

NOT BY DESIGN

An evaluation of the Arts Council England South East Fellowship Programme 2004-2006

Why?

We've spent the last 18 months on a senior management fellowship at three arts organisations in the South East. It's been a mixed experience. We're a mixed bunch. Our host organisations are a mixed bunch. As we come to the end of the fellowship we feel that what we've learnt might be useful to other people- people who are setting up fellowships, running them, and people who might apply to be fellows themselves. This document is a summary of our personal experiences. We hope that it can be useful and informative for you.

Saj Fareed, Tracey Low and Rajni Shah
May 2006

Fellowship aims:	“to address the under-representation of Black, Asian and Chinese arts managers in the South East”
Number of fellows:	3
Length of fellowship:	18 months (two full time, one part time post at 3 days per week)
Host organisations, fellowship title:	Farnham Maltings, Creative Producer Chichester Festival Theatre, Associate Producer Fabrica, Assistant Director
Structure of fellowship:	Fellow was expected to work within the organisation most of the time, with some flexibility around training events. Training needs to be determined by fellow (see below).
Host selection process:	All Regularly Funded Organisations in South East region invited to submit a written application followed by an Equal Opportunity health check of shortlisted organisations.
Fellows selection process:	Written application, interview, presentation (determined by organisation in conjunction with Showhow)
Training bursary for each fellow:	£18,000 p.a. net (paid directly to fellow by Arts Council England)
Additional training offered:	£883 training budget per fellow (decided by Showhow after negotiation from fellows)
Mentoring:	Showhow mentor
Advertised exit strategy:	“Additional support will be offered on exit strategies and potential future employment opportunities.”
Funded by:	Arts Council England, South East
Managed by:	Showhow (referred to in this evaluation as Project Manager)

Fellows

Saj Fareed, Tracey Low and Rajni Shah were selected in September 2004 as fellows at Fabrica art gallery, Chichester Festival Theatre and Farnham Maltings respectively. In May 2006 they completed the fellowship programme.

Saj Fareed is a freelance project manager with a particular interest in gallery education. She is also a practising visual artist and has developed and led a wide range of arts education projects. She has a keen interest in working with disadvantaged groups, promoting the arts to a wider audience and as a tool for expression and creativity. She has been a trustee for Carousel an arts organisation working with children and adults who have learning disabilities.

Before taking up her post at Chichester, **Tracey Low** was Administrator of English Pocket Opera Company in London where she was responsible for the general management of the company, including a national touring programme and extensive education programme. Tracey previously worked for Manchester City Galleries, the Orange Tree Theatre and the National Youth Music Theatre, and is currently a Director of Paradise Green Promotions, who manage Augustine's and Greyfriars Kirk House at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe.

Prior to her fellowship at the Farnham Maltings, **Rajni Shah** worked at The Place, National Dance Agency for London, and as a freelance producer and artist in the US and UK. Rajni is committed to bringing diverse artists together to explore innovative ways of presenting work. Her most recent piece, 'Mr Quiver', was most recently been shown as a durational performance at the National Review of Live Art 2006. Rajni is currently an Artist Associate for Chisenhale Dance Space and a Live Art Development Agency One to One bursary recipient.



Our fellowships were part of a positive action initiative designed to address the lack of arts managers in the South East from certain ethnic backgrounds. We found that this brought up a number of issues, including:

- Clarity: exploring fellowship aims
- Representation: how much is enough?
- Using the fellowship for the wider good

the trouble with Cultural Diversity and Positive Action

Clarity

Whilst it was clear that this was a positive action fellowship, we never felt that we knew exactly what the funders hoped to achieve from it. This lack of clarity felt debilitating for both funders and fellows. In retrospect, we feel that a statement of desired outcomes or a list of questions would have been helpful for both sides and encouraged an open and trusting relationship from the start. We also feel that it would have encouraged more openness of discussion about what the real issues are, both within and without the context of the fellowship.

Representation: how much is enough?

Many initiatives promoting ethnic diversity are designed to tackle the issue of representation rather than directly tackle social injustice. This fellowship was open to managers from any social background with a certain ethnic history- the idea being that changing the 'face' of senior arts management would start to bring about change on a more intrinsic level.

Without a doubt, there is value in attempting to address the lack of ethnic diversity represented in a region like the South East, which is famously '95% white'. However, in order for fellowships to create real change we feel it is important to offer more ongoing support to the fellow both during and after the fellowship. This could be support around integration within the organisation or the region, or support in thinking about how to move on from the fellowship most effectively (a 'living exit strategy'). This, we feel, would demonstrate a real commitment to change and might start to really reshape the sector.

Using the fellowship for the wider good

Fellowships work on the premise that if opportunity is given to one promising individual, it will ultimately achieve positive change for the wider community through the creation of a new, diverse leadership. However, we feel that it is important to encourage the widest possible ripple effect by supporting the fellow in sharing his/her experiences and knowledge, influencing others and advocating for the sector.



Senior Management

versus

Leadership?

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What do we mean by Senior Management or Leadership? How can a fellowship best prepare someone for a leadership role? What are the qualities of good leadership?

Reaching for Senior Management: integration – pitch – exit strategy – duration

Senior Management or Leadership? an attempt at definition

Reaching for Senior Management

The fellowships were advertised as an opportunity to develop senior management skills and we agree that there is a lack of support for younger, newer managers trying to break into top level management. We propose that the following four areas need consideration in order to maximise on the opportunity to develop these skills within a fellowship situation.

Integration: The fellow needs to be adequately integrated into the organisation in order to be able to take on responsibilities such as line management. This is achievable by ensuring that other staff are adequately briefed, that the fellow's role whilst within the organisation is clearly stated, and that appraisals are conducted regularly. In addition, we feel that integration can be harder if the fellow is being paid directly by the funder; in our case, we feel that if fellows had been paid through their host organisations this might have led to a more natural integration into existing management structures.

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Pitch: The management of the fellowship needs to be pitched at an appropriate level so that there is someone monitoring the relationship between fellow and host organisation. In this case, there was a lack of respect for the project manager from the start of the fellowship due to an inappropriate level of management skill. This left very little scope for effective intervention when things did go wrong or need changing.

Exit Strategy: A living exit strategy should be discussed at the start of the fellowship. We feel that this is crucial in order that the fellow has a wide base of support throughout the fellowship as well as when moving on into employment. It can also be beneficial to the host organisation to work with an awareness of this wider perspective and to examine the long term usefulness of conversations that are begun during the fellowship.

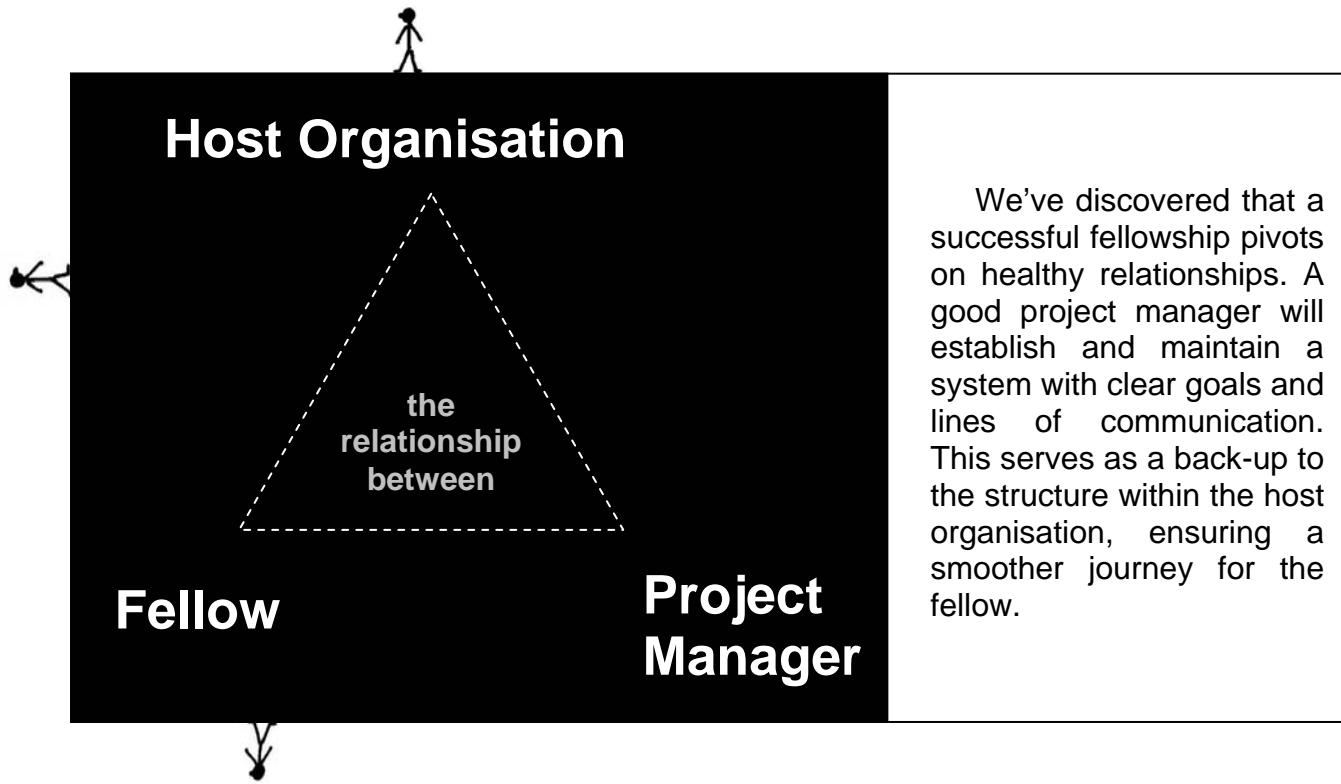
Duration: We found that whilst 18 months allowed adequate time for the fellow to become integrated into the host organisation, hosts were largely fearful of embedding a temporary manager too deeply into their core structure. Therefore whilst it is important that fellowships last long enough to make real change, it is essential to consider how hosts will be supported in managing that change. We also found that all of the above issues were more challenging in the part time fellowship.

Senior Management or Leadership?

There is a lot of talk within the sector about cultural leadership and management, but not enough discussion of what we mean when we use these terms.

Whilst a senior manager is usually someone who sits at the top of a traditionally hierarchical organisation and has specific responsibilities around line management, financial management and organisational overview, a leader can sit more fluidly within an organisation and is often someone who encourages growth in others. Many still define a leader as the person who shouts loudest in an organisation but we'd like to argue that a leader is someone who doesn't always need to shout loudly. We think a true leader is someone who has clarity of vision, energy, and the ability to take others on ambitious journeys; someone who genuinely embraces team work and is not afraid to let others do the shouting!

We feel it would have been useful within the context of the fellowship to explore the difference in these titles, in order to clarify roles and ambitions for both the fellow and the host organisation, and as part of a living exit strategy exploring post-fellowship ambitions.



Note: in the case of our fellowship, the funder was also part of this relationship. This was due to a defective relationship between the project manager and the fellows/hosts, and a lack of clarity around boundaries. In a more normal arrangement we imagine that any input from the funder would be channelled through the project manager.

The project manager

Where the emphasis of a fellowship is on spending time working within an organisation, we feel that one of the key responsibilities of the project manager is to supervise the integration of the fellow into the host organisation. In particular, we feel that hosts need support in finding ways to fully integrate a fellow at (in this case) senior level without unbalancing the ecosystem of the organisation itself. Project managers must remain neutral but able to understand the needs of the individual fellow, the needs of the host organisation, and the goals of the fellowship.

Outside of the host organisation, the project manager should monitor the fellow's professional development needs, providing a network of contacts from which to support both direct and indirect training and maintaining regular appraisals with the fellow.

Finally, the project manager needs to be aware of the overall timescale of the fellowship. This includes ensuring that training needs are met appropriately, that exit strategy is constantly considered, and that evaluation on both sides is undertaken in a timely fashion.



The host organisation

Host organisations need to be clear on the commitment they are making when they agree to host a fellowship. There is a danger that a fellow can seem like a 'free member of staff' and become akin to an employee to the extent that he/she does not gain from time spent as a fellow or give him/herself enough time to experience training outside of the workplace. On the other hand, if fellows are not properly integrated into the organisation, there is a risk that they do not experience enough of the internal workings to learn from their fellowship. The host organisation therefore has a responsibility to work with the project manager and create an appropriate balance between organisational integration and independent professional development for the fellow. If this is the case we believe that the fellowship can evolve into a two-way conversation where both fellow and host experience challenge and growth.



The fellow

The fellow needs to feel that he/she has responsibility to manage his/her own time within the fellowship, and also needs to be clear on who to contact within and without the organisation should complications arise. We suggest that the fellow is responsible for maintaining contacts within the field, asking for support, and remaining committed to the host organisation whilst at the same time making space to develop professionally on an individual level. We also suggest that there should be space for the fellow to raise challenging questions within the spirit and in the best interests of the organisation.



Professional Development

Training

and

Exit Strategy

Defining professional development can be a challenge, but feels essential to the success of any fellowship programme. In this particular model, professional development and training needs were identified as the fellowship evolved with no clear structure for either fellow or organisation. A training budget was identified part-way through the fellowship and the parameters for spending it were never defined. Having learnt from this model we've made suggestions relating to the following: fifth day structure, staying in touch with the world, developing strengths developing weaknesses, guidance for host organisations.



Fifth day structure

We have identified from our experiences that the optimal working structure for a full time fellowship of this nature is four days working within the organisation and one day of professional development time per week. We feel that it is important to separate out time when the fellow is not expected to be working directly for the organisation. The fifth day can be used for networking, direct training events, and events linked to the fellowship itself- meeting with project managers, mentors, other fellows etc. This allows adequate opportunity for development, benefiting both the fellow and the host organisation, and allowing for a smoother relationship between them.

NOTE: this fifth day structure is proposed for full time fellowships only. In our experience, it was extremely difficult to find adequate time within a part time fellowship for professional development without either losing touch with basic organisational issues or feeling pressured to work extra days to make up for this time.

Staying in touch with the world

During an 18-month fellowship, it is easy to lose touch with previous professional contacts, leaving the fellow feeling that at the end of the fellowship he/she is a few steps behind the rest of the professional world in that field. We suggest that some of the fifth day is used to maintain networks and attend events. This ties into the idea of having a living exit strategy- maintaining a wide perspective throughout the fellowship so that the final months bring into focus an existing strand of the fellowship rather than abruptly introducing a new viewpoint.

Developing strengths, developing weaknesses

It is all too easy for a fellow to feel insecure at the beginning of a fellowship and to share only his/her strengths with the host organisation. We feel that it is important that the project manager provides structure and support so that the fellow can build on strengths but also identify weaknesses and use this opportunity to address them.

In order to achieve this, it is important to have appraisal systems both within and without the organisation. We feel that the fellow should be appraised alongside the other staff within a host organisation (this also helps with integration), but should also have external support in the form of mentoring or coaching from an outside source. This should happen throughout the placement.

Guidance for host organisations

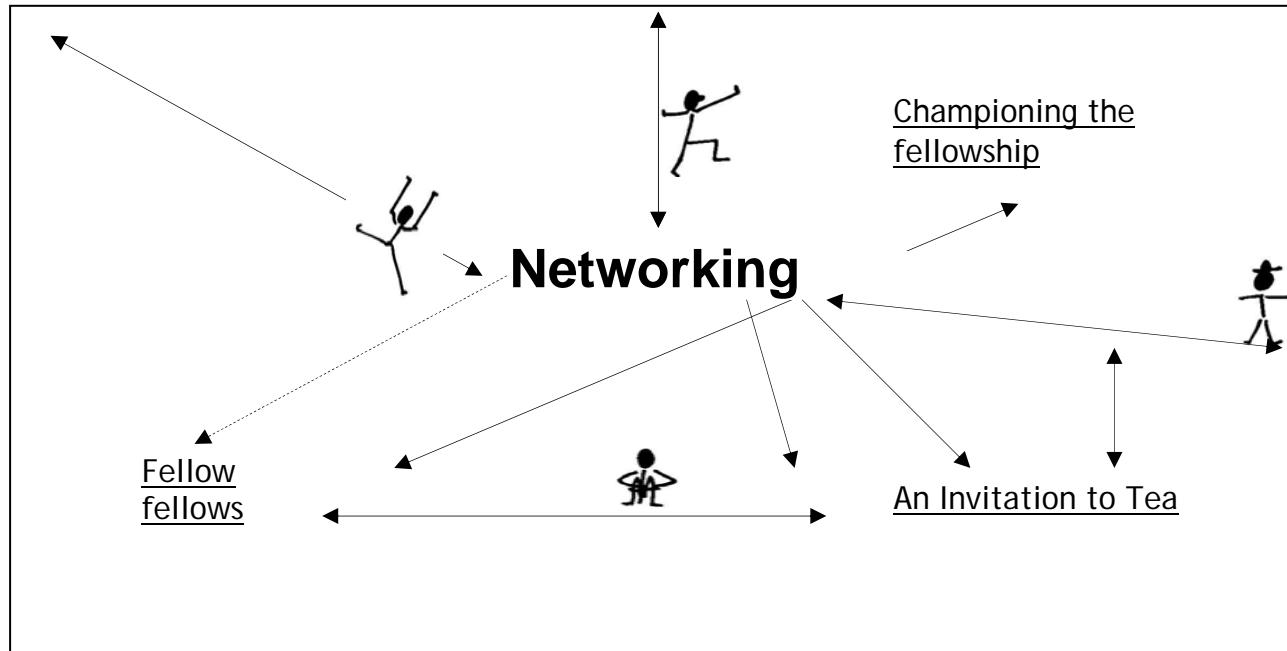
It is easy to overlook the development needs of the host organisation, but they are equally important if the fellowship is to yield long term results. We feel that it is incredibly challenging to find the balance between giving adequate support to a fellow and maintaining a focus on the needs of the organisation. It is therefore essential that there is a detailed assessment of the demands of the fellowship before organisations commit to being hosts, and that this is reviewed periodically by the project manager and the host organisation. It is also important that there is clarity between host, project manager and fellow around what the organisation hopes to achieve through the fellowship programme, both on a long and short term basis.



The dinner host scenario

Being on a fellowship can be a bit like going to dinner at someone's house for the first time. The person you are visiting is called the host; they open up their house to you and provide dinner. You eat some of their food, spend time in their home, and bring some flowers and a bottle of wine to share. After the dinner party, the host is left with a nice bunch of flowers, a bit of mess and some washing up to do in order to get the house back in order. The guest is left with the challenge of finding his/her way home.

We'd like fellowships to feel more like, say, a picnic in a park. Both sides come to the picnic with food to share, create an experience together and begin a conversation. The outside world is on all sides, and forms an important part of the experience. After eating, both people clear up and might walk in the park together before leaving. Each person gives and takes equally, and no-one's home is left in a mess.



Fellow fellows

During this fellowship, one of the most successful outcomes was the support we each received from the other fellows on the scheme. We soon realised that the other fellows were a key resource, both in terms of knowledge (skill-sharing and knowledge of other art forms) and moral support. We therefore feel that there is a lot of worth in building in time for fellows to meet and share experiences early on and throughout the fellowship.

Championing the fellowship

Fellowships benefit from a commitment to success. We feel it is crucial that funders and project managers champion the fellowship both internally and externally so that there is a wide understanding of its relevance. This makes a huge difference to the fellow, raising confidence levels and opening up new opportunities. It is also positive for the profile of the host organisation and increases the potential impact of the fellowship on a wider community.

An Invitation to tea: unexpected outcomes

As part of our fellowship, we were keen to raise awareness and stimulate debate around cultural diversity. We also felt that there was a lot we could learn from working together. This is how 'An Invitation to Tea' was born – an artist-led conference addressing the debate around cultural diversity in the South East, designed and produced by all three fellows in collaboration with Arts Council England, South East.

The experience of creating this event together was not only a learning curve for the three of us. We also feel that we took an opportunity to build relationships between our host organisations, and to raise awareness of the fellowship within the region. This kind of initiative is not always appropriate, but in this case it was a fantastic opportunity for networking and professional development, drawing on the skills mix created by the fellowship programme.

Summary of proposals

Summary
of key proposals
from this evaluation
and
looking
forward

Selection of project manager

Investment in selecting a project manager at the appropriate level that has listening and nurturing skills as well as an understanding of the artform(s) involved and a wide network of professional contacts

Selection of host organisations

Priority to host organisations that have a commitment to facilitate learning and development for the fellow as well as a commitment to learning and developing themselves

Transparency

A clearly defined set of goals for the fellowship programme, for the benefit of both fellows and host organisations

Investment – financial and time

Investment at the appropriate level to provide ongoing support for both the fellow and the host organisation, before, throughout, and beyond the fellowship

Investment – trust

A commitment to establishing trust and respect between fellow, host organisation and management organisation

Celebration

A commitment to success and championing the fellowship programme to promote a wider understanding of its aims and increase confidence levels of fellows

Fifth Day

One day in every week clear for 'clean time' when the fellow is not working for the host organisation but has time for networking, professional development and other fellowship-related activities.

Living Exit Strategy

Keeping an awareness of the wider picture throughout the fellowship, providing perspective and ambition for both host organisation and fellow

Quotes,



credits



and further

information



This evaluation is based on a series of questions we asked ourselves on completion of the three fellowships. Below are some of the questions and answers.

What attracted you to the opportunity of taking a fellowship?

Professional development, including exit strategy

An opportunity to work in a more senior role but within a 'training' capacity

The opportunity to work within a team on the strategic development of an organisation

A step up the ladder

The opportunity to train and focus on CPD whilst having the security of earning a salary

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What have you gained from the opportunity?

Some direction in my career and life

Contact with two new people that I would not have met (the other fellows)

Professional contacts I would not have made outside of the fellowship

A focus on training and professional development, which I hope I will carry with me throughout my career

The opportunity to go on courses, go to conferences and work shadow - things which would have been impossible to do in an ordinary job

What do you feel you've lost and why?

Confidence around delivering against goals, because of the unstructured nature of the fellowship

A clear sense of my professional skills - in some ways the fellowship and the role in the host organisation are always somewhat at odds and it is hard to see both simultaneously

Stability - it has been hard to root down both in terms of the organisation and also in terms of where I moved to live for the fellowship as I knew it was for a limited period

I am still not sure how I feel about coming out the other side of the fellowship and how having been a fellow will be perceived by future employers

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What would you advise any potential fellows to consider?

Make sure that the training aspect of the fellowship is clear and that there is a structure in place before you start

Speak to past fellows to get a feel of what the fellowship programme is about

Make sure an exit strategy is already in place

Try to be very clear about what you want from a fellowship

Find out who is managing the fellowship- do some research on them and talk to past participants or people who have dealt with this organisation before

Ask yourself:

Why are you choosing a fellowship rather than a job?

What do you hope to get from the experience?

How will the fellowship help you to progress in your career in a way that a job would not?

Thank you for reading our evaluation.



Source material: Saj Fareed, Tracey Low, Rajni Shah
Editing and illustrations: Rajni Shah
Guidance and advice: Janet Summerton

Host organisations: Chichester Festival Theatre, Fabrica, Farnham Maltings
Funder: Arts Council England, South East
Project Manager: Showhow

Further information

Arts Council England, South East fellowships

To find out more about this fellowship programme and future plans in the South East contact:

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Development Officer - Cultural Diversity
Arts Council England, South East
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An Invitation to Tea: joint conference

To read about An Invitation to Tea, including points to take forward and to order a dvd of the conference, please visit:

www.arts council.org.uk/an invitation to tea

Showhow

Showhow is an arts development company. It supports and showcases emerging talent, builds professional practice and workforce skills, and provides solutions to development issues affecting the arts and cultural sector. For more information, visit:

www.showhow.org.uk

Host organisations

Fabrica

Fabrica is an art gallery in the heart of Brighton town centre, committed to promoting understanding of contemporary visual art and craft.

info@fabrica.org.uk
www.fabrica.org.uk

Chichester Festival Theatre



Chichester Festival Theatre is one of the UK's flagship theatres with an international reputation for creating magical live performances.

admin@cft.org.uk
www.cft.org.uk

Farnham Maltings

Farnham Maltings is a creative centre which works with the region's artists to enrich the cultural life of the villages and market towns of South East England.

info@farnhammaltings.com
www.farnhammaltings.com

Fellows

Saj Fareed continues to work for Fabrica and other arts organisations in the Brighton area on a freelance basis, and is also spending more time engaged in her own artistic practice.

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Tracey Low has been employed by Chichester Festival Theatre as Associate Producer for the duration of the 2006 festival.

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Rajni Shah is working for the Live Art Development Agency and Chisenhale Dance Space in London, and as a freelance performance artist and producer.

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