

Deveron Arts | Shadow Curator Intern Report

I was Shadow Curator Intern at Deveron Arts from April to the October 2010. In this period of 6 months I worked on a number of varied projects that assisted in the development of Deveron Arts as an organisation and on the artist in residence programme.

My initial attraction to Deveron Arts stemmed from my interest in the social and the possibility of working within a defined and established community under the 'town is the venue' methodology. My own background as an artist and curator involved looking into the methods and understanding of the phrases participatory, collaborative, relational and social in terms of art and curatorial practice and theory. I have worked and continue to work in an educational capacity and organised an online research project on engagement for my final project for my MA Curating course at Sunderland University.

I was also attracted and intrigued by the Shadow Curator methodology of which I had not come across before. I found the idea of working in the context of an assistant curator but with the added responsibility of critiquing the curator interesting and provocative. Something that maybe is not always possible in the traditional role and relationship of assistant curator/ curatorial assistant to the curator.

At Deveron Arts I worked on a number of projects, developed and wrote tender bids and applications, developed the catalogues of two projects, assisted in the editing and critiquing of written literature for publication, wrote funding applications as well as other ad hoc duties such as proof reading, researching information for various activities.

The projects I mainly worked upon were the Stéfanie Bourne residency 'Red Herring' and the re-hanging and development of the Town Collection. Red Herring was a project based on food mileage under Deveron Arts theme environment. Stéfanie's aim was to learn about the subject matter (which she admitted she had little knowledge) and develop a project that questions the idea of food mileage. My role within the project was to act as a shadow curator intern towards Claudia Zeiske, director of Deveron Arts as well as assist Stéfanie in the running of her project through her blog, administratively and curatorially.

I organised the development and re-hanging of the Town Collection, including working on the design of the map and directory, designing the text for the boxes and write some new editions for recent additions to the collection, collating information for each piece and the photographs, hanging each text box and re-hanging any works that may be damaged.

Other roles I was involved include the writing of the tender for the re-design of Deveron Arts website and the interviewing of candidates, the writing of the application for the BME Fellowship, assisting in the design of two catalogues for the David Sherry and Gemuce publications, the writing of funding applications and the proof reading and critiquing of the text for the Artocracy draft publication.

Through these various roles and opportunities I feel I developed a thorough understanding of the work of Deveron Arts and the strategies and methodologies they have developed. This, as a result, will feed into my PhD proposal and ideas on social inclusion through the digital economy that I started in October 2010 at Culture Lab, Newcastle University. As large aspect of research for my PhD I hope to develop a strategy similar to the 'town is the venue' to understand and develop theories and methods for working in my local community.

Ben Jones
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