

# [ 1:1 FUND

**1:1FUND Evaluation**

**July 2022**

**JERWOOD  
ARTS**

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## With gratitude

Jerwood Arts would like to thank all the applicants who applied to the fund and those who offered feedback; all the academics and individuals consulted as part of developing the methodology; all the 84 selected awardees; the four commissioned writers and our Trustees for taking a risk.

## Introduction to 1:1FUND

1:1FUND was conceived in 2021 as part of our response to feedback from artists, curators and producers Jerwood Arts had supported over the pandemic. It became clear that creative practitioners had struggled to collaborate, especially in real life, and that chances for individuals to work together without the pressure to produce new works or find match funding were increasingly rare.

We found ourselves in the pandemic environment and its implications further drove conversations in the sector about more sustainable funding processes. Both artists and funders faced the consequences of increased demand for funding which, for the former, represented a lot of unpaid labour. We were also conscious of the pressure to provide feedback to unsuccessful applicants, and the growing determination across the sector to improve the diversity of who applies and who gets funding. The interplay of these considerations led us to talk to partners in the cultural and academic sectors to explore alternative models of decision making.

We designed the 1:1FUND with two core elements – inviting artists to collaborate and testing out random selection in the decision-making process for the first time: we engaged with a random number generator which selected [42 eligible pairs of artists](#) purely based on chance.

You can find out more on our website [here](#). We previously shared some insights through our Jerwood in Practice blog series which is referenced in this document. You can find these blogs as Appendix 1, 2 and 3 in the second half of this evaluation. They contain information on how we came to make 1:1FUND, the research and conversations underlying it and what we learnt from our own engagement with random selection early on. We also commissioned Kelly Best and Georgie Grace, Sam Metz, Mark Robinson and Jannat Ahmed to respond to the 1:1FUND. Their texts can be found in Appendix 4.

This evaluation is focused on what we have heard from 26 of the selected pairs who have completed their supported activities and shared their feedback with us. It highlights how they made best use of the £2,000 grant and what they learned from the process, and each other. Above all, their voices make a clear case for the value of open-ended, small scale, R&D support.

Jerwood Arts is a learning organisation and as set out above, this report pulls together a range of analysis and insights shared since we started on this journey last October. Evaluation and communicating our findings is part of our commitment to being open and transparent about what we do, and how we do it. We hope you will be as interested as we are in the role of collaboration in enabling early-career artists to thrive, and the possible role that random selection might play in supporting a wider range of exceptional talent across the arts.

## 1:1FUND supported artists

[An\\*dre Neely](#) and [Moa Johansson](#)

[Becky Horne](#) and [Anna Dighero](#)

[Bridie Jackson](#) and [Becci Sharrock](#)

[Crayola the Queen](#) and [Stamatios Koulouridis](#)

[Éanna Mac Cana](#) and [Moon Paw Print](#)

Flavia Pinto and Josephine Birch

[Hannah Sands](#) and [Rosanna Suppa](#)

[Holly Stevenson](#) and [Ingrid Berthon-Moine](#)

Joseph Aldous and Piers Black

[Joseph Clowser](#) and [Elle Dillon Reams](#)

[Katy Cole](#) and [Iris Priest](#)

[Kelly Sweeney](#) and [Martyn Riley](#)

[KV Duong](#) and [Hoa Dung Clerget](#)

[Leila Gamaz](#) and [Jessica El Mal](#)

[Lisette May Monroe](#) and [Adrien Hester](#)

[Natascha Young](#) and [Oscar Cass-Darweish](#)

[Peony Gent](#) and [Molley May](#)

Rachel Jones and Maegan Icke

[Reece Griffiths](#) and [Ellie Towers](#)

[Tina Dempsey](#) and [Kerry Tenbey](#)

[Tina Rogers](#) and [Samantha Dinsdale-Brown](#)

[Graham Martin](#) and [Brooke Palmieri](#)

[Alex Billingham](#) and [Rosanna Cook](#)

[Jem Henderson](#) and [Chris Cambell](#)

[Demi Nandhra](#) and [Rafia Hussain](#)

[Joe Mbala](#) and [Sheiyh Joseph-Loftman](#)

[Tolu Oshodi](#) and [Jenny Boat](#)

[Ajla Yi](#) and [Lxo Cohen](#)

[Antonia Georgieva](#) and [Aida Rocci](#)

[Dominika Kieruzel](#) and [Teddy May de Kock](#)

[Roisin Agnew](#) and [Rosa Abbott](#)

[Irimi Bachlitzanaki](#) and [Georgia Stephenson](#)

Olga Macrinici and [Rita Suszek](#)

[Marie-Claire Lacey](#) and [Adam Stearns](#)

[Helga Dorothea Fannon](#) and [Megan Garrett-Jones](#)

[Bibo Keeley](#) and [Debby Forsyth](#)

[Belén L.Yáñez](#) and [Mike De Lis](#)

[Bob Bicknell-Knight](#) and [Rosa-Maria Nuutinen](#)

[Penny Klein](#) and [Rose Dagu!](#)

[Lucy Haighton](#) and [Allison J Carr](#)

[Tawanda Mapanda](#) and [Takudzwa Mashonganyika](#)

[Karen Maxted](#) and [Gemma Petrie](#)

## Evaluation methodology

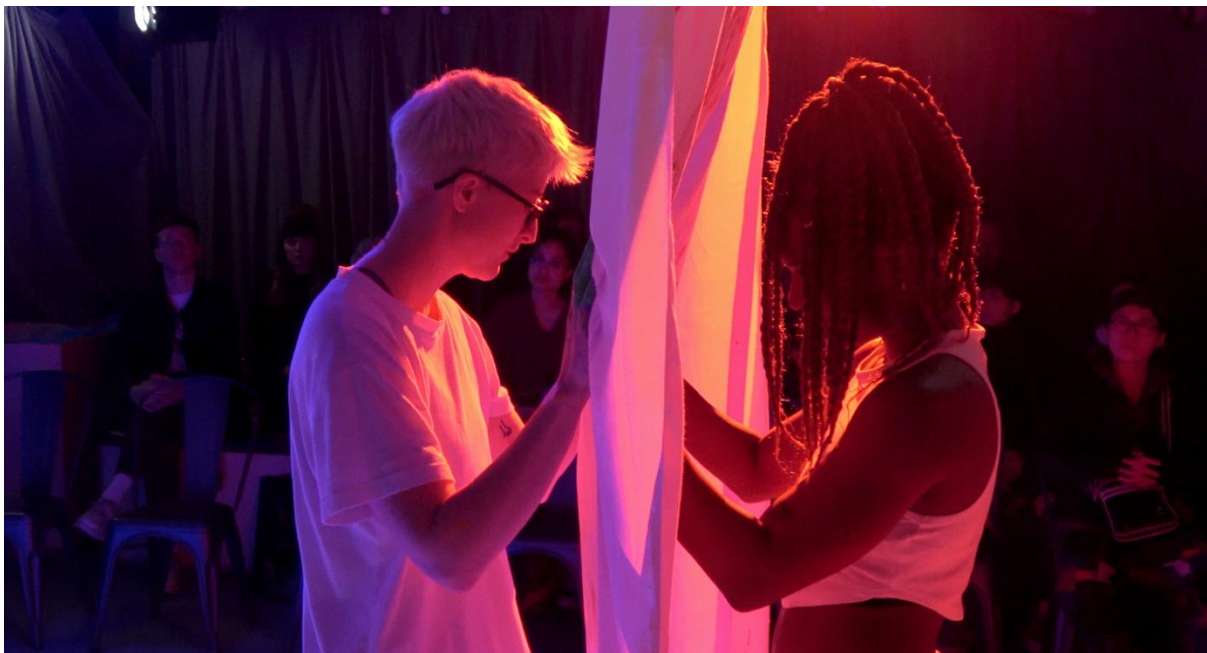
This evaluation presents findings from the final survey of the artists supported through 1:1FUND.

In total, 42 collaborative pairs/84 artists benefited from the award. 26 of the pairings/52 artists then shared reflections on their 1:1FUND journey between May and June 2022 (62%).

Artists submitted their evaluation forms as a collaboration, producing joint answers in most questions. There were only two questions where collaborators answered individually and we make note of that where relevant in the evaluation narrative on the next pages.

Where artists provided answers to free text questions, their feedback was summarized to give a range of their responses. However, it was not possible to comprehensively capture and reflect all answers or to achieve the same level of quantifiability as with quantitative questions.

Please note: a handful of projects are still underway as artists have faced delays due to Covid and other health reasons; some collaborations have recently finished and have not yet been able to send their evaluations through. We are therefore expecting to update this paper at a later stage.



*Flux, Jenny Boat and Tolu Oshodi. Image by Hicham Gardaf*

## Key findings

- The 1:1FUND supported a range of collaborative activity and on the whole succeeded in opening up avenues around free experimentation, research and generation of new ideas, sharing and conversations, as well as more focused and defined activities leading to public outcomes.
- The proposed activities largely accomplished what artists hoped to get out of their time together.
- Most common successes in collaborative work tended to be good communication, ability to plan and ability to adapt.
- There was a range of unexpected outcomes as part of artists' 1:1FUND collaborations of which one of the more frequently referenced was a fortuitous development of new relationship with organisations, artists and/or mentors.
- 94% of artists will want to continue with the work started during the 1:1FUND and even those who do not will keep utilizing the learning gained during the 1:1FUND collaboration.
- The majority of respondents did not change their mind on the fund's use of random selection. Their perspectives remain overwhelmingly positive, with some awareness that this might be affected by their luck in being selected.
- 84% of collaborations rated their communication with Jerwood Arts 'very good' and 'good'. A small number of artists would have appreciated a stronger relationship with Jerwood Arts and/or more visibility for their work.

### ***How did you intend to use the 1:1FUND award?***

7 collaborations intended to freely experiment together, share skills from their respective practices or embark upon open-ended research.

9 collaborations had a motivation to research and develop, workshop and/or explore ideas in an open-ended way for a potential future project or a new work, for example: *'We would like to work together to begin first-stage collaborative research for a project exploring the aesthetics of intimacy and representations of desire and the transactions that underpin them. Our proposed research methodology is discursive, based around sharing and discussing texts and artworks, proposing 5 intensive face-to-face sessions over a 6-week period... We hope to use these discussions as the basis for a future collaborative curatorial project.'*

8 collaborations had fairly specific plans about what they wanted to achieve with the award which in most cases involved a development of a new body and/or a public outcome, for example: *'We plan to produce a 15-minute creative documentary film exploring issues of aetiology, fear and entropy which weaves together reports of an alleged cancer cluster in rural Co Tyrone 2002... Our goal is to produce a dynamic, reflective, yet unsettling sound and visual piece. A documentary film that explores not only personal experience, but also communal fear and suspicion which is current and pertinent.'*

2 collaborations wanted to focus on more strategic planning around their collaboration, such as addressing working modes, expectations and access needs with the support of an external mentor, or creating a strategic plan for their practice and joint company.

***How did you use the 1:1FUND in the end and what did it enable you to achieve?***

Curators, producers and artists across visual arts, live art, performance, theatre, music and poetry:

- workshopped new ideas;
- brainstormed new bodies of work;
- undertook short residencies and research trips;
- attended skills development courses;
- experimented with new techniques;
- spoke to mentors;
- strategized about their future collaborative plans and ambitions
- shared their work with the public.

The majority of the artists responding to the survey felt that they achieved the overarching goals they were hoping for. It is clear that they highly valued the time and space together, with 5-6 pairings commenting that they accomplished more than they anticipated. There was also a handful of artists that had perhaps planned to do too much and ultimately wished to have had more time for their explorations or simply set out to do less.

While the 1:1FUND was fundamentally developmental and there was no expectation of a fixed outcome, including no expectation of a public presentation, we estimate that about half of the collaborative projects did share their work with public in some way, for example as an exhibition, publication, performance or a sharing of work in progress to gather feedback. Of these, two thirds were planned and one third arose spontaneously.

***What would you say worked well in your 1:1 collaborative partnership/work? What could have been improved?***

The most frequent successes picked out by artists was good and open communication, ability to plan well and ability to adapt to unfolding work and/or to external circumstances.

1:1FUND projects were happening in the Covid19 public health context and artists would have had to partly modify their schedules or switch from in-person elements to Zoom when necessary. Given the exploration at the core of their plans, their responsiveness also extended to seeing where the collaboration takes them by embracing unforeseen technical aspects of a new production process or shifting to a new method altogether.

Even though the evaluation questions did not directly asked about it, at least 5 pairings noted the benefits of the experimental and open-ended nature of the process and having protected time to freely explore: *'This was a valuable fluid way of working as it enabled us to think about our work without any pressure on producing a set outcome. If we had set outcomes for ourselves, or if Jerwood Arts had perhaps instigated a large group exhibition of the work made by participants, we would have pushed ourselves more to produce finished artworks. This, however, was the opposite of what we wanted from the fund, so the open nature of the fund was definitely appreciated.'*

Ideas for improvements ranged from ways of working, for example

- *trying different ways of carrying research*

- *giving more thought to advance project planning*
- *giving more thought to the budget*
- *taking more structured notes*
- *taking fewer notes and less documentation*
- *separating artistic work from project management of the activity*

to suggestions of structuring one's activity differently, such as

- *narrowing focus in earlier stages to enable more in-depth exploration of particular ideas*
- *allowing more time between different activity elements*
- *setting out to do less*
- *having more in-person time*

A few artists also wished that they had been able to spend longer on their activity and/or have more funds, leading to completion of their ideas or enabling them to take their ideas further.

***Were there any unexpected/unintended consequences or outcomes from undertaking the work?***

All collaborations found that there were some unpredictable occurrences during their 1:1FUND activity of which the majority were positive and useful. Some of these included:

*Relationships and/or future opportunities* – The most frequent unplanned outcome was artists setting up new or strengthening existing relationships with partner venues, other artists or communities. In addition, a number of collaborators told us about receiving further commissions in relation to their 1:1FUND work, being accepted for publication, being invited to host public activities, or receiving an offer of further in-kind support from a mentor approached through the 1:1FUND activity.

*'We realised that we hadn't considered where we would physically do the work together following the research trip... I asked around and Leeds Playhouse were very kind and able to offer us space for 3 days completely free. They are now on board as a potential partner for the next stage of the project.'*

*Unexpected turns or realisations emerging from collaboration* – Artists tended to be responsive to ideas and processes that were not part of their original plans but emerged later when working together, thus expanding or challenging artists' own expectations. A few collaborations switched formal, conceptual or material ideas following conversations and experiments together.

*'... We initially tried writing songs in a vacuum, with the idea that it would be performed in a cabaret setting, with no other conceptual anchor. We quickly found that having this much freedom actually made it quite difficult for us to focus. We then came up with an idea for a new musical, which then really set us creatively on fire and inspired a lot of focused activity. We weren't expecting to come up with a concept for a new musical, so that was definitely an unintended but highly welcome outcome.'*

*Discoveries about their own practice* – Some artists learnt more about their own practice and its focus which crystallised as an indirect result of a collaborative activity.

*'In [Collaborator 1]'s case, some of the emotions around publishing such an intimate work of writing were much more intense than [they] had foreseen. In [Collaborator 2]'s case, the process was surprisingly provocative: the fact that the majority of their intellectual labor, design, and collaboration remain invisible in the work produced has pushed them to want to shift focus on developing their own artistic practice more distinctly.'*



*Covid adaptations and/or delays* – A small number of artists had their activity temporarily disrupted by Covid, for example, when scheduling an event with a partner venue, when one of the collaborators had to isolate, or when some of the in-person sessions had to go online.

***Do you intend on continuing the work started with the 1:1 FUND award?***

The answer to this question was measured individually, not as a collaboration. 49 artists out of 52 (94%) expressed that they intend to continue with the work started during the 1:1FUND.

***What is your next step?***

Approximately 11 collaborations (42%) are planning to continue working on, revisiting and/or further shaping up the work enabled by 1:1FUND activity.

Approximately 11 collaborations (42%) have an even clearer vision for the next steps around their 1:1FUND work and are looking for/planning to look for exhibition opportunities, partner venues or funding for further development.

A small group of collaborations have talked about taking next steps in their individual practice while drawing on learning from the 1:1FUND collaboration.



*Helga Dorothea and Megan Garrett-Jones. Image by Helga Fannon*

## More insights on the use of random selection

The opinions on random selection remained the same for the vast majority of responding artists. Their perspective on this methodology was overwhelmingly positive, citing benefits such as:

- fewer barriers for applicants
- less time spent on application
- more risk-taking proposals
- more inclusive application process
- removal of usual decision-making biases (ie. familiarity with an applicant's practice or how well written the application is)
- potentially feeling better if rejected

*'We both still feel that the random selection process was an interesting one to be a part of. The idea of a random selection is fully transparent, overriding any and all factors that may deem someone successful when applying to traditional open calls. This, however, is based on us being successfully chosen. We acknowledge that we might feel differently if we had been unsuccessful, although, as people who apply for lots of open calls, this would probably just have been one of many that we were not successful in applying for. Overall we both still like the idea of the fund, and hope that it continues in the future.'*

*'We really like the idea of a random selector for small amounts of money, it reduces admin on both sides of a selection process and feels fairer.'*

*'The random selection process and relatively simple application form allowed us to apply for this opportunity: it removed many of the barriers that other calls feature. Even if we hadn't received it, the rejection would not feel like a reflection on the quality of our work or ideas. This sets an important precedent in our industry, especially important when it comes to nurturing emerging talent and risk-taking projects.'*

*'We feel that the intention behind this to try and remove human prejudice from the application process in order to give everyone a fair chance was a positive approach and we both feel strongly that this is very important. However there was a part of us that felt the lottery type selection process meant that some peoples applications didn't have the chance to be seen.'*

*'The random selection process wasn't a trigger for us to apply for the 1:1 Fund, we applied because our project fitted the brief perfectly as a collaborative development and it also involved other artists. Saying that, we wonder which projects the Jerwood team would have chosen if the decision making had not been transferred to an algorithm? Would there have been some differences in the final selection?'*

4 individual artists (15%) ticked 'yes' when asked about their opinions on random selection changing. Of these, 2 provided additional feedback that suggests they had always found random selection to be an exciting prospect. 2 other artists expressed that they had found clear benefits to this kind of process and/or felt more favourably about it the more they thought about it.

## Communication with Jerwood Arts

65% of collaborations rated their communication with Jerwood Arts as 'very good', 19% as 'good' and 15% as 'okay'.

On the whole, artists found communication with the Jerwood Arts team friendly, positive and encouraging. Jon Opie and Sarah Gibbon's willingness to support were mentioned a number of times.

In about 4 responses, artists shared that they would have appreciated more visibility for their work, more communication about ongoing support that might have been available during the 1:1FUND, or a stronger sense of mentorship.

## Appendix 1:

### Jerwood in Practice: Introduction

Published in August 2021: <https://jerwoodarts.org/2021/08/03/jerwood-in-practice-introduction/>

We have recently been taking time to reflect on our work over the last year funding organisations that support early-career artists, curators and producers, as well as supporting individuals directly through opportunities like the Live Work Fund. It has prompted us to ask ourselves: is arts funding for individuals broken? If so, what can we do to fix it?

Covid-19 has revealed the precarity and the interdependence of creative freelancers with institutions in new ways, exposing significant pre-existing inequalities in the structures and practices across the arts and cultural sector.

Issues brought sharply into focus by the pandemic have been widely documented including, among others, by: the Policy and Evidence Centre (PEC) led by NESTA; The Big Freelancers Report by Freelancers Make Theatre Work; the Freelance Task Force; the Speak, Listen, Reset, Heal conference; the Musicians Union and Equity. Key issues include: unpaid labour and no/low wage cultures; racial inequality highlighted by Black Lives Matter; access and inclusion, especially around digital spaces and in the wake of the challenges of re-opening for live engagement; and the importance of good communications from funders and institutions with the power to make and shape individuals' careers. The pandemic also gave independent arts funders a reminder of just what a relatively small part of the arts ecology we represent and the limits of our impact and influence.

Jerwood Arts, like many other arts funders, has been assessing its changing responsibilities and actions across these intersecting issues and more as the crisis has unfolded. It has affected how we have offered our funding over the last year, and we have also seen other funders make significant changes to how and what they fund. Some for the first time made emergency grants for individuals, putting financial and welfare needs first. Some have adapted their application and decision-making processes, creating new, flexible, lighter-touch approaches to be able to match the urgency. Some have created new, targeted funds designed specifically to address issues such as racial inequalities. Other pre-existing programmes changed their parameters to ensure more funds reach more artists overall and are now reflecting on what funding will be the most effective going forward.

Understandably, most funders have reported that demand for grants, bursaries, awards and opportunities for individual freelance artists and creatives have increased to unprecedented levels. In the case of Jerwood Arts, demand from individuals for our funding opportunities leapt. Our Live Work Fund alone last autumn received 1,283 applications, double the number received for previous open calls for entries. The success rate was 1 in 40.

We need to be honest: many of the current models no longer feel sustainable for applicants or for funders. The majority – from open calls to nomination processes to closed selection – are highly competitive and risk perpetuating systems of unpaid labour, exclusion and bias, regardless of good intentions and development of better practices.

Back in May, we sent an SOS to other arts funders large and small that, like Jerwood Arts, fund individuals directly. Our provocation was: 'Is arts funding for individuals broken? And if so, what are we going to do about it?'. Since then, we have convened monthly Zoom meetings to discuss some of

the common issues we are facing, and have started to delve into how we can respond to them and explore ways in which we can work together to find solutions.

As Jerwood Arts enters a period of strategic review looking at our long-term aims beyond 2022, we want to make sure that we are learning as much as we can from other funders, artists we do and do not support, and other sectors that face similar challenges. Our aim is to continue to pilot new ways of working, experiment and adapt our funding opportunities to be fit for the future.

This is where Jerwood In Practice comes in: a new series of public-facing blogs, podcasts and other content that we are starting today to help broaden the conversations we are having internally and within our networks. We know that opening up these topics and inviting questions and feedback will strengthen our overall ability to support early-career artists, curators and producers through transformative opportunities.

*Lilli Geissendorfer, Director, and Jon Opie, Deputy Director*

## Appendix 2:

### **Jerwood In Practice: The making of the 1:1 FUND**

Published in September 2021: <https://jerwoodarts.org/2021/09/07/jerwood-in-practice-the-making-of-the-11-fund/>

Today we launch the 1:1 FUND, a new fund offering awards of £2,000 to support 35 pairings of independent early-career artists, curators and producers from across disciplines to connect, develop their practice and generate new ideas.

In this Jerwood in Practice blog, we wanted to share a bit more about the research and thinking we have done to inform its development. As set out in our announcement, it contains two new elements for us that respond to what we have heard from artists over the past year.

Earlier this year we shared a provocation with fellow arts funders: 'Funding for individuals in the arts is broken: what are we going to do about it?'. For Jerwood Arts, the responsibility of being an independent funder means leaning into challenges. We have therefore sought conversations that explored more imaginative ideas that respond to the pressures exacerbated by Covid-19. The 1:1 FUND is part of our response to this question.

#### HOW WE GOT HERE

First, a brief review of what we had been doing to make our funding process more responsive, accessible and inclusive before Covid-19. Since our relaunch as Jerwood Arts in January 2019 we have developed a robust selection model, with each application reviewed and assessed according to fixed criteria by Jerwood Arts staff, a pool of Artist Advisers, and other paid external assessors and expert panelists. These criteria typically include categories such as: the quality of the applicant's existing practice; the clarity of their plans; their commitment to their artistic community; or the potential for their future work and ideas. Our intention has been to shift the balance of power, broaden our perspectives and bring diverse expertise to the decision-making table.

In the year leading up to the pandemic in March 2020, applicant numbers were already growing. We had steadily increased the number of open call opportunities for individuals, building on this approach to selection and our support to external assessors and Artist Advisers. We have increasingly taken positive action approaches too, focusing our efforts on directing our resources towards more artists who have been historically excluded from different artforms based on their background and identity. We monitored demographic data at various stages of the process to check that certain groups had not been lost from the process, reflecting on how to rebalance the representation within the selection pool.

This has largely worked effectively as an approach. However, it has become increasingly hard to ignore that any attempt at achieving an equitable funding outcome is subject to systemic and human biases and inequalities. In November 2020, for the Live Work Fund, we received 1,283 applications for 33 grants of £20,000, a success rate of just 2.7%. The pressures the selection process put onto staff and Artist Advisers to make life-altering decisions about fellow members of their artist communities, balanced with a heavy administrative demand, were particularly acute in the context

of the pandemic. It put fundamental questions about the competitiveness and equity of our approach into sharp relief.

In the spirit of being a flexible and responsive funder, we therefore decided to explore different approaches to selection processes. You can read more about the journey we are on in this blog from August.

We now want to pilot two new elements in the 1:1 FUND: first, a targeted focus on a particular element of artistic practice affected by the pandemic, in this case collaborative working; and second, the use of a new system for selecting awardees using a random number generator. They represent an attempt to target our funding at specific, under-supported artists' needs; and to combine our commitment to equity with a system where each eligible application would have an equal chance of being selected.

#### FOCUSING ON THE POWER OF COLLABORATION

Throughout the pandemic, in-person contact and collaboration has been extremely challenging. Feedback from our survey of Live Work Fund artists in autumn 2020 suggested however that maintaining peer networks and continuing to collaborate online were a key part of finding ways to continue an artistic practice throughout the lockdowns.

We have decided therefore to design the 1:1 FUND specifically for two artists to work together. The opportunity has fair pay at its heart, and we hope will generate the energy and inspiration we know is fostered by strong creative networks, peer support and collaborative practice. Our aim is for it to fill a gap in the funding landscape and help build the confidence of early-career practitioners to collaborate again. We know that working together can accelerate new ideas and open doors for future projects.

#### PILOTING A NEW SYSTEM FOR SELECTING AWARDEES

We decided to develop a new fund building on the success of our Jerwood Bursaries, a professional development grant opportunity that we have been running in different forms since 2016. Jerwood Bursaries provided relatively small, time-limited grants for artists to explore new ideas or collaborations.

For the 1:1 FUND, we have: increased each award to £2,000 per collaborative pairing; made it exclusive to new or existing collaborations between two early-career artists, curators and/or producers; refined our definition of 'early-career', which previously asked applicants to have less than 10 years of professional practice; and introduced a random number generator.

This evolution reflects our desire to continue to provide well supported opportunities, while creating a light-touch exploratory fund without any requirement of a final or fixed outcome. It feels right that it should have a light-touch application and selection process too.

The application form we have developed now contains mainly Yes/No questions, focused on the eligibility criteria for the fund. These include: a confirmation that both artists are aware they are being named in the application; a confirmation that both artists could be reasonably understood as 'early-career'; confirmation that the funding would not be used to fund an existing project or as

match funding; details of the activity applicants plan to undertake together, and the name of a professional referee for both artists. Following general checks to ensure applications are complete, all applications will be entered into a true random number generator.

What we are piloting is a more streamlined process for a small-scale fund that will enable us to provide more funding to a greater number of artists, in part by reducing overheads. This approach has been used in different ways by other organisations, but we are not aware of any pilots of this size. We feel the potential risks associated with this funding round are worth taking. We want to discover if it could be adopted and/or adapted to become part of the suite of approaches available to funders and organisations offering open call opportunities across the sector.

With this approach, equal opportunities monitoring data will not be used to inform the selection at any stage. We will collect data from all applicants only to help us continue to build our understanding of who is applying to us. It will also contribute to our evaluation and understanding of how random number generator can create a fairer outcome. We are particularly interested to see how the representation of artists from underrepresented art forms and backgrounds might increase if there is a perception of less institutional bias in the selection process. The use of the random number generator includes a risk that the selected applications are more homogenous than the overall applicant pool: it is a risk we hope to counter by focusing our marketing of the opportunity to groups and networks of artists who we hear from less often. The risk that the 1:1 FUND produces an 'extreme' outcome that is less representative than our recent funding programmes' awardees is a small but real one, and we feel it is worth testing the proposition of an 'equal chance' of being selected to reach eligible applicants who have experienced barriers in applying to us – or for any funding – in the past.

We have also had interesting conversations about the risk that this approach may fund a less talented cohort of awardees, questioning how our sectors define words like 'talent' and 'excellence' among early-career professionals in an inclusive way. We are confident that the quality of applications we have received across our funding programmes in recent years has been very high, and believe the 1:1 FUND will no doubt support some outstanding artists, generate new ideas and lead to new works that might otherwise never have seen the light of day. Artistic and creative practices are by definition full of 'risks', and Jerwood Arts has long specialised in focusing our support on areas where that risk is perceived to be at its highest: on early-career artists still discovering their unique voice and perspective, on awards for self-directed artistic development, and funds explicitly for research, development and experimenting with new ideas that may or may not be taken forward to full production further down the line. Using this extensive experience, we have focused on designing the 1:1 FUND with clear guidance and application questions that ask potential applicants to carefully consider whether they are at the right moment to make the most of the opportunity. While no process design can eliminate all risks, we're excited by the potential for this one to introduce us to new artists, curators and producers we might not have met otherwise.

## HOW? EXTERNAL SYSTEMS AND CONVERSATIONS

Trialling this approach will mark a departure from previous ways of working, and we have been thinking carefully about how to make this as useful and impactful as possible. Our commitment as a learning organisation is to take risks, innovate, and share our experiences for the benefit of our wider communities, and we will document the process over the coming months.



One way we will maintain the integrity of the pilot is to use an external true random number generator. The functions available through Random.org were designed by Dr Mads Haahr, Associate Professor of Computer Science at Trinity College, Dublin and is operated by Randomness and Integrity Services Ltd. We will make a recording of the moment of selection to be made publicly available to build in transparency.

The development of the fund has also been richly informed by feedback and conversations with academics including Dr Dave O'Brien, Chancellor's Fellow, University of Edinburgh and AHRC Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre co-investigator, Professor Eleonora Belfiore, Co-Director of the Centre for Research in Communication and Culture, Loughborough University, Professor Michael Rushton, Indiana University (USA), Professor Lee Elliot Major, Professor of Social Mobility, University of Exeter, and artists including Kelly Best and Georgie Grace, Laura Sweeney and Ashleigh Bowmott (The Uncultured) and many others. We would like to take a moment to thank them all for the generous time they gave us, their wisdom and enthusiasm.

We will continue to document this pilot on the Jerwood in Practice blog as part of our commitment to being an open and learning organisation. We want to share our learning with the applicants at the sharp end of the current funding challenges, and other organisations facing similar challenges. We particularly hope that trialling the use of a random number generator may open up a toolbox of alternative options for funders and arts organisations offering opportunities for individual practitioners in the future.

*Lilli Geissendorfer, Jon Opie and Sarah Gibbon*

## Appendix 3:

### Jerwood in Practice: 1:1FUND First Insights

Published in December 2021: <https://jerwoodarts.org/2021/12/20/jerwood-in-practice-11-fund-first-insights/>

The 1:1 FUND was a pilot programme which sought to experiment with a radical new approach, shake up our existing funding processes and see if a random number generator could lead to reduced labour for applicants and funders alike.

Announcing the 42 artist pairs in November was hugely exciting. We relinquished more control than ever in this process and are genuinely delighted with the collaborations it has led us to, and the potential of their proposals. Seeing it through has been both joyful and nerve-wracking. Below we share our first insights into what we've learnt.

In trying something different we hoped to spark conversations and critique to enrich our learning and open out the issues raised. We're grateful to everybody who has taken the time to engage with this experiment and share their feedback with us, and the writers of the four unique perspectives which we are publishing today.

In this blog, we're sharing our first reflections and the questions we're still answering. It includes responses from 178 applicants (out of 856 applicant pairs, total 1712 individuals) via our feedback survey, which they received a week after the application deadline. While this is a self-selecting sample subject, it represents around 32% of the total individuals who engaged with the fund and provides us with a clear applicants' voice and insight into their experience to support our evaluation of 'what worked'.

### Motivations

When we launched the 1:1 FUND in September we shared our motivations behind it in a Jerwood in Practice blog here. With these in mind, we wanted to explore the role of randomness and collaborative applications, and the possibility of a process which asked for far less information from applicants. As a pilot we never intended it to replace our standard grant making approaches – including using external selection panels, providing feedback to all unsuccessful applicants who want it, and employing positive action in our selection processes – but rather to explore our beliefs about these, and potentially provide us with some new tools and ways of working.

We were mindful in doing so that each application form would have less human engagement than usual, and so we hoped to reduce the labour of applicants as far as possible to reflect this. The fund was designed with collaboration in mind to counter the isolating impact of Covid-19 on artist practices, but we were also interested to understand how it would feel to apply as a new collaboration, and whether the application process itself might generate conversations about new or untested creative partnerships.

### **Too many changes at once?**

A key learning from this process was that, in our desire to innovate, we may have changed too many things in one go. For the 1:1 FUND we:

- Introduced a random number generator as the main tool in the selection process
- Designed a significantly shorter application form, with an emphasis on eligibility questions and Yes/No answers
- Introduced collaborative applications for the first time
- Refined the criteria for the length of practice we can support at Jerwood Arts

With so many new elements to pilot, and a desire to both simplify and innovate the process simultaneously, the overall process became unhelpfully complicated for applicants and us at times, and made it harder for us to apply the level of care we would have liked. It has hampered our evaluation: changing so many core elements at once has made comparisons with our other opportunities largely meaningless. For example, we cannot easily disentangle the factors that may have influenced who applied when we changed how to apply, who can apply, the size of the fund, and the selection process. Nonetheless, the feedback we have received and our internal reflections do allow us to gain some insights and focus on questions for future opportunities.

### **What's the right balance of information required and unpaid labour of applicants in the application process?**

Our usual application processes develop more of a relationship with those applying, including offering advice on how artistic concepts and ideas are framed in relation to the funding opportunity. This time our interaction with just a small number of applications was based entirely on eligibility, expressed mainly in their 'Yes/No' answers. In collecting such little information, we had to take the information we had as read and this didn't allow for much nuance in our decision-making. While we were glad to try something different, it was clear to us that we needed more information in some cases to make a fair assessment.

There were benefits to a shorter form, such as less unpaid time spent on applying: 76% of applicants spent less than a day, with 35% spending 1-3 hours. This is significantly shorter than any other application form we've designed. Our learning here has inspired us to think about two-stage processes, where the first stage requires very little information. It has also reinforced the importance of fully interrogating what questions we ask and why, to balance applicant labour and our ability to make fair and rigorous decisions.

### **Equality, Access and Inclusion: Can randomness remove some of the barriers to applying for funding for groups currently under-represented in who applies to us? How might random selection affect representation, access and diversity of who is selected?**

The 1:1 FUND had a higher number of applicants (856 pairs, 1712 individuals) and selected individuals (42 pairs, 84 individuals) than any other opportunity we offered in 2020/21. First, some statistics from the feedback survey: 81% of respondents were applying to Jerwood Arts for the first time, a higher proportion than usual. We were reassured that 95% knew the selection would involve a random number generator, 94% felt our guidance was good or very good, and 89% felt the

language used was clear and easy to comprehend. While more than half (54%) said that the random number generator had made them 'more', or 'a lot more' interested in applying, almost a quarter (24%) said it made no difference at all, and a sizeable minority of 20% said it made them 'less', or 'a lot less' interested in applying. Our experience was that the random selection did divide opinion, with those less keen more vocal and passionate about their reservations than the majority who were in favour. You can read more about the response to the idea of random selection in four texts we commissioned here.

In terms of diversity, the applicant pool was broadly in line with the average demographics of Jerwood Arts applicants for the past 18 months, although individual funds have varied significantly within that. The random selection maintained the diversity of the fund's applicant pool – given the nature of randomness, this was not a given and we acknowledge that there is no guarantee that using random selection would produce a result that matches or improves the diversity of the total pool of applicants. An 'extreme outcome' was just as likely and would have posed a very uncomfortable result. All advice is that you would have to run a random selection process regularly over time to start to generate a representative result. Nonetheless, the selection can only ever include the diversity of the applicants, and therefore we put significant efforts into ensuring a wide range of artists, curators and producers were aware of the opportunity.

*Geography* – 41% of applicants were based in London, lower than the Jerwood Arts average of 45%. Random selection increased this to 48%.

*Age* – 64% of applicants were under the age of 34, exactly average for Jerwood Arts. Random selection maintained this at 63%.

*Ethnicity* – 28% of applicants identified as from an African, Caribbean, LatinX, South Asian or East Asian background. Random selection maintained this at 29%. The Jerwood Arts average is 33% for the applicant pool and 41% in the selection.

*Sex, Gender and Sexual orientation* categories were consistent with Jerwood Arts averages across both the applicant pool and random selection.

*Disability* – 18% of applicants identified as disabled, in line with the Jerwood Arts average. Random selection was 17%; the Jerwood Arts average across our awards is 23%.

More on the data from the 1:1 FUND and Jerwood Arts other opportunities over the last 18 months, including the full applicant pool demographics, is available [here](#).

### **What can we learn about bias, experience and expertise in our selection processes from trying to remove them?**

In terms of the selected artist pairs, they are almost all entirely new to us. This is, without a doubt, the most exciting positive of the pilot: it has brought us into contact with artists and practices we did not previously know and raised important questions for us about the role of network bias in our decision-making. The random selection and awarding based on eligibility elements meant that artists whose work we were already familiar with could not be prioritised. The experience made us think more deeply about where this shows up in our wider assessment processes. Even where we use external assessors with distinct expertise and knowledge bases within the arts, our experience from other selection processes is that many times there is a tendency to vouch for those whose work is more visible or familiar as opposed to those they are meeting for the first time in an application.

Removing these qualitative comparisons and the biases within them was one of the most interesting advantages of the process and opened-up further important questions for us in reflecting on our usual approach that we will take forward.

### **How would the focus on collaboration and request for both parties to apply together feel to applicants?**

This fund was unusual in that it invited artists to apply with a collaborator, and not as an individual practitioner. We were interested to understand how the extra 'step' of identifying a collaborator was received.

Applying with a collaborator made 65% of applicants more confident to apply, and only 3% less so. About half of collaborative pairs had made professional artistic work together previously (52%) and regardless of the outcome of their application, 87% said they were likely or very likely to work together in the future. Only 20% had met each other during the past year of the pandemic, and 48% had known each other between 3 and 10 years. We know that strong networks and collaborative partnerships are more commonly a feature of more privileged and established artists, so while we recognise that many responded very positively to this joint opportunity, there are considerations we didn't make about how this disadvantages those with fewer opportunities to connect which we would want to consider in the future.

### **Conclusion**

In running this pilot we have achieved what we set out to, taking us outside our comfort zone and learning a huge amount. We have identified 84 brilliant artists working together across art forms and all over the UK, who we might not otherwise have. It has given us the confidence to change our processes more radically, while continually listening to artists about where the systems are flawed and where they are working. We understood from the outset that this would be an imperfect process, but in running it we have learned more about the possibilities of random selection. It's also made us consider where this deceptively simple tool might come into play for us in the future in a way that enables us to maintain our connection to applicants and leaves space for nuance and care in our application and selection processes.

*Lilli Geissendorfer, Jon Opie and Sarah Gibbon*

## Appendix 4

### 1:1FUND Commissioned Responses

Published in December 2021: <https://jerwoodarts.org/projects/11-fund/11-fund-commissioned-responses/>

#### ***Funding; A Game of Chance by Kelly Best and Georgie Grace***

*Kelly Best is a Cardiff-based artist and Jerwood Arts [Artist Adviser](#) who has worked with the organisation on a number of selection processes, including [Jerwood Collaborate!](#) in 2019. She first got in touch with us about the potential of random selection approaches and their success in other areas of funding distribution in 2020. We emailed Kelly, along with around ten other Artist Advisers over the summer, to let them know what we were planning and to invite their feedback. As Kelly and Georgie have an existing collaboration, which began through a Jerwood Arts-funded project, they asked to write the text collaboratively. Georgie is a queer digital artist and interaction designer. Through various forms of playful correspondence, Kelly and Georgie explore their shared interests in memory, rules, relationships, and technology. Their text was written before the 1:1 FUND opened for applications.*

And the winner is...

This is feeling a bit too academic and so maybe we should change the beginning, make it a little softer, more inviting? Great idea. Good morning. How did you sleep? Very deeply, but with weird dreams. I woke up, mind already chocka with really good phrases and words to use in this text. Lost them all again when I went to make breakfast! Scrambled eggs, in fact. A bit like how my head feels about funding applications.

Last summer I was listening to Malcolm Gladwell's podcast, Revisionist History. The episode, [Powerball Revolution](#), was looking into lotteries, and how it might be a fairer way to make decisions in electing student councils and allocating medical research funding. At that point we were well into the chaos and unpredictability of the Covid-19 pandemic. Overnight, people lost jobs and financial security. Events were cancelled or postponed, for the unforeseeable future or indefinitely, and many artists and other creative practitioners fell through the vast cracks in the support that was made available by the government and other funding bodies. Powerball Revolution brought me back to thinking about the current unsatisfying, overcomplicated and biased models for awarding arts funding in the UK and I began to feel curious about a new potential. What if funding for the arts was awarded by a lottery? THIS IS WOULD BE EXCITING!!!

We met through an open call in 2014. Jerwood 3-Phase was in itself a pilot and we were the chosen fyunue pigs (guinea pigs if you type from memory with your eyes closed, and turn off autocorrect). We applied separately and made our own work for that project, but ended up building a collaborative practice as well as a friendship; two unexpected outcomes. Can you imagine ever writing on an Arts Council evaluation form that one of the most significant outcomes was friendship? Maybe one day! We can dream. Friendship isn't quantifiable and it might only be an engagement with one or two other people but it can significantly help us sustain ourselves and our practices in general, but even more so through difficult times.

I know that at this point of writing we are already embedded into a system. After being successful in one application (Jerwood 3-Phase), we felt equipped and supported to apply for Jerwood Arts funding to create our own residency in 2016 that did away with outcomes, called *Do Without*. This was also awarded funding. We had the track record of 3-Phase and an existing working relationship with Jerwood Arts which gave us the confidence to ask for what we actually needed and valued, which was real time and space to spend together and not have to promise anything in return.

Since then we've had a lot of conversations about being funded, trying to get funded, and how we write in service of these processes. Examining *what makes an application useful to an artist, not just to the selectors?* seems to be at the core of these conversations. Being able to create our own proposal for the funding for *Do Without* helped us explore some questions around how we speak, and how we ask. So often it feels like there's a secret way to ask successfully, with secret language, and we're all chasing it. We're asked to provide so much pre-work and pre-thought in the application process so funders can attempt to accurately predict whether a project deserves funding. These processes create problematic access barriers and we all end up sounding the same, and losing our authentic voices. Trying to fit into different boxes that each funder requires and adapting each time. It's exhausting. And funders don't want risk. They want security and predictability. How many people undersell what they really want to do for fear of rejection? That takes confidence on the part of the artist. For me, it feels like all this pre-justification and speculation is antithetical to how the creative process would unfold in ideal conditions. We need space for the unknown. I don't think we can always predict if our work will be good, and neither can funders. And Malcolm Gladwell's interviewees seem to agree -- voters are not the best predictors of who will be a good leader, and funders aren't the best predictors of who will produce useful, relevant medical research. It's a guess. A gamble. So we may get better results, widen access, and save a lot of unproductive labour (for both artists and funders), by using randomness to make these choices.

Anyone want to play?

What's the game?

So, Jerwood Arts are piloting a bursary that will select awardees using a random number generator, which is essentially a lucky dip. There's minimal info required in the form of an eligibility checklist and a small description of what you'd like to explore in collaboration. This feels refreshing in so many ways, including the infamous 'light touch' that you see bouncing around. Actually making something light touch is very appealing. When is this really possible though and not just another buzzword? I think there is beginning to be some acknowledgement of the time involved in doing applications. But there is not much acknowledgement of the emotional toll. So true! I wonder how the feel of randomness will apply to random selection in a funding situation? It becomes a kind of human-computer interaction, instead of a personal evaluation. Will it feel different to be rejected randomly, rather than personally? In the process of writing this we've dug into a lot of the feelings that come up around existing application processes. In addition to the time it takes, we have to ask ourselves: do we have enough emotional energy to invest and risk? Are we willing to put this idea into someone else's hands to approve or discard? Do we have enough resilience to recover from getting rejected? How will we know if our work is even seen or given the respect it deserves? And feeling like we need someone else to validate our work doesn't equip us with confidence. Who have you worked with before, who will you work with in the future? Who will be your referee? This always feels more about the other person's status than our own merit, work or ideas. If we are randomly rejected, will this be easier to recover from, or will it still feel as difficult? Will it at least feel less onerous if there's less time investment in the process?

I love the fact that this new bursary is supporting collaborative exchange. Yes! We've talked a lot about how progressing in the/a art world/s is like playing a game of poker and hedging your bets. Working in collaboration has been so important for me. I think it started earlier than we think, when we were working individually during 3-Phase. We were able to lean on each other when we secretly didn't feel as confident as we thought we should, or as confident as we thought the funders expected us to be. It has helped us work through the rules that exist and rewrite our own new ones. Do you think working in collaboration is a human version of a random generator? Thinking of our collaboration, thinking of writing this. We turn up, we input, we shake it all together and something (random) comes out that is unpredictable and previously unknown or underdeveloped. That's creativity. That's exciting. And there's play. There's an invitation to let go of control. When we collaborate, we deliberately do things together where we have less control, and invite more random elements. We forget who wrote what. It's energising. It feels less personal, more freeing.

Place your bets now please.

I'm really interested in control here. How does having a computer decide feel in terms of sense of control over your success rate or chances? The idea of being in control of your own destiny is seductive. How might that feel if it is taken away from you? The feeling that you cannot influence it in any way, or the belief that you might be able to influence the outcome if you worked harder, or made better (and bigger / more ambitious / more) work, or if you were in a more socially visible or privileged group. I think we need to accept that randomness is a bigger factor than control.

Control, in part, comes down to visibility, being seen, and having enough opportunities to be able to progress your work, or even having time and money to spend making work. And how by being very early career, or still very rough around the edges with little exhibiting experience, a small amount of funding can be a catalyst for potential, for time, for conversation, for introductions (to another collaborator or an institution which may feel out of reach or unapproachable). How do you get your first break? I think there's real value in awarding funding to people that might be at a really early stage in their practice or less able to articulate ideas well in writing, or struggle to decipher the code of what each funder is looking for, for this very reason. If you haven't yet had the opportunity where someone has decided to take a risk on you, or you've been unable to finance your work, or been unable to make any creative or institutional connections, you aren't then given the opportunity to progress. And this looks even more bleak if you are from a marginalised group.

What I find most exciting is that some people will get selected that might not have done through the old process. A random number generator for a new generation.

The new Jerwood Arts 1:1 fund is a small fund for a small chance for a small amount of labour. At least in the application process. I think it's important to acknowledge here the amount of labour that goes into a practice to get to the point of being eligible to apply. Basically you need to be talking the talk, or walking the walk. But the walk usually looks more like a hike or a steep climb up a cold, dark, rocky mountain without shoes to soften the journey or a flash light to guide the way. Fumbling around in the dark trying to make progress when you have no idea if the direction you've taken will be useful or helpful, especially for writing funding applications. So a small chance (or a small torch) sometimes makes a big difference. A small fund for a small chance for a small amount of labour. This isn't to be underestimated in terms of potential impact. The reality of this fund might be that it buys a few days of collaborative conversation or experimentation. Whilst the output might not necessarily be much physically, there may be other valuable outcomes which are often overlooked, less measured or undervalued. Some that we've personally experienced include increased confidence,



peer support and learning, new professional and personal relationships, shared experiences (recreational and project based) and feeling more able to take risks. And don't forget, getting better at poker.

Are you all in yet? Was it you who said that you resubmitted your unsuccessful application to ACE, having been advised (not necessarily by ACE. But maybe!) to put the words HIGH QUALITY in front of almost everything, then it would probably get selected? Hahaha. I remember who it was now. It wasn't you but it's a good story. Well, it's not good, it's got too much truth surrounding it for comfort, but it helps highlight our point. I think it was then selected - doh! Haha I wish it was me. Maybe it could be me, now I know the secret words.

We need to remove ~~the secret words, buzzwords~~. Immediately!

Oh, hi quality. Didn't see you over there! I often wave to quality. Sometimes from a distance, sometimes from up close. Sometimes we shake hands and other times it's an awkward kiss on the cheek, neck, or lips if I'm really unlucky?! Once I actually kissed someone's ear during one of these exchanges! That was inappropriately cringy. Sometimes quality is so out of reach as a concept I stand at its feet, crick my neck and squint my eyes to try and catch a small glimpse of it but I can't, it's head is so far up it doesn't even need to be hidden in the clouds. Quality. Quali-tea? Fancy a nice cuppa? How many cups of tea has it taken to write this text?

How many cups of tea does it take to select applications? You've been on the other side as an Artist Adviser for Jerwood, maybe you know? I'm wondering if you're all sitting around with tea together, or whether it's remote and asynchronous these days. It's probably still remote tea. One of the methods Jerwood currently uses is to invite Artist Advisers into the selection process. It is a positive step in broadening experience, background and opinion from outside of their own circle. But maybe all this does is make the circle wider, rather than changing the shape of it altogether. Maybe the shape needs to be in flux, constantly evolving into new forms, as needs and climates change.

From being on the other side, I do know that many applicants in these processes are equally qualified. There's just such a huge need for financial support. It's a massive responsibility being a decision maker, especially since the pandemic, where a decision that really only helps a handful of people disappoints many, many others. And every person who is successful feels guilty if their friends are unsuccessful. Panels and peer review can be a minefield and I've not really felt qualified myself to be able to make judgements or decisions in this very situation. It's quite a lot of pressure. And of course, unconscious and conscious bias plays a large part too. It's awkward when you have friends applying for opportunities, something that must only increase the longer you are in the game. I've not felt very equipped to be able to remove myself from those relationships or that position of power (I feel gross even saying that phrase) and might have even done a disservice to their work so as to not come across as biased. At the same time it is very natural to want to support friends or people working in your field or hometown, especially if there is underrepresentation there, be it geographical, gender, racial, sociopolitical or class. And in a world where there are very few opportunities, if you do find yourself in that privileged position, you want to try and take others with you. It feels very wrong, and not supportive if you aren't able to do this.

And the winner is.... George Best and Grace Kelly.

Right! But can we trust computers more than we can trust human judgement, especially when they have been programmed by humans in the first place? I think these are separate questions: we're not talking about programming computers to "select" (like if we wrote an algorithm to detect HIGH

QUALITY by machine-reading the applications). We're only asking the computer to pick numbers at random, which correspond to anonymous applicants. The trust point is with the institution in this case: we need to be sure that each number is only entered once, and the random number picker program is run without human intervention.

What if we entered and we were selected?

And the winner is... Kelly Best and Georgie Grace.

That wouldn't look very random.

Often random generation doesn't end up looking or feeling random, or like even distribution. I've seen this problem implementing random selection in programming a game: you expect to get a variety of the items in your set, then when you run the program you get a bunch of the same things, and it feels broken. But it's just the nature of maths. Over time it will give you an even distribution, but on a per case basis it may look unbalanced. Here I'm thinking about how a pilot such as the Jerwood 1:1 fund might need to have some longevity in order to really be worthy of all this effort and thinking. It is really important that Jerwood Arts utilises this randomised selection process multiple times to ensure that it has any real chance of being properly evaluated as a new model. There's a very real chance that the random generator will select mainly, or all, straight white cisgendered men. What happens if this is the case? Will there be more or less trust in this idea or system? Will we feel more let down by the system if we are placing all our trust in this method to produce a truly representative selection and it doesn't appear to do so? That might depend on whether there is true representation entering in the first place. And, if Jerwood Arts decided to run the programme again, what would happen if the outcome was the same? There's a real risk of loss of control here which might feel daunting from an institutional point of view. Everyone has a complicated relationship with control.

Going back to our own experience, whilst our work and ideas must have had potential for development to have been selected for Jerwood 3-Phase, I feel like there was also a huge amount of luck that led up to that point. And the same with other opportunities. The luck of where you were born, the education system you were part of and whether or not that worked for or against you, the colour of your skin, your gender, your socioeconomic background, any caring responsibilities, or chance meetings along the way. It's total chance that we even met.

What is the difference between luck and privilege? Am I lucky if someone who likes my work already is on the selection panel — or is this privilege, or something else? Am I lucky, or privileged, if writing applications is in my skill set? What if I'm dyslexic? Or great at writing but terribly anxious in an interview (like the friend you mentioned). Is a painter at a greater disadvantage than someone who works with text in their practice, because they aren't honing the same skill set that is required for an application? Side thought, I always feel like painters fall through the funding cracks.

Which skills are we really selecting for? With ACE it feels like a lot of spin and correct language use, because there's usually no portfolio or other material involved in the process. It's all pitch. That's kind of mad now I am thinking about it. In a random selection, everyone has equal access in the sense that they have the same odds. If you're eligible, you have the same chance as anyone else. It should eliminate any barriers. Thinking about painting and painters again, they don't often collaborate, and it feels much harder to secure funding, but maybe this is an opportunity to join up with another painter to discuss painting?

Getting more speculative now... if we decentre the dominant concept of merit by using more random selection, will we become more obsessed with luck? Will we become more superstitious? Is there potentially more scope for bribery and corruption? How do we ensure that the computer can be trusted? And what does this say about trust between humans? That's a really interesting point. We place trust high up on our lists of qualities that we value in society, maybe it's even top in many cases, but how can we trust if it is based on such a wide set of variables and experience and bias? Trust and confidence; what's the relationship between these two? Is there a difference? Can we trust ourselves and our own judgements?

I like your thoughts about trust. Random selection feels really exciting. It feels more democratic than democracy. As highlighted in the podcast, voters are not very good predictors; a louder candidate isn't necessarily more competent, but we continue to demand this. We demand candidates perform for us. In elections the performer will win. What does this say about personality types and do these problems cross over to our sector? Does this have any influence over how selections are made? Especially in current applications, you have to be really loud about something you do not already know (outcomes) and not so loud about what excites you, which might hopefully be the unknown. Lotteries feel fairer and give a truly representative selection of leaders (or practitioners). Yes, imagine if elections were chosen by random selection. Half of our leaders would be women! As long as you can ensure that there is no tampering and embedded bias in the method of selection or technology. And this also comes down to trust.

I had an aha moment yesterday. I realised that the model of project development we're frustrated with is really out of date. In software development, people stopped planning the whole project in advance and trying to deliver that plan about 20 years ago. That model was replaced with a more cyclical approach: you don't plan the whole thing in advance, instead you gather requirements or needs, plan and deliver a first step, then get feedback. You evaluate how it's going and whether it works, you make changes as needed, then you plan the next step. Back to the evolving shape idea then. In software the main concern is to allow for user requirements to change, but I feel like it's equally applicable for creatives who are exploring unfurling questions and need the plan to adapt to what they discover.

I wonder why the arts are still using an outdated model of project management? Would it be easier for applications if people were only asked to propose a first step? Maybe there's only one question: what are you curious about? Curiosity is key! That's a starting point for working with funders for feedback and support as you evolve your plan more cyclically during the project once it's funded. I like this a lot and combining it with a random generator would free up a lot of time for organisations. It could help facilitate relationships between organisations and practitioners because they wouldn't be wasting time and emotions on all the admin and rejections. More time for wine tasting than timewasting. Haha! More space for the unknown. Yes please.

-----the end-----

for now.

## **A Response to the 1:1 FUND by Sam Metz**

*Sam Metz is an artist based in Hull who researches, creates and reflects on the concept of what they refer to as choreographic objects. Sam has collaborated with the performance artist David Clarkson to create body-based live art, and has been a member of Guerrilla Art Lab, a queer, feminist, live art, performance collective since 2016.*

*As an emerging curator Sam is influenced by disability-led approaches to interpretation, particularly focusing on sensory modalities of understanding neglected in traditional forms of art museum interpretation, such as touch. Sam explores methods of providing art historical, social, material interpretation– that different people can use in different ways to help them make meaning from what they are looking at.*

*Sam emailed the team shortly after the 1:1 FUND call for entries was launched in September, enquiring about the updated process and expressing concern that some of the more relational and responsive elements of our recent processes – such as individual feedback – would not feature within this new approach. We invited Sam to write this commission to document their concerns and suggestions as expressed in our email correspondence. Sam has specialist knowledge of inclusive and disability-led practice, and have been part of selection processes as part of the PANIC! Steering Group through The Tetley in Leeds. Sam’s text was written after the 1:1 FUND opened for applications.*

Jerwood Arts’ pilot application process and use of a random generator for its 1:1 FUND aimed to solve a number of very real problems, including the near impossibility of selectors being able to offer meaningful feedback to the many hundreds of applicants for a vanishingly small number of prestigious awards. Artists’ work is, by and large, not only precarious but also dependent on repeated cycles of grant applications that result, with mathematical inevitability, in more rejections than acceptances. To require artists to invest unpaid time in an application that they know is not just unlikely to be accepted but unlikely ever to be read feels like a damaging shift away from an understanding of the application process as relational – a critical conversation between practitioners.

Their solution – a much-abridged initial application, with artists then shortlisted via a random number generator – may address issues of capacity and free staff to work more closely with selected artists but risks sacrificing the care and consideration due to those on the other side of that process. The random generator applied was also pitched to remove bias from selection. Something that, for me, is best achieved by diversifying selection panels, which Jerwood Arts already works to do in relation to other funds. Critically, for me, the pilot approach does very little to support artists who don’t know that a fund like this is for them. As a disabled artist, when I see a disabled artist on a panel I am immediately reassured. Diversifying the panel can mean seeing yourself reflected in the organisation and reassured to apply. Receiving feedback from artists can therefore be pivotal.

My knowledge of Jerwood Arts’ previous excellent practice, and my own experience of having worked with, and been funded and supported by them, means that I hugely respect the organisation and have no doubt that their intentions for the pilot are good. What I would like to do here is simply to voice my personal understanding of the value of the application process for artists, particularly those in the formative stages of their career, and how that is in danger of being lost.

For me, something about diminishing agency through a random generator didn't seem to be caring. A call out has the potential to be relational: a dialogue between you, the organisation and other artists. A philosophy of interdependence recognises the need to both receive and give care; essentially, the care taken to construct an application feels like it needs care at the other end. This philosophy (introduced in the recent publication by the Care Collective, *The Care Manifesto*) also reminds us that interdependence cuts through social hierarchies, so that renowned artists are reliant on support as much as emerging or underrepresented artists. Feedback from respected peers emphasises learning transmission between more and less-experienced artists as bi-directional, horizontal and communicative. Jerwood are in many areas of their work diminishing individualism and favouring coproduction, peer support and collaborative knowledge exchange. The random generator for me, by contrast means the 'other end' is a dead end, not a more modern one that shares practice among artists and organisations and which enables a diversification of voices.

I think that it can be possible to develop confidence and ability through the application writing process – but only if there is meaningful feedback. As a disabled artist who receives application support it feels problematic to engage support in a proposal that is likely not to be read and to not value my collaborator. As a practising artist who is still an emerging artist, the opportunity presented by a fund can sometimes be exposing, where you feel forced to share an idea before it is ready because you don't know when funding will be available again or conversely where you are confident in an idea or approach but don't know if it is the kind of work that matches the funder and the needs of the fund. This position can be underscored by precarity, isolation and disenchantment. Precarity is the position of working with unstable income streams in a society in the UK that has seen austerity followed by a pandemic and cuts to the arts. Isolation is widespread, particularly for disabled artists, like myself, who might be unable to access peer support, accessible studios and events. Disenchantment (inevitably) follows because to situate yourself as an artist responding to call-outs, commissions and opportunities can mean repeated rejection. Post education, finding space for creative knowledge exchange and collaboration can be rare; it's hard to know what your peers think about your work. Receiving considerate written feedback about your practice forms a necessary part of lifelong learning and development.

Personally, despite all the inherent risk of being an artist, I sometimes find it motivating to be able to send out work to a panel of artists. You hope that your written application acts as a proxy for the conversation you might have with them were you to meet. Not being able to gauge peers' interest in your work risks barriers to future engagement, due to a lack of reassurance about the value of your work, but it also reduces the ability to have critical conversations between practitioners.

I wonder if it would possible to engage the random generator approach again utilising a simple expression of interest, with no requirement to describe or advocate for your work, and then support selected people throughout the whole application-writing process. An approach of that kind would enable feedback and care for both the team and applicants, restoring the relational process and becoming a real opportunity for artist development.

## ***Time to think about meritocracy and precision-madness by Mark Robinson***

*Mark Robinson is the founder of Thinking Practice and the author of the book, Tactics for the Tightrope (Future Arts Centres, 2021) as well as several collections of poetry. His poem 'The Infinite Town' is carved on a large plinth on Stockton High Street, from which emerges a steam train at 1pm every day. He has been an individual applicant as writer and small press publisher, a member of many panels, and a decision-maker working for Northern Arts/Arts Council England.*

*Mark [tweeted positively](#) about the experiment when it was announced in September and has since been in email correspondence with Lilli. Mark's text was written after the 1:1 FUND opened for applications.*

It is hard to disagree with the starting point of the 1-1 FUND's design: that arts funding for individuals is broken. Open programmes have failed to respond to massive competition. Jerwood Arts' own success rates have plummeted, and other funders report similar patterns. Yet this competition – or choice, to look at it another way - has not made the funded much more representative. Disparities around race, gender, disability and class persist.

Such low levels of success are a massive 'hidden' cost to the sector. Jerwood Arts' Live Work Fund received 1,283 applications in 2020, with 1 in 40 successful. Let's estimate each application took two days. That's 2566 working days – over 10 working years. Let's then say assessment and decision-making processes took two days per application. That makes 20 working years spent on unsuccessful applications. To one fund. Now multiply that by the numbers of funds individual artists might apply to. The sector is spending centuries on applications that never get funded.

Now, of course, these are rhetorical and challengeable calculations. But the system damages through its inefficiency. What could we do with that time if it wasn't spent developing detailed applications and often even more detailed assessments and feedback? How much more could artists do? How much stress and strain could funders remove from the system to everyone's benefit? These are urgent matters given the lack of 'slack' in the system, the exhaustion and burn-out. So I welcome this experiment.

Research in the science field suggests traditional methods are flawed in finding the best ideas. Nobel Prizewinning scientist Sir James Black has suggested peer review has two main drawbacks. It favours 'well-advanced', fashionable or 'endorsed' practice over the speculative and new. It also teaches people how to successfully play a broken system.

Too much well-intentioned effort goes into justifications for choosing between a surfeit of good bids whilst maintaining the status quo. These justifications are, if not fictions, often codes for 'too many good applications, try again later'. Our illusion of control, choice and meritocratic 'excellence' makes us reluctant to say or hear this. Deliberative decision-making leads to ever-finer distinctions, what I have seen described as ['precision-madness'](#). I have seen and felt this in action, from both ends.

The use of a random number generator is, in some ways, not much more random than the processes of selection and diary availability that lead to a particular group of people making decisions about eligible applications against a particular budget. Replace one or two people with others, and decisions easily end up different. Random selection could lead to more representative selections

across any set of characteristics, over time, as it would be less prone to bias. It would also be more transparent and perhaps even fairer than group decision-making.

[One study looking at science](#) describes grant-giving as an example of a merit system that is essentially a lottery. But many in the arts are reluctant to accept this applies to us. Grant receiving has a 'status-endowing' function, for individuals and organisations: a grant from certain funders serves as a quality kite market as well as cash. It is often said to be as valuable for the confidence it gives as for the money. (Conversely a rejection can knock confidence.)

But it also plays into the myth of meritocracy in the sector highlighted in recent years. As [a paper by Dave O'Brien and Mark Taylor](#) puts it, the belief that 'Culture is a meritocracy' may reinforce social inequality, especially as the more successful you are, the more likely you are to believe it. Being part of panels, part of grant-giving, may deepen that feeling.

Such panels bring current, practice-informed insight. People take their roles seriously, in my experience. They feel the responsibility for their choices. [Long, intense, deliberation is often a point of honour](#). But panels can also have a normalising, mainstreaming effect. The panel can work as a store of the social and cultural capital of its members.

Often it boosts it – I know this was part of my own experience as a young member of the Northern Arts Literature Panel. There was an exchange of 'legitimacy', and I gained new networks, alongside genuine learning. But we also know that such networks tend to exclude or marginalise people from certain backgrounds. Be that bit too awkward, and you may not be asked back. (I've had that experience, too.)

The panel process can be part of fitting into a broken system. Just as hiring is, to quote O'Brien and Taylor, sometimes 'a form of cultural matching rather than a meritocratic exercise', so is grant-making.

Being selected by one's peers can boost confidence but feeds the meritocracy myth. Will being selected by the random number generator from a set of equally deserving people lead to less confident artists, not as thrilled to be funded? Will it lead to a lack of the endorsement effect in commissioners or even the public, who studies show have less faith in randomised decisions?

Time will tell: but at least more people may have time to think about it.

### ***In response to the 1:1 FUND by Jannat Ahmed***

*Jannat Ahmed is an occasional writer, poet, illustrator, and also editor-in-chief at Lucent Dreaming, an independent magazine of fiction and poetry based in Cardiff. She has worked for Poetry Wales where she launched Poetry Wales Pamphlet Competition, Wales Poetry Award and Wales Young Poets Award. She hopes to launch Lucent Dreaming in 2022 as Wales' first book publisher led by two full-time editors of colour.*

*Jannat got in touch with us via the Jerwood Arts inbox shortly after the 1:1 FUND call for entries was launched, expressing serious concerns about random selection as an approach, and particularly the ways it might dehumanise or 'gameify' a process which already has little returns for the artist. Jannat is also concerned that this approach was misguided around notions of 'equality' and represents a step backwards from important positive action work. Lilli Geissendorfer, Director of Jerwood Arts exchanged emails with Jannat. They had a meeting to discuss this further, and Jannat was invited to document her perspective through this commission. The text was written after the 1:1 FUND opened for applications.*

I was angered to see that Jerwood Arts, an organisation that is lauded for its schemes for artists, offering funds and professional development to its grant recipients, would pivot so dramatically in the name of 'fairness'. The reason this pilot scheme is so disappointing is because Jerwood Arts has previously outdone other funding organisations in terms of care for the artist. Jerwood Arts is known in recent times for offering what all artists [from under-represented backgrounds] actually need: access to sustained and significant funding direct to the artist over a comparatively long period, with human-led positive action.

There are so many ways in which this pilot model for the 1:1 FUND is structurally bad; it feels like the outcome of board meetings and academia rather than conversations with artists who are already doing work about equity and access in arts funding. Let me outline two of the main issues that I've found:

#### 1. Unpaid time, no returns.

There are two sides to this. Firstly, the fund didn't indicate on its landing page what the application form looked like, e.g. how many words are expected, what questions need to be answered, how long it might take to complete. Given the nature of the fund, it put off those who need to weigh up if they can make time to apply. This fund requested a partnership, which is a significant amount of work for the non-networked artist.

Secondly, this funding model offered no feedback to its applicants, an anomaly for Jerwood Arts applications, and implied that only lottery-selected applications are read. It suggests that for funding to be more 'accessible', and reach beyond middle-class audiences, the dramatic increase in workload for arts organisations can be addressed with a lottery-style selection process. It's upsetting that the white middle class have always been awarded funding as humanised individuals, with their words actually read, and the offer of feedback and connection. However, when 'Diverse Background' artists are given a 'fair' opportunity to apply for funding, the solution is to dehumanise as much of the process as possible. The gameification of the process, and robotic distance as a solution to bias and



imitation of ‘fairness’ is not a good reflection on Jerwood Arts. Are arts organisations saying that other funding is so inaccessible that this volume of applications is not anticipated, or is it that they’re implying other funding is more worth the person-power of the art worker? My fear is that because Jerwood Arts is doing it, other arts organisations will follow.

A lottery-style process isn’t a long-term solution to bias against new, untested artists, nor against racism; a lottery-style process means art workers, who are in their vast majority white and middle class, will never unlearn their own biases. What’s needed is for art workers to cultivate an ethos around giving new, untested, Black artists and non-Black artists of colour, intersectional artists and working-class artists, multiple chances to learn and develop their craft, chances that, say, a white male writer/director at the BBC for example, always has. Conscious changes behind the scenes are how we make the arts space better.

Time is finite for all, but a low-income artist cannot delegate their job nor responsibilities the way a middle-class artist might, so why is it that this model disrespects the already limited time of artists who would benefit most from funding and feedback? There is a human cost to the lottery, and instead of the paid art-worker, it is the underpaid artist who loses out. The time of low-income artists is thrown directly in the bin, never to be recovered, for the benefit of the paid staff in an arts organisation.

## 2. The traditional applicant is still at an advantage

If middle-class artists have had decades of opportunities to learn about the application process, and to develop the networks that make funding opportunities available, this pilot scheme does nothing to address that imbalance.

Jerwood Arts can boast having received over 1800+ applications for this fund, but what does that mean when the new shortened application form is not the one newer artist-applicants will find elsewhere, putting them on the back-foot in terms of being able to apply for other funds? A larger quantity of white middle-class artists applying increases the likelihood that more white middle-class artists will be selected. It’s not fair because there are so many non-white, non-middle class, artists who, structurally, are kept from knowledge about arts funding. If lottery-style selection must happen, it should happen after all applications are screened, feedback is provided, and conscious decisions by art workers are made about what funding is ringfenced and why, and then to draw from the hat in those categories for variety. But it cannot ever be the only model.

On the human level of respect, speaking to power, I ask: Would Arts Council England’s existing 800 National Portfolio Organisations like it if they had to submit—suddenly unpaid for the whole duration, with no ability to delegate their existing work and responsibilities—a 1-in-10,000 application form—that might never be read—to be put through a lottery-style selection process, for the slightest chance of being awarded funding? I think not. Imagine, then, how it feels for the rest of us applying against all odds.

You cannot use straightforward models of ‘equality’ or ‘fairness’ in funding models when there is no equality in society. It’s unworkable. Funding from all organisations must be equitable; Jerwood Arts, and other arts and funding organisations, need to engage with living artists who understand the nuances of socio-economic inequality in human terms in order to pilot future schemes, not source their models from white middle-class academia whose research and scientific approach doesn’t prioritise or perceive the human cost of these games, nor meaningfully understand the

intersectional, structural, affective ways that art does or does not happen. White middle-class, often ableist and racist thought, structures organisations and academic research takes priority over what artists of colour and disabled artists actually say they need long-term from arts and funding organisations to succeed, and that ultimately needs to change.