

I worked alongside the Deveron Arts team from October 2010 to April 2011 and during the 6 months, I coordinated education and outreach programming, curatorial programming, Library and Archives as well as assisting the artists in residence.

My first opportunity to work with Deveron Arts was as Arts and Development Traineeship, and I was especially intrigued to the “town is the venue” leitmotif that guides all of Deveron Arts projects. As an artist and independent curator, I often begin with an object or the making of an object. In Huntly, I approached art from a distinct “place” and contextual reference of the town and people of the community. Having worked alongside Claudia and Anna, I was attracted to the Deveron Arts environment, in that open critique, discussion, innovation and initiative are encouraged.

In addition to the daily operations, such as managing web content, updating news and maintaining consistent contact with local media, I assisted in editing publications, conducting research for projects and developing marketing materials for projects. I wrote reports and archives for projects and

I worked with Maider Lopez to assist in the development of *How do you live this place?*, a community mapping project that addressed themes of subjectivity, place and our everyday interactions with the place we live and memories that live with us. Our starting points were 16<sup>th</sup> century cartography “choreographers” James and Robert Gordon, who together mapped and collected maps of Scotland. Their maps were highly subjective, and what interested Maider was the idea of using the footstep as a measurement, used in a bird’s eye view map of Edinburgh. My role was to assist Maider curatorially and administratively in developing her project and engaging the local community, through marketing, education and outreach. I programmed workshops, artist talks, lectures on early Scottish cartography, as well as the *Mapping Communities* symposium with artists Lucy Lippard, Chrissie Orr and David Harding. The final project engaged about 60 local people using colour-coded stones to map sites of memory.

I worked with Peter Liversidge, an artist who creates proposals. His project involved meeting members of the community in the studio space he refurbished as an improvised living room. He discussed their lives in Huntly, and issues they wished addressed, and I assisted by scheduling meetings, coordinating logistics and managing administration.

The final artist I worked with was Congo-Brazzaville-based photographer Baudouin Mouanda, whose project *SAPÉ/ ambient people’s elegance* explored youth dress culture. I researched and programmed learning activities, such as talks on West African history, artist talks, film screenings about Congolese *sapeur* dress codes and culture and worked closely with youths on creating street photography workshops. I assisted Baudouin in meeting youths and young people in the town, its pubs and social scenes and worked alongside Claire Briegel, the Project Intern and fluent French-speaker, to ensure we could be effective intermediaries between the community and Baudouin, whose first language is French. It was unfortunate that Baudouin had to return home sooner than planned, but

what struck me was how well and effectively the team pulled together to coordinate the final projects: the first, a redevelopment of Baudouin's studio into a youth space, and secondly a film screening, photo-shoot and photo-screening event.

I also initiated a re-organisation of the DA Socially Engaged Library and Archive, to increase efficiency and accessibility. I managed the Town Collection and the hanging of new works and created texts for new pieces. During the six month period, I immersed myself in the community, and thereby implemented curatorial and programming strategies for the town and its context. This training provided me with a better understanding of my own career goals, and the necessity of young curators to engage with their community, wherever they may find themselves. It enabled me to develop key analytical skills to critically approach each project and define the goals, priorities and strategies for programming and curating.

Stefanie Ford  
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