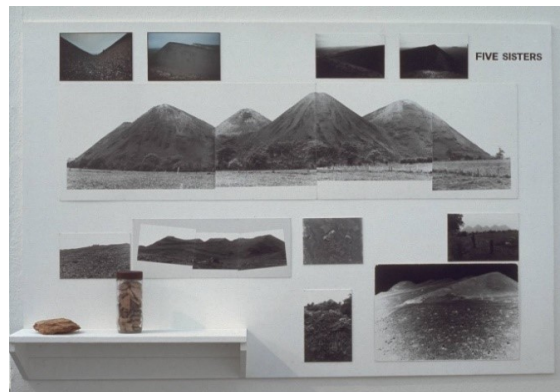


Glenn Davidson - Artstation

The serious work that artists do in the social sphere means that the gallery and curatorial fraternity, the old publicly funded institutions are dissolving; whilst desperately in some cases, looking predatorially at the new socially engaged practices. However, as artist work further afield they remain part of the wider socio-political system. Anthony Schrag describes different sorts of artists 'working-with-people', in institutions, community and around politics, defining the new regions of engagement for the artist, beyond the gallery. Immersion of artists in community contexts, I believe, strengthens art work as it acclimatises the artist empirically and widens and involves new audiences and relationships, beyond the narrow and divisive social divides of the gallery. Early attempts at work in communities such as Bill and Wendy Harp's Blackie Project (1960-80s), helped socially regenerate an area of Liverpool. John Latham and Barbara Stevini's - APG - Artist Placement Group (APG) created the first artist-in-residence (A.I.R) in organisations as a challenge to organisational decision-making and culture.



DERELICT LAND ART: FIVE SISTERS 1976 BY JOHN LATHAM 1921- 2006

APG works 'at the margins' served to critique common tropes of art production. Latham's bold and conceptually innovative work, *Five Sisters*, 1976 was produced during his AIR in the Scottish Development Office. APG residencies invested the notion of an artist as 'Incidental Person' and the residency as an 'Open Brief'. Both ideas today pose challenges for commissioners, curators and artists alike especially around the sticky question of how to assess the quality and value of work arising out of social art-making.

Through my own practice as Artstation, I tend to pursue a course of novelty and variety, and not wanting to be pigeonholed as a producer of certain things. Quality appears to arise beyond the sensoria of social practices and their memoria within our minds, in an expression of our interdependence with the materiality of the world all around and its fragile and limited resources.

In appreciation of the world as *a work of art*, real freedoms and limits are found; the revelation is of nature's ultimate regulation upon us. Bounded dreams of *social equality* and self-determination should not obscure from us, nature's timeless flow. But our planet's binding regulation remains largely opaque to our political classes. And yet there is no

escaping this regulation, not for us, not those people over there, not those others we don't ever speak to... Addressing these social fractures and political indifference - Art is loving negotiation, *by any other name*.

**From Romeo and Juliet by Shakespeare:**

...

'Tis but thy name that is my enemy;  
Thou art thyself, though not a Montague.  
What's Montague? It is nor hand, nor foot,  
Nor arm, nor face, nor any other part  
Belonging to a man. O, be some other name!  
What's in a name? That which we call a rose  
By any other word would smell as sweet;  
So Romeo would, were he not Romeo call'd,  
Retain that dear perfection which he owes  
Without that title. Romeo, doff thy name,  
And for that name which is no part of thee  
Take all myself.

Thanks to Chris Coppock for comments.