always take full advantage of

the help that is on offer, as it is unusual for assistance to be provided.

HOW MIGHT THE OBJECTIVE HAVE BEEN BETTER OR MORE EASILY FULFILLED?

- Training provision to aid budgeting skills
- Compulsory site visits
- Clarification of the budgets available
- Greater one-to-one working with project coordinators
- Clearer budget guide in application pack, drawing attention to possible expenses.



Head - Russell Mills & Ian Walton
A goldplated allotment shed on the site
of Kurt Schwitters' allotment, Ambleside

4. TO HELP REALISE PROJECTS THAT MIGHT OTHERWISE NOT HAPPEN

TO WHAT EXTENT HAS THIS OBJECTIVE BEEN FULFILLED?

FRED 2006 enabled artists to create the kind of work they really wanted to, outside of any commissioning process. This encourages an entrepreneurial approach to projects. Artists create works, which can and do act as marketing and publicity tools for their practise and garner the full potential of the event. FRED created the raison d'être for many previously unfulfilled projects.

HOW HAS THIS OBJECTIVE BEEN ACHIEVED?

FRED 2006 provided bursary assistance towards the cost of creating new works. Artists were free to draw down additional funding and secure sponsorship on an independent basis with support from Coordinators if required. All projects were run as individual projects under one marketing and promotional banner for greater critical mass. As the majority of projects were not commissioned and were not required to fulfil any brief beyond their application, there were very few compromises. Those artists who were commissioned, (Richard Box, Adele Prince, Russell Mills) were given very open briefs and selected on the basis of ambitious proposals. Local knowledge from coordinators provided essential contacts, broadening artists' knowledge of new processes. The 'excuse for new work' is one of the most recognised and cherished aspects of FRED among artists.

WHERE HAS THE EVIDENCE COME FROM?

- Artists' evaluation
- Internal evaluation

WHAT HAVE BEEN THE FAILINGS IN THE PROJECT IN RESPECT OF THIS OBJECTIVE?

Some artists under-estimated the potential of the event and wished they had been more ambitious
Some artists lacked the time or resources to achieve their full potential – as artists were not paid for their time through a FRED bursary (materials and expenses only), those artists that choose not apply for, or do not receive additional funding may prioritise paid work, which may in turn reduce their commitment to FRED
Some artworks had to change location to less ideal locations and some of the integrity of the work was subsequently reduced
Some artists were unclear about the level of support available from coordinators, see above

HOW MIGHT THE OBJECTIVE HAVE BEEN BETTER OR MORE EASILY FULFILLED?

- Securing locations at a much earlier stage
- Artists familiarising themselves with the locations in good time
- Longer lead-in times
- Increased available budgets, possibly through better initial budgeting by artists, paying for artists' time or encouraging increased individual applications for additional funds.



Roast Lamb Over Wastdale - Sally Barker
The iconic view over Wast Water created in roast lamb reared in Wastdale and supplied by local farmers, presented as an image on the back of the Mountain Goat bus, which serves the village of Wastdale

5. TO SUPPORT AND PROMOTE THE WORK OF ARTISTS WORKING IN RURAL ENVIRONMENTS

TO WHAT EXTENT HAS THIS OBJECTIVE BEEN FULFILLED?

The majority of projects were realised in rural locations. Experience has shown the benefit and potential of working outside centres of population, both in terms of relative visibility, but also in terms of logistical possibilities

HOW HAS THIS OBJECTIVE BEEN ACHIEVED?

It was found that artists from the local region, as well as rural artists from other areas, had a better understanding of the resources available in the landscape, and consequently their proposals tended to be stronger. The selection process however, was an open scheme that did not segregate urban from rural artists. Work by urban artists within the programme fitted seamlessly and even the marketing had an urban slant on rural recreation. There were also a number of projects in more urban settings (Carlisle, Kendal, Whitehaven etc) so the festival was far from being exclusively rural.

WHERE HAS THE EVIDENCE COME FROM?

- Artists evaluation
- Audience feedback
- Internal evaluation
- Media coverage

WHAT HAVE BEEN THE FAILINGS IN THE PROJECT IN RESPECT OF THIS OBJECTIVE?

The geographical spread meant there were still isolated projects in some parts of the county – although it was noted that this was less than in previous years. There were distinct differences to the ability to work with local businesses between urban and rural areas, and Carlisle in particular has been identified as being worthy of a separate approach to public interventions and installations. The event as a whole wasn't portrayed as being primarily rural.

HOW MIGHT THE OBJECTIVE HAVE BEEN BETTER OR MORE EASILY FULFILLED?

Inviting artists groups from rural areas of the world would help raise the 'rural' issue. Greater familiarity of the locations with the artists would create stronger site-specific meaning.



Landscape Bubble - Steve Messam
A seven-metre PVC bubble over
redundant buildings, seen from the
A685 near Kirkby Stephen

6. TO CHANGE PERCEPTIONS OF ART PRODUCED IN CUMBRIA

TO WHAT EXTENT HAS THIS OBJECTIVE BEEN FULFILLED?

As an annual event, FRED has built awareness of the diversity of work produced in the county. This year over 60% of participating artists were resident in the county, or returning to the county after a spell away. There has been a noticeable shift in the attitude to the event from the local press – from a sceptical and bewildered stance to a fully supportive and passionate view. Local and regional media have been more involved with the project this year and are increasingly aware of the artists working locally.

HOW HAS THIS OBJECTIVE BEEN ACHIEVED?

A more joined-up approach to the marketing and publicity has resulted in a much greater take-up by the media. Fold worked closely with Osprey Communications, to identify strong positive stories across the county. The commissioning of Adele Prince for the marketing material worked particularly well at a time when her work was receiving much attention nationally and internationally. The bright, contemporary take on exploration and outdoor leisure was well received both by the art-going public and traditional visitors to the area. The large-scale light work by Richard Box commissioned as part of the marketing also proved very effective. A combination of an engaging, large-scale land work and strong visuals resulted in widespread media coverage, particularly outside the area. Its location beside the M6 made it easily accessible to day (evening) visitors and media crews.

WHERE HAS THE EVIDENCE COME FROM?

- Media coverage
- Artists evaluation
- Website feedback
- Level of response from arts organisations internationally

WHAT HAVE BEEN THE FAILINGS IN THE PROJECT IN RESPECT OF THIS OBJECTIVE?

The landscape of the county is vast and significantly sparser than other places in England. Where the scale has been used effectively, the impact has been very strong. The scale of the landscape and this unique opportunity to be part of it is one of the underlying strengths of the event, and one that gets the most attention internationally. However, many artists underestimated the scale of the landscape in relation to their work and failed to fulfil its potential.

HOW MIGHT THE OBJECTIVE HAVE BEEN BETTER OR MORE EASILY FULFILLED?

- Deeper understanding and familiarity with the locations.
- Careful selection of commissioned artists to exploit the area's strengths and natural draw.
- Make potential artists aware of the scale of the landscape with comparative illustrations with recognisable landmarks.
- Compulsory proposal sketches would increase awareness of scale and visual impact



Sweeping - Shelley Heath
A performance cleaning
the footpaths, trees and
walkers around Tarn Hows

7. REDUCE ISOLATION OF ART AND ARTISTS WITHIN CUMBRIA BY NETWORKING AND LINKING ARTISTS ACROSS THE COUNTY AND BEYOND

TO WHAT EXTENT HAS THIS OBJECTIVE BEEN FULFILLED?

FRED provides the only countywide visual arts activity in Cumbria. FRED also aims to bring artists from around the UK and beyond to work within the county, bringing with them their own contacts, with opportunities to work with each other.

HOW HAS THIS OBJECTIVE BEEN ACHIEVED?

A residential programme was run at Foldgallery with London based collective *Discotheque*. Eight artists from across the UK, worked collaboratively towards a common goal in the lead-up and throughout FRED, as a networking project and to allow the public to observe the process of working site-specifically. The Cumbria Network to provided networking opportunities throughout FRED.

The End of Festival party was held at Fold, with local accommodation sourced for all attendees. Turnout from other local artists was good too and overall the party worked well.

WHERE HAS THE EVIDENCE COME FROM?

- Artists evaluation
- Internal evaluation

WHAT HAVE BEEN THE FAILINGS IN THE PROJECT IN RESPECT OF THIS OBJECTIVE?

In reality, there were few genuine networking opportunities. Talks and discussions by the Cumbria Network were poorly promoted and attendance figures were generally low. Artists commented on working in relative isolation with little or no contact with other participating artists. Many artists did not meet their coordinators in person until installation, or at the party. Participating artists also felt that they didn't get the opportunity to see other FRED projects.

HOW MIGHT THE OBJECTIVE HAVE BEEN BETTER OR MORE EASILY FULFILLED?

- Compulsory meeting between coordinators and artists at an early stage.
- Potential for site-visiting weekends for selected artists to meet and bounce ideas
- Increased working with more arts organisations within the county. This would increase sense of countywide cooperation and build new contacts for artists. This would also increase the contextualisation on offer and broaden the range of work on view.
- Organised bus tour to coincide with party day to enable artists to see the other projects
- Use local pubs as area focal points and venues for events



View - Graham Martin
A medicine cabinet displaying pillboxes that investigate the cultural legacy of the lake district, shown in a tearoom on the banks of Grasmere

8. GENERAL EVALUATION

TEAM MANAGEMENT

A new team structure was introduced this year with locally based area coordinators across the county. Each artist was designated a coordinator to aid project management and provide on the ground assistance securing permissions, sourcing services and being a main contact point. The team worked remotely from their own bases and information was distributed via email, with a central web-based file server providing a virtual hub for communications and storing frequently used documents. The team were also involved in the initial selection of projects and shaped the overall event. The coordination team were one of the greatest positive differences made to the management of the event and all agreed that it is essential to work in this manner across such a large geography.

However, most of the coordinators felt isolated with little contact between the team as to how things were going across the whole event. Late funding decisions reduced the delivery timetable and consequently the number of team meetings was minimal. Team days out didn't happen and the peer-to-peer supervision system used last year wasn't implemented, again due to the limited time to deliver the projects. The addition of a fifth co-ordinator to cover the central lakes was highlighted as being an effective proposition, as in 2006 the four co-ordinators lived on the far edges of the existing divisions of the county leaving the central region tricky to access, research and manage.

There was also some confusion about the distribution and collection of paperwork and a large amount of

paperwork being done in the office without the administrator. It is important that in future all administration is carried out in the office. There were some technical problems with the file server system, however these could easily be rectified and training provided for all coordinators.

Most of the team were also involved in FRED as an artist, which has positive and negative points. Positive in that they understand their artist's point of view/issues, but negative in that they don't have a co-ordinator/support of their own

There is a greater need for training amongst the team than anticipated. A team induction could provide essential IT training and information on how to secure locations, additional funding and health and safety risk assessment. The introduction of IT upgrades for the co-ordinators, although too late to have much impact this year (broadband/wireless internet access etc) were recognised as important tools in developing faster and more efficient responses and communication - with the team, and their respective artists, - particularly taking into consideration the geographical spread of all involved.

MARKETING AND SIGNPOSTING

The style and theme of the marketing material by Adele Prince was universally well received. The range of limited edition multiples helped blur the lines between marketing and artists project. The leaflet distribution was more targeted this year with leaflets distributed across galleries, bars and cultural venues in Cumbria and the North East alongside high volume outlets at



Roadside Haiku - Richeldis Messam
Five-line poems on placards at various sites across the county

supermarkets and train stations. Such was the demand for literature that in many supermarkets, demand outstripped supply on a weekly basis.

There were still a number of major issues with the guidebook / leaflet. Directions were ambiguous, scant or non-existent. Although full and accurate directions were available online, most visitors do not have access to the website on a daily basis. A small number of artists felt that project descriptions were inaccurate or misleading. This was due in part to the limited space available in the design, but also due to the tight deadlines for information from artists – who all missed the initial deadlines. The job of writing condensed descriptions needs to be allocated to someone with knowledge of all the projects and text needs to be approved by artists prior to publication. Artists need to be contracted to be precise about location, and all directions should be field tested first. GPS devices could be used by coordinators for accurate grid references. The use of Sat Nav devices in cars should also be exploited as downloads from the website.

The text alert service received more subscribers than expected. All the users reported that they found the service to be invaluable and extended their experience of FRED. As the service only required a pay as you go SIM card and 5 minutes of time everyday, the service was very cost-effective, and one that should be further exploited in future. Art by text and text quizzes could be developed to increase take-up.

The website was developed in a very short space of time due to late funding decisions and the planned database driven site was not implemented. The timescales also prohibited employing external web

designers and the updating of the site, in particular the gallery of images of final projects, was slow. The design worked well with the print marketing and the number of external links to it resulted in record visitor numbers. Longer lead-in times would enable a more sustainable and easily maintainable site for future years.

Press coverage was significant this year and every artist was mentioned at least once. The small number of quality advance images meant that a small number of projects received more publicity than others. However, the strong images of Richard Box's previous work and the images of Sally Barker's Meat Landscape resulted in more press coverage than we would have had without such strong images. Artists need to be made aware of the benefits of strong visuals as marketing tools, and proposal sketches must be part of the proposal stage for all artists.

The documentation, as per the last two years, was very successful, and programming the events to enable the photographer to access all the projects - despite the huge mileage this entailed, - worked well. The high quality images are too good an opportunity to miss, in terms of publicising and archiving FRED, and a means of sharing/distributing these needs to be resolved.

TRAINING NEEDS

The evaluation process highlighted a number of training needs, both for the management team and participating artists.

The training needs would have been more readily identified through the peer supervision system used in 2005. Key training needs for the team were in the use of virtual file servers and other remote working I.T.



Why Do Walkers Walk For Pleasure?
- Shanti Casali-Bell
A series of footpath signs to 'pleasure'
near Coniston

systems, and general management / project management skills for dealing with artists at all levels of their careers.

A number of training needs have been identified among participating artists. These include budget management, risk-assessment, marketing & P.R., documentation, and locating sources of funding. Much of this is general professional practice and is more pronounced among early career artists. As many of the training needs lie outside the FRED framework (i.e. would benefit all artists prior to submitting proposals) it is felt that training providers be approached and encouraged to provide collaborative programmes throughout the year. It was also noted that most of the artists benefited from the extended opportunities FRED allows and particularly benefited from the evaluation process. To that end, more should be made of the real-life training and professional development aspects benefited by all participating artists. There were fewer artists doing their own P.R. for FRED than last year and marketing and P.R. training days should be reinstated to allow the artists to maximise on the potential of inclusion. Other training needs can be overcome through improved clarity in contracts and timetables. A comprehensive artists pack which includes detailed guidance of the FRED process and updated FRED handbook to artist-run projects should be developed for all successful FRED applicants.

Education and Outreach

The late funding decisions meant that we missed crucial deadlines for much of the planned education projects. It also meant that we were unable to secure additional funding for the residency programme. Earlier

budget confirmation would increase the opportunities for schools and community groups to be engaged with the project. The callout for participatory projects through the Cumbria Network produced no response from local artists, despite the offer of decent budgets. A more integrated approach with other organisations in the region would extend the opportunity for involvement. A pre-FRED residency would help raise the profile of site-specific practice and extend the programme beyond the 16day core event. A series of educational and participatory projects should be developed by the team and artists recruited to run these. Educational resources could also be created and distributed through all schools for independent learning programmes.

Despite the lack of proposed outreach projects, over 1,000 students and members of the public actively participated in the creation of artwork across the county in every district except Carlisle.

BUDGETS

The festival ran to budget and financial systems were markedly improved. Cash flow, although not as tight as in previous years, still caused problems – particularly from receiving final invoices to receiving grant payment from RRC (Cumbria Vision). A more robust business and cash flow plan should take into account this anomaly. Fold is currently undergoing a restructuring and development phase, which will address that issue. Last minute changes to the terms and conditions for the RRC grant created an additional couple of days of administration. Agreements on the administrative terms for grant support need to be monitored.



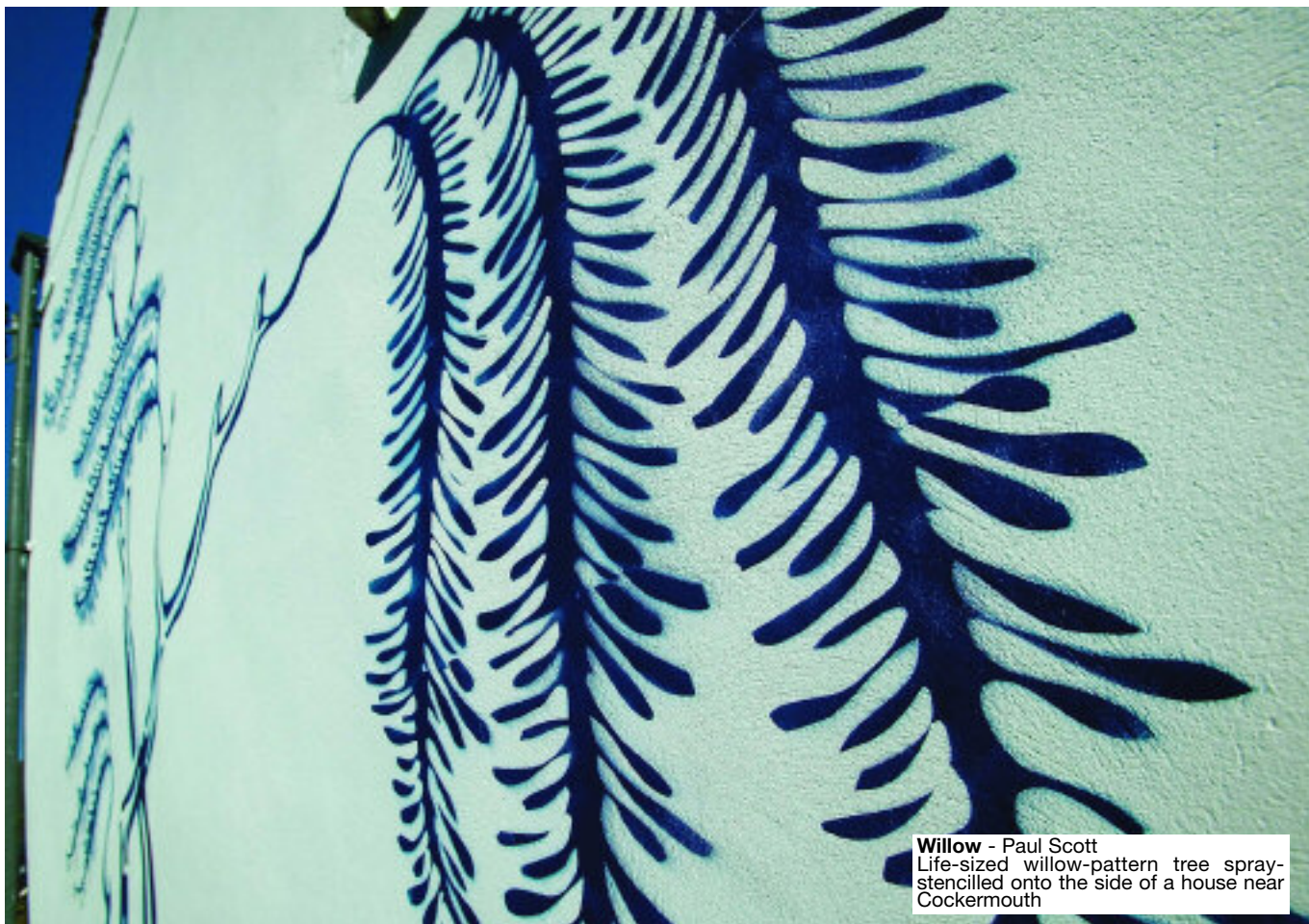
Artists' Briefs - Helen Fletcher
An installation of ceramic briefs representing the artists main influences on the beach near Baycliff

KEY IMPROVEMENTS MADE IN 2006

- Local project coordinators – spread the workload to manageable levels and exploit local knowledge
- Text alerts
- Improved selection process
- Increased bursary budgets
- Commissioned large-scale pieces

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- More team time
- Improved artists pack and contracts
- Training for management team
- Improve directions and project information in guidebook
- Become more inclusive of other arts organisations
- Introduce compulsory site-visits
- Pilot area pub centres
- Improve financial planning
- Reinstate marketing and P.R. training opportunities
- Admin to be run from Fold office by dedicated administrator



Willow - Paul Scott
Life-sized willow-pattern tree spray-stencilled onto the side of a house near Cockermouth

FRED TEAM

PROJECT MANAGEMENT – Steve Messam

PROJECT COORDINATORS – Bryan Eccleshall, Helen
Fletcher, Richard Webster

ADMINISTRATION – Michelle Yorke

ADMINISTRATION SUPPORT – Richeldis Messam

PRESS & PR – Osprey Communications Limited

DOCUMENTATION – Tony West Limited



Enclosure - Robbie Coleman
a 100ft diameter neon circle in a copse beside
the Orton - Tebay road



Shake Pole - Richard Box
a field of 1,500 florescent tubes beneath the power lines near Shap



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