

- Intern Report -

Shadow Curator Intern, April to May 2013

by Annika Christin Gödde

From the beginning of April until the end of May 2013 I was part of the Deveron Arts' team, as a shadow curator intern. During my time in Huntly I was involved in and responsible for the preparation and organisation of different events and projects (Slow Marathon, Fernweh etc.), the newsletter (summer edition 2013), administrative work (projects/artists archive, library), the Town Collection and the support of the artists Celia and Yunion from Havana, Cuba.

When I applied for the internship, I had some previous experience based on internships in different other arts organisations (e.g. music theatre, European cultural institute, artist residence) in different countries (Germany, Luxembourg, USA). Nevertheless, it was clear to me that Deveron Arts with its focus on socially engaged arts and its residency programme with artists from all over the world would be a totally new experience. I never worked in an institution with a mainly rural audience and had only small insights into the field of socially engaged arts. Regarding the position as a shadow curator intern, I was very happy that the emphasis of my work would lie more on the programming, planning and development of events and projects than on tasks regarding press and communications (as in former internships). I was very much looking forward to learn more about the concept of the shadow curator.

Special Tasks:

Slow Marathon

Since I arrived only two weeks before the Slow Marathon took place, the event was already very much planned through. Nevertheless, I was involved in some, more creatively orientated preparations - amongst others, the creation of medals for the slowest participants, of special John Muir quotes to be handed out to the walkers and of motivating banners with John Muir quotes to be installed along the route of the Slow Marathon. As a solution for water-repellent markings of the route, flags were made out of shower curtains (of eye-catching colour).

On the day of the Slow Marathon I didn't take part as a participant, but instead helped to take care of the arriving participants in the garden and the office of Deveron Arts, e.g. welcoming them, handing out certificates and being prepared to solve occurring problems all over the day. The marathon was framed by two other events, a talk by Jim Crumley on Friday evening and a discussion on Sunday morning about John Muir and national parks.

Following up the event, I wrote the archive sheet for the archive folder of the Slow Marathon 2013, in collaboration with project manager Diane, as well as a review of the events for the summer-newsletter.

Fernweh-Project

The Slow Marathon was followed by the travelling curator project called "Fernweh". For the whole project and especially for its last day (4 May), taking place in Huntly, several arrangements needed to be set up and files/documents for the participants needed to be written ("Fernweh proposal") and put together for the participants' folder. Amongst other things, my emphasis lay on the "special branding" of the day and on the arrangements, which needed to be made with the hosts of different Town Collection pieces in preparation for a "food walk" through the Town Collection.

The focus of the special branding lay on travelling and hospitality and involved maps, suitcases and trains. Every participant got a luggage tag with his name and a hand-made folder, covered with maps. In addition, puzzle pieces indicating the words "Hospitality + Visiting" were placed on the tables of the first venue, the Destiny café. The empty shop as the place of the final symposium was decorated with suitcases (labelled with "Fernweh" and "Heimweh"), arrows above the door alluding to the town centre ("fern") and the train station ("heim"), a welcome-sign at the door, a garland displaying the general topic of the day ("Hospitality + Visiting") and pictures relating to trains (Orient-Express, Flying Scotsman etc.) put in old-looking frames were hung up at the wall. The overall aim was, on the one hand, to convey and trigger a feeling of Fernweh to the participants and, on the other hand, to make them feel very welcome in Huntly.

Regarding the food walk through the Town Collection I discussed arrangements for the day with all hosts and provided them with a letter, summarising all details for the Saturday event.

On the first day of the event I had the opportunity to attend the first meeting of the group of curators in Huntly, in the Deveron Arts Greenhouse, and get a first impression of the participating curators and their visions of the project.

On the final day I was mainly in charge of the coordination of the activities (e.g. talks, the food walk) and - partly - taking care of the participants with tea, coffee, cake. During the day I tried to convince as many people as possible to leave a message on a specially created page of our guestbook.

Following up the event I wrote the archive sheet for the event and a review for the summer-newsletter.

Town Collection

During my time in Huntly I learned a lot about the projects and the artists whose pieces are part of the Town Collection. On several occasions I did Town Collection tours, for example for Pauline Burman and Kimberly Bradley previous to the

Fernweh-project or for a young woman from Finland who is writing her thesis about the implementation of a similar project in a town in Finland.

In addition, I was in charge of Nancy Mteki's Town Collection piece. One of her photographs was produced on aluminium and then installed at the Kiddie Winkles Nursery on Gordon Street. Instead of a publication it was decided to produce a collection of greeting cards (to congratulate someone on the birth of a baby) with some her pictures. Another idea – the production of matching wrapping paper – was not convincing enough.

Newsletter edition, summer 2013

At the end of my time at Deveron Arts I got in charge of the summer-newsletter - collecting information, writing articles and organising coming events (e.g. Friday lunches). In preparation I did research relating to several projects (e.g. past works of Celia – Yunior, works of the Caravan Gallery) and wrote several articles reflecting on past projects (Slow Marathon, Fernweh) and on coming projects (Caravan Gallery, Stuart McAdam's project). Regarding the project "facelooop" I did an interview with Celia and Yunior focusing on their project idea, development, involvement and obstacles during its realisation.

General Tasks:

Administrative insight

Beside the organisation and coordination of events (Slow Marathon, Fernweh, artist talks etc.), I got an insight into the administrative sight of the work at Deveron Arts - writing archive sheets, preparing archive folders (putting information together, collecting information, pictures, newspaper articles), do the labelling (Nancy Mteki, Slow Marathon, Fernweh, Celia-Yunior) and was responsible for the library (adding new books, giving out books). It was great to learn more about the development of a vision document (of the Walking Institute) and a business plan as well as the work of the board by attending the board meeting and learning more about its composition (female, male, young, old, artists, non-artists...), conflicting topics inside the board, their opinion on financial issues and the future heading of Deveron Arts and its walking institute. In addition, I had the opportunity to attend a meeting at the Scottish Sculpture Workshop in Lumsden in preparation of the Skills Biennale 2014 and got small insight into funding proposals.

Gardening

One smaller intern task was the gardening. After a long time of cold temperatures the garden was finally prepared for the summer. Collectively the beds were prepared and weeds removed. I tidied up the greenhouse, sowed seeds for salad, beans and sunflowers and created signs indicating the different types of plants.

Artists' support

During my time in Huntly Celia and Yunior, artists from Havana/Cuba, were the artists in residence. Supporting them was also a small part of my internship. I accompanied them to their school project and took care of their home, Old Road.

Even though I only spent two months in Huntly, I had the opportunity to get an insight into different fields of work of Deveron Arts (projects, events, research). I was in charge of tasks regarding programming, organisation and administration and had the chance to propose ideas, develop parts of the programme (e.g. conception of Friday lunch talks) and see the preparation and follow-up of events. Over the time it was great to get more and more responsibility. I enjoyed the reflecting on and the critical questioning of diverse tasks very much and I always felt encouraged to act on my own initiative. Events, projects and meetings gave me the opportunity to meet and get to know several, different artists, curators and journalists.

With regard to the projects and events (e.g. Slow Marathon, Fernweh) I had the chance to bring in different creative ideas for their outlook and the design. The aim was to make the events and projects special and more enjoyable - sometimes only through a little something or a present, sometimes through their whole appearance. I enjoyed both, the planning and development of the special branding and the implementation of these plans.

All in all, it was a challenging and exciting time at Deveron Arts during which I learned a lot! Thank you so much!!

Anniika Christina Jödde

Botrop, 3 June 2013