

I was the Shadow Curator Intern at Deveron Arts for the period of April to September 2011. The Shadow Curator Intern's role is to assist the Director in curatorial, critical and administrative duties within Deveron Arts (DA). I was attracted to the position by the 'Town Is The Venue' methodology and how the organisation uses the town, its people, its location and social concerns as stimuli for its programme. I was also intrigued by the description of the role of shadow curator intern as advertised in the job application, thus to reflect the Shadow Curator who acts as a critical commentator in the workings of the organisation, this level of critical engagement in the curatorial process is not normally found within residency organisations and one in which I was enthusiastic to engage within.

My main responsibilities within the post were to oversee the upkeep of the Town Collection, communicate the activities of the organisation online, assist the artists in the creation and development of their projects and assist the Director and Project Manager in day to day administrative tasks. Within the first month of my appointment I wrote a report suggesting ways to improve the Town Collection as well as the need for clarification of its role within the organisation. Whilst compiling the report I noticed that greater emphasis should be placed upon the hosts for allowing DA to exhibit their artworks within their property. Alongside the arts visitor, Norma D. Hunter, I devised a small project entitled 'Town Collection Dinners' this project aimed to foster stronger links between Deveron Arts, the current artist and the members of the community that host their Town Collection. In my view this project had varying degrees of success it was difficult to entice the hosts to attend the dinners however the people who did, reported that they enjoyed the experience and thereafter took a keener interest in the projects and DA. I also initiated a summer school with Norma and local artist Sarah Rumis. The summer school aimed to engage children and their families with the diversity and richness of culture within the Town Collection. We used a familiar concept of a summer school to expose the children to a socially engaged art practise drawing from past artists and their projects for inspiration.

I also devised and implemented a strategy for social media which was not in place prior to my arrival. This has increased DA's presence ten fold on these platforms contributing to a growing reputation as an innovative organisation within the art world both at home and abroad.

The six months I was with Deveron Arts was a very busy period within the organisation. As well as having the core artists Anthony Schrag and Ross Sinclair, DA also welcomed BME writer fellow Amy Fung, artists Roman Signer, Priya Ravish Mehra, Baudouin Mouanda, Rocca Gutteridge and Catrin Jeans and initiated their pilot scheme Arts Visitor with local artist Norma D. Hunter.

Anthony Schrag's project explored the shifting dynamic of the 'family unit'. During his residency he embarked on a series of performed researches in which I helped document and create awareness of, through creation of marketing material. I also coordinated the documentation of his final event and researched speakers for his panel discussion. Anthony did not require a lot of assistance during his residency as he had already worked with Deveron Arts and was a very self initiating artist.

Ross Sinclair was the artist in residence from July to September. I had a much more hands on approach to his project as I was his main point of contact during the month of September. Ross's project explored the history of the Gordon family and how it related to modern day Huntly. I coordinated a programme of events which supported and fed into Ross's research. This included 'A Gordon For Me' lunch, a film screening of archive footage and 'Tunes of Glory', a talk at the school and an intervention at the local farming festival. I also assisted Ross in documentation of his interventions throughout his residency and documented his final tour around the town.

Roman Signer visited DA for a week in September; during this time he installed and presented a new work entitled 'Transmission from the River'. I was the main facilitator in his project, this was due to my background in video art. I provided technical assistance as well as coordinated the set up of the Empty Shop for the presentation of his new work and artist talk.

I also made a short promotional film for Deveron Arts which outlines DA's objectives and gives the viewer a sense of what it is like to live and work for Deveron Arts; as I write this report the video is in the finishing stages and will soon be launched along with the new website.

I enjoyed my experience very much at DA however my time was not without difficulties. The nature of the organisation and location within a rural environment meant that during your time in Huntly you become immersed within the workings of the organisation constantly hosting or being hospitable which can be extremely exhausting. Artists and interns are often housed in the same accommodation, this can develop

into a great relationship between the artist and the intern however the downside is that the intern is always at the beck and call of the artist thus never truly relaxing from their post. In saying that what I found most enjoyable was meeting a diversity of people and the many projects I worked upon. I think the two interns could work closer together and day to day administrative tasks could be shared more equally between the two posts. I found that both the project interns I worked alongside felt that they often did not have much responsibility whereas a great deal of responsibility was placed upon my role. The Shadow Curator Intern did not work alongside the Shadow Curator in which I thought I initially would, thus it was difficult to gauge what capacity the Shadow Curator had in forming the organisation's curatorial strategy during the projects. Both permanent members of staff went on annual leave at the same time, leaving myself solely responsible for the organisation in the lead up to its busiest period of programming. This was ill-advised and although the two weeks passed without a hitch it did put an incredible amount of pressure and responsibility upon an intern.

The experience of the Shadow Curator Intern position has left me with many skills which I will take on to future projects. It has confirmed my enthusiasm to work within the art sector as a curator and has given me impetus to initiate projects that have been on the back burner. Deveron Arts is an intriguing organisation which I hope to continue my relationship with for many years to come.

Gayle Meikle