

Artcheck

Artcheck is a practical toolkit of questions and inspiration points on what art can do in your area – designed by the Urban Design Alliance for Channel 4.

It is a method of showing how art can change people or places. It focuses people on working together to make it happen.

It will help you find a potential

time or **place**

for art in your neighbourhood or beyond.

You can do Artcheck on your own, you can get together a group of friends or colleagues to walk around your neighbourhood, or you can start small with a chat around your kitchen table.

Artcheck builds on a method called Placecheck, which helps people to analyse places and shows them how to kick-start action.

Inspire me

What is public art?

Public art is art in a public place. It is art in its widest sense.

Public art can be something **formal**, such as a monument or a plaque on a wall.

It might be something **lively**, such as a street festival, a pageant or a parade – or a space for these to happen in.

It can have **sound** or be musical, such as park railings that play a tune when you run a stick along them.

It could be a **sculpture** made of stone or a living material.

You may also discover art that is being spoilt and that, with a bit of care, you could restore.

For ideas and some great examples of what's possible over the spectrum of art, see:
<http://www.channel4.com/culture/microsites/B/bigart/gallery.html>

Next time you visit or think about a place near you, ask these three simple questions first:

- What do you like about this place?
- What do you dislike about it?
- How could art play a part here?

Getting started

Let's get started. One hour of your time ...

Select an area where you think art could happen.

Team up with a few friends or colleagues. Spend about half an hour walking around, talking with each other about how you feel about the place and whether public art could make a difference. Be imaginative!

Discuss your ideas – you might find this checklist useful (see:
http://www.channel4.com/culture/microsites/B/bigart/where_6.html)

You should now have lots of ideas to help you complete the Channel 4 Big Art Project application form. See:

http://www.channel4.com/culture/microsites/B/bigart/nominate_1.html

Hints

As you walk around the area you have chosen

- think about all the senses
- think about emotion and memory
- think about time and space.

How long should the art last?

- For ever
- For a generation
- For a year
- For a moment
- Every year, every day, every hour or minute
- Seasonally

Where should the art happen?

- In a specific location
- In multiple locations
- Relating to something that's already there
- Somewhere significant
- Somewhere insignificant

Checklist

Artcheck starts with three simple questions:

- What do you like about this place?
- What do you dislike about it?
- How could art play a part here?

You can ask these questions as you and your group look around your neighbourhood. Take a camera and a notebook to record what you think.

From these three questions come some more specific things to think about:

Who else would be affected and who might we need to collaborate with?

Think about:

- Who lives here
- Who works here
- Who makes things happen here
- What education, advice and skills networks there are
- What professionals we would need to work with later
- Who else has a stake in the area

What do we hope to achieve?

You might want to:

- Entertain
- Make something inspiring

- Make the place look better
- Bring life to the place
- Kick-start community activity
- Create a sense of civic pride

Art can happen in any public space – think about parks, streets, rivers, buildings, the sky.

What about:

- Horizontal surfaces
- Vertical surfaces
- Above, below, beside, in front, on top
- *Instead of* something, or *as well as* something, or changing something
- Temporary sites
- Permanent sites
- Living sites
- Moving sites, like water
- Disposable sites, like everyday objects

What's distinctive about your area? Can this trigger ideas for public art?

Think about:

- Landscape
- Environment
- Local architecture
- Local materials
- History
- Culture

- Food
- Religion
- Sport
- Science

Think about art that blends in, and think about art that shouts out and asks questions!

You might want to take this checklist with you on your walk. Open up the subjects you are interested in and print your customised version.

After you've come back and discussed your ideas, you're ready to fill out the application form. See: http://www.channel4.com/culture/microsites/B/bigart/nominate_1.html

The Channel 4 Big Art Project will select six sites from around the country. If you're not selected, you may have a great idea you want to take forward anyway. To help you kick-start action in your community, we've provided additional material.

Getting things going

If your community is working with Channel 4 on the Big Art Project, you'll be working with an artist to think about these questions. But if you're getting together yourselves to commission an artist, you might want to start thinking about the kind of art you want. These questions will help you come up with some surprising ideas.

Living art – checklist

Most people, when asked for ideas on public art, will think of an object such as a mural, a statue or a monument. But many other art forms involve life or change, such as performing something, exhibiting or getting the community together to make something.

This table will help you widen your ideas.

	Animal	Vegetable	Energy and materials
Sound	Shouting Storytelling Drama Singing Music Footsteps Or something else debate	Rustling leaves Flapping of a banner in the breeze	Wind chimes A recording of sound, such as footsteps
Sight	Drama Dance Parade People moving Sport	Flowers, leaves Crops Landscape	Light, fireworks Machines Local industry Raw materials Transportation Cityscape Smoke Fire Children's workshop making artificial flowers Fountains or waterfall
Smell	Leather Cooking	Spices, scented flowers, foliage	Fumes

		Newly cut grass Burning	
Touch	Holding hands, working together on a project Handling animals	Smooth leaves, bark of a tree	Different temperature of materials Ice-skating rink
Taste	Cooking	Cooking	Salt spray

Object art – checklist

Function

Should the art have a use? For example, should we be able to sit on it or under it, shelter beneath it or play on it?

Form

What form should the art take?

- Solid, liquid, gas, vapour, spray, smoke, light, heat or performance
- Static or moving
- Growing

Materials

What materials should be considered?

- Animal, vegetable or mineral
- Wood, stone, metal, plastic
- Living or dead

Colour and light

- Brilliant to black
- Permanent or changing
- Daytime and night-time

Impact or blend

The choices range from art that fits in to art that shouts out. Think about how art would complement your area and how it could make a difference.

Features of the site

What features of the site you have chosen need to be considered?

- Orientation
- Sun and shade
- Season and weather change

Does the site need to be enhanced or changed in any way to make the most of the art?

Complete artcheck

Convert your ideas into action.

If you've walked round your neighbourhood you'll have had some initial ideas and will have discussed them with a small number of people. The next stage is to get things moving.

- Involve the people who can make things happen
- Agree on your overall goal
- Decide what sort of art you want
- Find a site
- Think about the practicalities

- Think about what resources you have locally
- Network to develop your ideas and get support

When you've got your group together, you'll need to keep track of your progress. As you gather support you may need to bring in experts and be able to explain your ideas to a wider network.

Record how you reached your conclusions by keeping a note of each meeting and the discussions you have. You need to note three things for each meeting:

- Who was invited
- Who attended
- What was decided.

You've looked at the ideas on the site and done your first walk around. See: http://www.channel4.com/culture/microsites/B/bigart/where_6.html for a checklist of questions to help you think in more detail and take your ideas to the next stage.

For information to help get your group started on making a difference to where you live, go to www.placecheck.info

Artcheck – the complete checklist

The people

Who needs to be involved?

Stakeholders

Who has an interest in the future of the place through living, working, playing, visiting, providing services or investing here?

Local knowledge

Who has local knowledge?

Finance

Who manages budgets that might be used for public art?

Control, regulation and standards

Who controls, regulates or sets standards here? Who would we need to ask for permission?

Policy

Who draws up policies, plans, briefs and strategies that affect the place?

Opinion

Who shapes opinion locally?

Action

Who makes things happen around here?

Collaboration

How can all these people work together on the Artcheck and beyond?

Your goal

How would you like the art to work in your neighbourhood?

What do you hope to achieve?

- Entertain
- Inspire
- Make the place look better
- Bring life to the place
- Kick-start community activity
- Create a sense of civic pride

- Something else

Where else could this project go? Could your whole community benefit?

Think about:

- Further community activity
- Education and skills
- Employment

Art can have a range of purposes, but remember, it cannot rescue an unsatisfactory environment on its own.

Context checklist

What is distinctive about your area? Can the context trigger ideas for art?

Landscape and environment

Geology

Hydrology, rivers, streams

Ecology

Sky

Weather

Local architecture

How would the proposal fit into the surrounding area? Look at local architectural and garden styles.

Materials

Local

Sustainable

Renewable

Traditional imported materials used in local trades

History

Famous people

Locally significant people

Historic buildings and sites

War or peace

Culture

Art

Music

Song

Literature

Dance

Food

Trades

Local communities

Local skills

Religion

Events and rituals

Sport

Local teams

Practicalities

It is as well to think about practicalities in advance. Who will own it, who will fund it and who will give professional advice? Maintenance, if it is needed, can sometimes be a bigger task than creating the art in the first place.

Maintenance

Who will install it

Who will maintain it

Who will repair it

Aging

Will its function or appearance change over time; for example, through rust, rot, dirt, algae, wear and tear, breakage and so on? Will this matter?

Liability and insurance

Who will take responsibility?

Support programmes and projects

How can we make the most of other programmes and community networks?

Council programmes

How can we help the local council to focus its own programmes and resources on improving this area?

Education and training

How can links be developed with education and training programmes locally?

Sustainable development

How can links be made with local authority sustainable development initiatives?

Economic development

How can links be made between economic development and environmental improvement strategies locally?

Grants

What sources of grants are available locally?

Social inclusion

How can links be made with neighbourhood renewal and social inclusion initiatives?

How can we make the most of other resources?

Community funding, external funding, sponsorship.

Resources

What resources are available locally to help people get involved?

Think about

Organisations

Advice

Venues

Training programmes

Grant schemes

Your network

Programmes and advice on arts and regeneration local to you might be at your:

Local authority

Local community arts group

District authority

Regional Arts Council

Regional Development Agency

Regional Cultural Consortium

Support

What resources to support people working together are already available (including information and advice services, venues, training programmes, grant schemes and funded initiatives)?

Skills

What skills are available to help create art?

Guidance

What guidance or expertise can the local authority or other bodies provide?

A focus

Is there a centre that can be a venue for meetings; for example, a local school or college, or a religious or community centre?

Sharing visions

Should events be organised to identify common interests, discuss ideas, share information and experience, and enable people to organise themselves into continuing working groups focusing on specific topics?