

Open Design & Manufacturing Project at Tate Exchange 2019

**Open Design & Manufacturing
OD&M in collaboration
with Digital Maker Collective
at Tate Exchange 2019**

A case study report about the EU Open Design and Manufacturing (OD&M) project at Tate Exchange, in association with the University of the Arts London (UAL) Digital Maker Collective (DMC) and Beta Society.

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Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



**D/G/TAL
MAKER
COLLECTIVE**



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Introduction



Since September 2018 the Digital Maker Collective (DMC), a group of University of the Arts London (UAL) staff, students, alumni, have been developing a project titled 'Beta Society'. The project aimed to establish an open and collaborative community to raise awareness and support greater diversity and equality of opportunity in technology, education and the arts.

Beta Society is a collaboration between the DMC and community/industry partners (see below) that supports projects exploring the impacts of technology on society. Working across public, private and industry sectors, it champions diversity and equality of opportunity in the technology industries, education and the arts.

This case study highlights the contribution of the Open Design and Manufacturing Project to the development of Beta Society and the launch event at the Tate Exchange (5-10 March 2019). Beta Society has been developed in collaboration with the following partners:



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Image: **Chris Follows**

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OD&M project collaborators

- UAL Digital Maker Collective, staff, students and alumni, University of the Arts (UAL)
- MA Industrial Design, Central Saint Martins
- Open Design and Manufacturing (OD&M) Project, EU funded knowledge alliance

Social community organisations

- **Child Rights International Network (CRIN)** A creative think tank that supports dynamic perspectives on human rights, specifically focussed on child rights and environmental impact.
- **Lionheart in the Community** A social organisation based in Loughborough Junction that empowers local communities through sport, apprenticeships and International Youth Exchange.
- **Black Thrive** A partnership for black well being, addressing systemic issues which contribute to poor mental health outcomes for people from black communities.

Industry collaborator

- **Happy Finish** An innovative creative production studio specialising in retouch, CGI, XR, AI, Motion VFX and animation.

Tate Exchange is an experimental space for collaboration and discovery through art. Located in the Tate Modern, London. The DMC is a founding associate of Tate Exchange.

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Image: **Tate Staff**

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Aims and Objectives

The focus of the week's activity was collaborative and based on a process of exploration. As such, specific expectations and intended outcomes of the event were undefined prior to the event.

Beta Society event partners including OD&M and Digital Maker Collective all broadly shared the same aims for the Tate Exchange event:

- Engage the public in open debate and activities which explore impacts of technology on society
- Build networks and partnerships through collaborative activity.
- Gain better understanding and perspectives of socially engaged practice
- Interrogate barriers to educational access and develop steps towards equality of opportunity
- Explore practices of open design and citizen centered innovation in response to societal challenges.
- Create and test spaces and processes for initiating open discussion, debate and exploration of ideas.
- Relate ideas and themes explored to [each partner or participant's] research endeavours.
- Establish an open, creative and socially engaged community - consisting of students, education and technology sectors, social think tanks and the public - for further collaboration and action.

OD&M & UAL specific aims and objectives:

- Explore how citizen-centered innovation and open-access to education can provide solutions to societal challenges.
- Dissolve divisions and structures of formal University curriculum.
- Explore new and meaningful avenues for knowledge exchange and creative accreditation.
- Embed and disseminate the OD&M project at UAL and externally.
- Test participatory workshop models developed in other publics.

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What we came to do : Explore Open Design through citizen-centered innovation

Between 5-10 March, the UAL Digital Maker Collective, OD&M project affiliates, industry and community partners were in residence at the Tate Exchange for the launch of Beta Society.

The event was structured around participatory workshops, round-table discussions and debates on the following themes:

- Citizen-centered innovation
- Socially engaged practice
- Community perspectives and community/organisation led provocations
- Open design and open practice
- Building a sustainable open education infrastructure
- Equality of opportunities

The intention was to develop a new network of organisations, academia, industry and public to explore and reimagine a speculative society of equal opportunities. The 'Beta Society' network is an evolving concept and the event at Tate was the beginning of the journey.

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Image: **Chris Follows**

OD&M at the Beta Society Event

Each day saw participatory and collaborative making activities and workshops in the 'Action' space paralleled by a series of programmed speakers, presentations and debates in the 'Debate' space.

The week was host to:

- 45 participatory workshops
- 35 speakers
- 2437 Public Visitor

These activities were structured around the daily themes of:

- Day 1: Introduction for event partners and the public
- Day 2: Beta Utopia - Child Rights Led - Theme
- Day 3: Common Language - Community Led - Theme
- Day 4: Gender Diversity in Creative Technology (International Women's Day)
- Day 5 and 6: Beta Jam - General exploration of open/ social practice and next steps

See full programme link [ACTION](#) and [DEBATE](#) and Beta Society event info on Tate website.

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Image: **Dan Weill Photography**

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OD&M in the Action Space

Six students from UAL Central Saint Martins CSM MA Industrial Design who were engaged with OD&M related projects were invited to participate in the Beta Society event, all of whom are pursuing public-facing and socially engaged personal research projects. Their research projects shared thematic crossovers and interests with other Beta Society event partners:

- Diversifying access to education and the arts through knowledge exchange and community engagement.
- Challenging traditional learning models through co-learning, self-learning and learning through doing.
- Open and participatory design methods and processes.
- Community integration through design
- Citizen-centered innovation
- Design for a speculative future society

The OD&M students each had participatory workshops and activities, previously developed in other publics, for which they were seeking public interaction and feedback. A small number of these workshops could be applied to the daily theme of the Beta Society event and the publics of the Tate Exchange used as a direct 'test case' for personal research.

Since the event itself was produced in the spirit of open collaboration and co-design with the other event partners and publics. All the Beta Society partners were encouraged to collaborate across agendas and interests. Cross-collaboration happened throughout the week, with all the different Beta Society organisations, groups and event agendas.

CSM OD&M students, DMC members and the event partners produced a number of successful new iterations of existing workshops through combining existing processes and co-developing new collaborative workshops to engage the public. For example CSM OD&M students 5 'ways' workshop (problem solving) was combined with the DMC & LITC 'Emoji' workshop (collaborative storymaking). The CSM OD&M students also adapted their open design workshops to fit the Beta Society event themes of each day, e.g during the Child Rights themed day the students responded by creating a new 'We Design it for Kids' workshop in collaboration with fellow event partner, Child Rights International Network 'CRIN' team.

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Image: **Dan Weill Photography**



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OD&M in the Debate Space

Within the 'debate' space a number of talks contextualised the OD&M paradigm, exploring sustainable models of open education and challenging the diversity and accessibility of creative programmes. Specific to the OD&M project were introductory and evaluative talks about the Charlton Street Market project (CSM MAID), which focused on the sustainability and infrastructural dependencies surrounding institutional/public collaborations as well as the nature of public-student collaboration and community involvement.

The public were introduced to the OD&M card framework via a participatory workshop. The audience were encouraged to articulate a personal learning experience with a specific card from the learning framework.

OD&M talks and presentations within the 'debate' space:

- **Open Design and Manufacturing: Reflecting on the Charlton Street project and its trajectory into self-directed research within a social design practice.** CSM MA Industrial Design students
- **What if design education was open? OD&M open design and citizen centered innovation.** Matt Malpass and Adam Thorpe
- **Reflecting and recognising experience-based learning: Open Design and Manufacturing workshop.** Matt Malpass

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Image: **Chris Follows**



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What we learned

Audience responses/ public feedback

The OD&M talks in the 'debate' space raised the following responses from members of the public:

- **Openness versus attainment**

How do you balance openness and accessibility with levels of attainment, varying ability/skills and varying time commitments? How useful is standardising this attainment through academic credits from the University?

- **Varying motivations and agendas**

Non-university and university based participants may have different expectations, motivations and aims for pursuing the project.

- **Common language**

How do you bridge academic and industry specific language with communities/public? Is it relevant to all types of experience-based learning?

- **Longevity and sustainability**

How do you facilitate or support the continuation of relationships, infrastructural dependencies and assessment framework after the OD&M project ends?

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Image: **Dan Weil Photography**



Other learnings/challenges

- The expectation for individual research can be conflicted by commitment to the collective and collaborative outcome.
- Activity in pursuit of collaboration was sometimes conflicted by the necessity to provide a public-facing activity.
- Ethics and consent issues should be constantly questioned and reviewed throughout any collaboration.
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Student Experience

The students benefited from working closely with partners, and from working within the context of the week's themes and provocations. The students were able to work with an outward-looking and collaborative approach, drawing out themes and ideas that were specifically relevant to their personal research:

"Our work was less insular - maybe a couple of us overlap in our projects and maybe we would have done something but we definitely wouldn't have all been working together." (Tyler Gindraux, CSM MAID student)

"We went in with a certain amount of expectation... we adapted to the situation...we also got new things out of it that we would never had anticipated [like] working so closely with provocations and partners in something that was external from our projects...and working together." (Elliot Quinn, CSM MAID student)

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Image: **Chris Follows**



Beta Society Partner Impacts

The following impacts were reported by Beta Society event partners at the Tate Exchange evaluation session:

- Recontextualisation of day-to-day working practices through an interdisciplinary lens (reported by Black Thrive, CRIN and LITC)
- Bridge the gap between educational access to technology and broader participation from underprivileged communities (LITC)
- Shine a light on the existing digital bias and the lack of BME individuals employed in the tech industry/targeted as general audience through tech campaigns, products and services (LITC)
- Collaborative initiative: supportive and proactive endeavour to overcome challenges and achieve common goals of all organisations (LITC)
- Representation of diverse people who come from diverse backgrounds did sometimes feel lacking, however I feel this is something that happens in many spheres of society and it was refreshing to work with people who were aiming to do something about it. (Black Thrive)
- I think charities and organisations like Black Thrive or CRIN can work with DMC to bridge the gap between elements of fluidity in methodology that can sometimes be found creative industry and the rigidity of methodology that is often found in the charity sector (e.g. pressure to respond to funders to ensure that all work is directly connected to their objectives meant for the first two meetings, I was unable to see the connection to my work but with time and by working together, we were able to see some commonalities and ways in which our work would be adding value to each other) (Black Thrive)
- Positive shift in attitude, within their organisations, to working with artists and designers on projects (Black Thrive and CRIN).
- Engagement and interest in the Tate Exchange project from social campaigning sector (CRIN).
- Planned inclusion of creative outputs in future projects, including a project at the United Nations (CRIN).
- The Beta Society and OD&M work was closely aligned and informed wider UAL Teaching and Learning Funded 'Socially Engaged Digital Practice in the Curriculum' project and other conversations at course level regarding technology and social diversity.

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Image: **Chris Follows**

Beta Society

Podcasts



Overview of the Open Design and Manufacturing OD&M project
Matt Malpass

Podcast



14 What if design education was open?
Notes by Adam Thorpe

Podcast

Outputs

- **CRIN X MAID students at the Venice Biennale**
Following the Tate Exchange event, students from MA Industrial Design collaborated with CRIN to make a sculpture for the Human Rights pavilion at the 2019 Venice Biennale.
- **UAL knowledge exchange**
The event facilitated the continued collaboration, connection and interdisciplinary exchange of ideas amongst students across UAL courses and colleges: *"I was following the Digital Maker Collective [on twitter] and now I interact with them a lot and they've been giving me references for what I'm working on."* (Tyler Gindraux, CSM MAID)
- **Podcasts**
Event podcasts and video documentation from the Beta Society <http://betasociety.org/podcasts.html>
- **What Next?**
The OD&M project legacy will continue to inform the future development of Beta Society

Event Planning/Context

Between September 2018 and March 2019 the Digital Maker Collective (DMC), met with the various 'Beta Society' partners to help develop and plan the Tate Exchange event. <http://betasociety.org/info.html>

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OD&M related workshops pre-Tate Exchange

The following workshops were hosted at the Camberwell Playground in the run up to the Tate Exchange event, directed towards participants of the Tate Exchange or the wider cohort of the DMC or MA Industrial Design students:

- **Re-Designing Products for a Circular Economy.** OD&M workshop held at Camberwell Playground, by Nat Hunter, co-founder of The Great Recovery. Participants of this workshop deconstructed discarded products to their component parts and materials in order to identify the materials used, supply chains and waste/recycling process. Participants were encouraged to redesign the products for a circular economy; redesigning for fix and repair, for service design, for reuse in manufacture and for material recovery.
- **Introduction to Green Lab.** OD&M workshop held at Green Lab, Ande Gregson, founder Green Lab. This talk contextualised Green Lab within Industry 4.0 - the fourth industrial revolution, defined as a new level of organisation and control over the entire value chain life cycle of products. (Saurabh Vaidya et al, 2018). Green Lab is an open innovation lab for individuals and organisations to design sustainable solutions to complex urban food, water and waste challenges.
- **Equal Opportunity, Social Mobility, Diversity, Social Engagement and Youth Work.** Beta Society workshop held at Camberwell Playground by Natalie Bell, SE1 community activist. This workshop provided an introduction to social engagement and youth work, exploring ideas, methods and approaches for supporting co-production and positive community engagement.

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Image: Chris Follows

OD&M Platform

odmplatform.eu

Beta Society

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