



Autumn eNewsletter 2013

Opening remarks...



Welcome to the Autumn 2013 Tees Valley Arts newsletter!

I'm going to begin, as I often do, with an excerpt from a poem, in this instance from 'Late Summer' by Jennifer Grotz (who is American, hence the spelling).

*Summer lingers, but it's about ending. It's about how things
redden and ripen and burst and come down. It's when*

*city workers cut down trees, demolishing
one limb at a time, spilling the crumbs
of twigs and leaves all over the tablecloth street.*

*Sunglasses! The man exclaims
while beside him blooms a large gray rose of pigeons
huddled round a dropped piece of bread.*

I'm writing this in early August, so definitely not into Autumn, and not even really late Summer, but we have had sunshine for quite a while, by British standards, so it feels lateish. Like many colleagues, I have had to work through quite a bit of the loveliness, so I'm not personally reddenning and ripening, and at the risk of appearing very superficial, I remain astonished at how my sizeable wardrobe does not seem to contain many suitable clothes for pleasant weather conditions – perhaps the last spell of good weather was simply too long ago.

Anyway, be that as it may, here at TVA we have been focussing on the future.

Our 'Moving On' project, working creatively with young people in the care of all 5 Tees Valley authorities is coming to an end; we had a grand celebration/ exhibition/ film show at Middlesbrough Myplace of two years' good work, with the Mayors of Darlington, Redcar and Cleveland, and Stockton all in attendance (thanks to them), and celebrated and applauded the young people who had taken part in Year 2, 25 of whom achieved Arts Award. Well done to them, and well done and thanks to all our Children's Services colleagues, all the Host Arts Workers and all the sessional artists who have helped to make the project such a positive success – painting, drawing, printing, film-making, model-making, photography, poetry, performance, dance, music, there's not much those young people haven't tried.

The J Paul Getty Jnr Charitable Trust, which has generously funded this project (with the in-kind support of children's services, of course) is closing down, and is no longer open to new applicants. We were given an in principle welcome to apply for further funding, for another year, which we have now done. We await a decision in October.

Risky Biz, our partnership with Barnardo's SECOS, to help and support young people accessing that service is also in its last cohort of delivery – Year 3 Cohort 2. That excellent project has been funded by Comic Relief, who are changing their guidelines for application. Jane Gray will shortly be meeting up with our current Comic Relief grants officer, to explore any future possibilities.

Opening remarks...



We have delivered another cohort of stART in Stockton, through a Synergy-managed tender opportunity, and again, its effectiveness in helping slightly dazed and confused young people find their feet and make better choices about their futures has been demonstrated. Tim Coyte will tell you more about that.

Our talented young people in Musicmix have been recording and performing, and thanks to the Musinc initiative, we have gained a community musician mentee, in the form of Fran Hammill, member of Stockton-based and now properly signed band, Cattle and Cane.

The play 'Alchemy', written by local star playwright Ishy Din, was performed by excellent young amateur actors at Middlesbrough Myplace and at Middlesbrough Town Hall. The play presented a sort of time slip exploring the area now, and the area when ironstone was first discovered – making an analogy with alchemy, and – as always with alchemy – the potential transformation of the 'seeker'. This project (the project itself being called 'Journeys') has been a very positive undertaking, and we hope to work with Ishy again. Thanks to Grants to the Arts for funding this.

Wider World, our project with newly arrived people, has completed Year 1 and will enter Year 2 with all sorts of plans, and all sorts of challenges. Maurice Dezou will tell you more about that.

TVA has been involved in two lots of report writing – Jane Gray will tell you about the 'Making a Mark' report elsewhere – but Maurice Dezou and I have researched and written a feasibility study for Stockton Catalyst, looking at the feasibility of community internet radio for the borough.

I have validated three schools for the national Artsmark programme – a kitemark for the quality of a school or other setting's provision of a creative curriculum, and as Artsmark Round 13 approached its closing date, six more applications came in, so plenty to be getting on with.

I recently attended the launch of the Association of North East Councils' Cultural Partnership at Durham Castle, where the keynote speaker was Lauren Laverne, who was great. I can see the sense in all 12 NE Councils working together to strengthen and enhance the cultural offer, but I do hope that it will amount to a bit more than tourism promotion – not to say that such promotion wouldn't be valuable, especially in the light of recent comments on the suitability of the NE for fracking sites, as it is so desolate and bleak....

So, Autumn is coming on, and we need to get busy putting our acorns into a store for the hard months ahead. Happy squirrelling!



Rowena Sommerville
Director, TVA






Education



The Arts Award Issue

I have been somewhat consumed by Arts Award over the past six months, and, as I raise my head for breath over the summer, I'm preparing for a busy Autumn/Winter with it too, but definitely in a good way. As you well know by now, we've completely embraced Arts Award and embedded it into many of our projects and it has added tremendous value to the work we do. Other cultural venues in the region benefit, as young people go on a visit as part of Arts Award; and our groups are generally young people who wouldn't visit those venues independently. It's a qualification which supports young people to take ownership of their own learning; to think creatively; to explore their own interests; to connect with artists and arts organisations and to develop leadership skills in the arts. And that's what we want isn't it, as arts & cultural organisations, schools, or youth groups – for our young people to be the artists and audiences of the future; to be active in the community; to have pride in their achievements and learning and to foster a cultural engagement?



Education



Arts Award Project News

Thirty Four young people from Risky Biz and Moving On achieved Bronze Arts Award this summer. I think that's an incredible achievement, particularly when you consider some of the challenges our young people face. They came to sessions; some week in, week out; some missing a few, but wanting to come; worked with artists; created their own work; visited arts venues in the region; researched their own arts hero and shared their newly-learned arts skills with someone else. The final cohort of Risky Biz will be starting in August (I can't believe how quickly three years has gone), so we look forward to more Arts Awards being achieved by the end of the year.

MusicMix participants are gearing up for their Arts Award moderation in September. They have had a fabulous time songwriting & composing with Maurice and Gabriel, visiting a professional studio to record their CD and performing live at The Sage Gateshead and WorldFest 2013. Look out for more news of MusicMix coming soon on youtube and twitter.

In other Arts Award news...

We're continuing our role as an Arts Award Training and Support Agency, so for those of you who are trained Arts Award Advisers, check out the FREE support surgery dates across the region or apply for a face-to-face support visit. It doesn't matter where you are in your AA journey; just starting to plan; already delivering; ready for moderation or not sure how you can fit Arts Award into your programmes – this support is for you. Go to www.artsaward.org.uk for more information and to book.

For those of you who haven't trained as Arts Award Advisers, there's training dates across the region. Arts Award is for anyone aged 5 – 25, and you don't need to be an artist to be an Adviser. Go to www.artsaward.org.uk for more information and to book.



Jane Gray
Education Officer





Wider World/Musicmix

Wider World/ Musicmix

I'm now at the end of my first year as Refugee Arts Worker on the Wider World project funded by the Northern Rock Foundation. It has been exciting, working on the ground with refugee artists, being part of their daily life, becoming part of their extended family, and it has also, of course, provided many challenges. They are interesting, wise, mature and reflective people, with great ambition, but also great frustration, as life is not easy for artists anyway, but the life of newly arrived artists is even harder, when you add in language and cultural change, lack of money and lack of access, and the fact that their artistic practice is rooted in cultural specificities, not easily translatable to their new situations.

When we made our original funding application, we included a modest programme of mentoring for some talented individuals, but we have discovered that, after much discussion, people did not welcome that. They felt that the notion of 'mentoring' was somehow diminishing for them, and felt like 'being done to', rather than 'doing for yourself'. We discussed this with NRF, and they told us that this was often the case, and that similar initiatives elsewhere had also not taken off.

We have now developed other ways of supporting these individuals, as part of which we are making a short film in which they express themselves – to be completed in the Autumn.

As music leader on the Musicmix project, funded by Youth Music Foundation, I have had the pleasure of working with four very talented young women, from very different backgrounds, whom we have been able to introduce to a professional studio, to work with a producer to test and stretch their abilities. The girls have really enjoyed the studio environment, and have conducted themselves like real pop divas! It has been marvellous to foster their development and to be able to support the awakening of their musical ambitions.



Wider World/ Musicmix

The refugee artists' film, and the clips of the girls singing, will soon be available on the TVA website, and on Youtube – watch out for details coming soon.

Besides those projects I have also been involved in preparing a feasibility study for Catalyst (voluntary sector development agency) in Stockton, on the potential for developing a community internet radio station – a matter very close to my heart.

Also, Musinc, the Youth Music funded Music Education Hub based in Middlesbrough Town Hall asked me, via TVA, to mentor an emerging community musician, to help him/ her learn how such activity works, particularly in the context of cultural diversity. Our chosen mentee is Fran Hammill, of Stockton band 'Cattle and Cane', and that has been enjoyable and interesting so far. Fran's band has been signed to a proper label, and our activities will have to fit in between a schedule of touring and performing – good stuff!



Maurice Dezou

Refugee Arts Worker and Filmmaker



Gabriel Mulangu, Musicmix trainee Music Leader



Youth & Community



stART

stART continues to raise the national profile of Tees Valley Arts through the Trinity College's continued use of the project as a case study on the Arts Award website, and through further use of images that I have taken and submitted. The project was featured on the front cover of the Arts Award Guide 2011 and now an image of a young participant on a visit to the Baltic (Centre for Contemporary Art – not the sea!) has been chosen for the front cover of the Arts Award Supporters brochure 2013.

Another stART cohort has reached its conclusion with (once again) all six young people completing the course achieving their Bronze Arts Award. I would like to say a big thank you to Shirley Wells for being an excellent and supportive (no pun intended) Project Support Worker and to Adrian Moule, Nicola Parkin, Vicky Holbrough and Kev Howard for delivering outstanding arts activities. I have delivered stART as an Arts Award Adviser since 2009 and during this time fifty six young people have been entered for a Bronze Arts Award and all have passed. I am pleased to have continued my 100% pass rate as an Arts Award Adviser.

A comment was made by an Arts Award Moderator recently before marking folders for several TVA projects: he said "If they are anything like Tim's then I know they'll be fantastic" I surmise that I must be a genius! Further praise from Arts Award Moderators:

"Top stuff! I enjoyed looking at these folders greatly. I was particularly interested in the range of work on display and was hugely impressed by the photography, which was of a very high standard. The fanzines are also very impressive. The folders had a very personal feel to them, and the thoughts and ideas of the young people featured heavily. This is a clear indication of how engaged they were: their ownership of the work shone through. Your marking is clear and accurate and the quality of this work was correctly credited in your remarks. Well done to all!"

Youth & Community



We know that stART has a proven record as a Personal Development Opportunity (PDO) for young people categorised as NEET (Not In Education, Employment or Training) and evaluation of the most recent cohort demonstrates this:

All six of the young people completing the course stated that they

- Are more motivated to actively pursue progressions, job search and volunteering opportunities
- Are more motivated to go on to college, training or work
- Feel more likely to secure work, college courses or training

This is what they said about the project:

"It's helped me with my weaknesses, building up my confidence with my writing."

"I was really bad with attendance before this course. Because it's enjoyable you want to come."

"It's given me a lot more confidence with people."

"It's given me experience; everything we've done through the course has boosted us up and gives you more chance of getting a job."

"Even if you're not interested in art it still develops your skills."

"We've come here and learnt new skills which we'll use with whatever we do next."

"Whatever job you do you need commitment and stART helps you to be more committed."

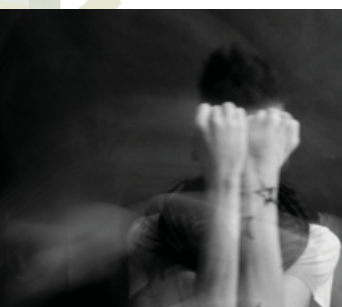
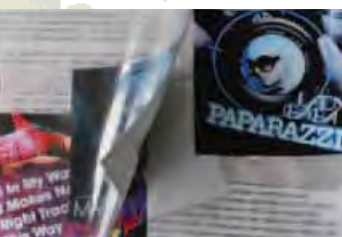
I have thoroughly enjoyed working with the team of artists and the support worker who helped to develop a positive group dynamic and created a very accepting, respectful, supportive and co-operative atmosphere. This was clearly appreciated by young people who stated:

"The course leaders are fun and easier to talk to than if you were in a class room with tutors. It's better because if something's up you can talk to the course leaders, we're not scared to ask questions or ask for help."

"I think when you come in on a morning, if you're tired and a bit angry it helps when people are happy and friendly when you come in."

There have been some great developments during this project several young people have enlisted as volunteers to work on SIRF (Stockton International Riverside Festival) with artist Shirley Wells. This opportunity developed during the project whilst Shirley was working as the Project Support Worker, thanks again to Shirley for adding value to the project not just with her friendly and approachable working manner but also for identifying and developing these opportunities for the young people on the project.

Other exciting developments are the inclusion of young people's work from stART in an exhibition by Adrian Moule at Gilkes Street Artists' Gallery, Middlesbrough. The exhibition explores themes around stigmergy through Adrian's observations of pigeons movements and other natural phenomena which made him think, "They have a plan, being drawn up, arranged, mapped, unfinished, indistinct, but being worked on." I feel that this statement could also describe the circumstances around the young people who took part in stART.....interesting!



Youth & Community



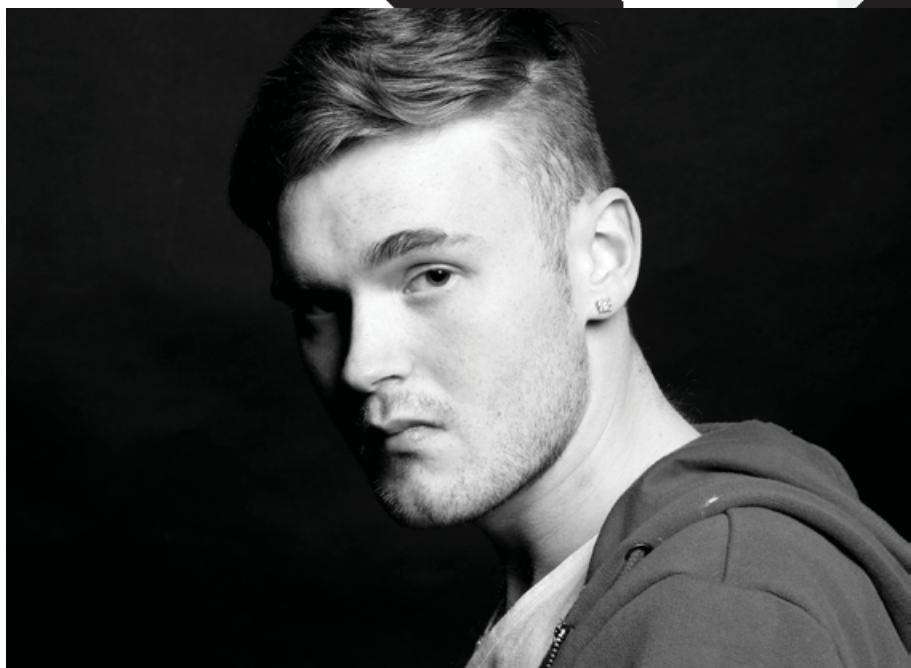
I am very pleased to have worked with Adrian who has a clear vision and strong motivation to incorporate work developed through participatory arts projects into contemporary arts settings. As a musician working in both of these settings I feel that Adrian is quite right in his attitude; this can be a symbiotic relationship with both practices informing and enriching the other.

I have written previous newsletter articles about being young and unemployed. The following poem gives a humorous and touching insight into being young and unemployed in Teesside today.

Teesside Tupac

A poem inspired by legendary hip hop artist Tupac Shakur by stART participant Josh Healey, created as part of his Arts Hero work for the Bronze Arts Award

When you're signing on the dole
you feel neglected like you have no soul,
it makes you feel like you're nothing,
it will drive you insane to an early coffin.
The people who work in there are horrible and sad,
you walk out fuming and really mad.
A man picking binges off the floor
you see him outside and don't want to go through the door.
I find it a very depressing place,
I feel sad and sickened, this is the case.
£110 a fortnight?
How can you live on that?
Yeah you can buy food and rent
But you can't afford a mat!!



Youth & Community



Discordia

Having mentioned my own musical practice I thought I'd share a project that has been very nourishing for me and a lot of fun. I have been working with visual artist Kraig Wilson who was nominated for last year's Northern Arts Prize. Our work involved developing an audio-visual piece for the prize nomination which has since been exhibited and screened at The Ottawa Film Festival, The Vancouver Film Festival, New York City Fashion Week, Shoreditch House (private exhibition) and the Cooper Gallery, Dundee.

The eight minute film entitled "Discordia" features a progression of scenes incorporating landscape, self-portrait and surrealist installations. Images and light are projected on to installations and then filmed as visual allegories to create stories or myths and a "sense of self and purpose rooted in location".

This location is not just described by place, but it also comes out of, the quiet solitude of the "innocent gaze and the intimate moment".

Kraig's photographic and video work embodies a "romanticism of listening and waiting" that draws deeply on the nature of contemporary melancholia. Kraig feels that the melancholic is someone that opts out of the "collective rituals in society" and his work brings into the space of images "something beautiful and unspoiled and something that could be forever".

I have known Kraig for several years and I am glad to be working with him as we share a visual and musical aesthetic through common interests in avant-garde and experimental musicians, artists, poets and film-makers. I share Kraig's passion for creating intense, mesmeric, immersive and evocative art with a powerful sense of primal emotions.

When Kraig asked "can you do atmosphere?" I had to laugh as this is exactly my approach to music. I found no difficulty in creating a score for his film and used experimental approaches with treated electric guitars, lo-fi electronics and recording techniques to create spine tingling textures, monolithic walls of sound, plaintive and haunting melodies and visceral crescendos that enhance and compliment Kraig's visual language. To the untrained ear this soundtrack would not have anything to do with a guitar; this is another area of expertise and interest for me; I love to push the boundaries of an instrument as far as possible to develop new approaches that embrace the sonic range of an instrument to create a new audio language that is indecipherable from the instrument in its traditional use. When I said to Kraig I would "probably hit guitars with mallets" I wasn't joking but didn't tell him I actually meant percussion mallets used with Brazilian percussion instruments!

I look forward to developing more work with Kraig and unleashing this on the world.



Tim Coyte

Projects Officer: Youth & Community

Simon Says...

Here's the latest blast from the past

5 Years ago: (Autumn 2008)

St Aidan's in Hartlepool and Thortree Primary in Middlesbrough had both enjoyed CPD days for their staff in drawing techniques and drama.

Artist Derek Mosey worked with pupils at Westlands School, Thornaby for one day as part of their arts week. They created animal willow sculptures, and chose a giraffe to be exhibited in their outdoor space. Meanwhile, over at Junction Farm Primary, Eaglescliffe a dragon had taken over! Artist Vicky Holbrough worked with Year 3 and 4 over five weeks of afternoon and after-school sessions to create a 3D sculpture for permanent display within the school.

10 years ago (Autumn 2003)

Working with the INCH project in Stockton, a dramatist, animator, musician and set designer worked in three schools, producing a fantastic drama performance at Stockton Parish Church. The workshops were aimed at developing participant's skills in cooperation, conflict resolution and confidence.

15 years ago (Autumn 1998)

Storyteller and actor Chris Bostock brought poetry alive at the Riverside Stadium on Saturday 17th October, to celebrate the Writearound festival's 10th birthday. Chris read a selection of poems by Boro supporters about the club itself. These were gathered through a competition run jointly by Buzzwords at Cleveland Arts and the Middlesbrough fanzine Fly Me To The Moon. This was part of a link up with Middlesbrough Football Club to promote the arts to fans attending matches played at their home ground during the 1998-99 football season. A mixture of poetry readings, music and dance were performed before matches and during intervals by local and national performers. A series of football themed postcards by local artists were also produced and distributed at matches through the club's Fanzine and matchday programme.

20 years ago (Autumn 1993)

In September, Arts & Minds '93, a successful series of participatory and celebratory events were held raising awareness of mental health and the arts in Redcar.

A seminar, "Creating Choices" was held at Robert Atkinson Youth & Community Centre in Stockton showing the role the Arts could play in older peoples' lives.

The fifth Cleveland literature festival "Writearound '93" was held in October and in a packed programme featured appearances from Liverpoolian poet Roger McGough, comedian and writer Mike Harding and East-Cleveland born novelist Jane Gardam. "In Our Street", an anthology of children's poetry, was launched to an audience of 200 people.

As a legacy of the Riverscape project, Cleveland Arts had been given, as a gift, from Vivan Sundaram a delightful painting entitled "Crane View of the River Tees" which still has pride of place in our offices at Melrose House.

More than 100 local children and adults worked with textile artist Kate Russell to produce silk banners of local scenes for installation in Netherfields new Community Centre.

Artist blacksmith Graeme Hopper had been working with two mental health centres and children from Tilery, St John's and The Glebe primary schools on designs for steel cut-out emblems to hang from Stockton High Street lighting columns.



Simon Says...



25 years ago (Autumn 1988)

Cleveland Youth Opera had presented its third annual production “The Italian Girl in Algiers” at Middlesbrough Little Theatre in September. Following the production, Cleveland Youth Opera, became an independent group.

Sculptor Alain Ayers was appointed to work on the Hilton New Milestones project. The work created would be concerned with marker stones / posts, crossing points over streams and imagery and text relating to and drawing from the history and geography of Hilton.



30 years ago (Autumn 1983)

The Horse and Bamboo Theatre Company had successfully toured the area. Denis Coe had been newly appointed as performing Arts Officer. Plans were advanced for a sculpture exhibition at the Cleveland Gallery in February 2004 featuring young British sculptors such as David Mach and Anish Kapoor.

Simon Smith

Communications Officer





TVA can work with you to plan a programme of creative activities, work up a budget, write funding applications, find suitable artists, and then manage the project both artistically and administratively. If you have an idea that you would like to discuss, please contact us:



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