

LETTER OF MOTIVATION

I am an Artist who works actively in communities and understands the arts to be an innovative way to learn about the world and each other. During the ten years I have been working as a socially-engaged Artist, I have worked with a range of communities in the UK and internationally. This has included young people and children, in schools and community settings.

My approach is focused around the discovery in making, providing opportunities for children to explore their own ideas, in their own way, through a range of processes. For me, art projects are conversations, a way to share thoughts and create collaboratively.

I am drawn to this project because it celebrates this method of working and the high quality partners involved. I am excited that there is an opportunity that enables children and teachers as co-creators, as I find this the most exciting way to make work as an Artist.

It is also a timely application for me as I am in the process of learning the Spanish language, a few years ago I started to take lessons and continue to try and find ways to practice, such as visiting Spain. Just earlier this month I visited some friends in Madrid who introduced me to the art scene of the City, I would very much like to spend more time experiencing the life and culture of the City.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

After reading the brief, I am particularly drawn to the concept of coexistence and cooperation. I think that it is a particularly important time to explore this idea, not just in the classroom, but beyond. The way that I deliver projects is in four stages; incubation, design, production and celebration. Each stage will take approximately one week of the residency.

I would begin this project by opening up a dialogue with the pupils (alongside the teacher). What does the idea of coexistence mean to you? Do you think it is important? Why? What about internationally? What about here, in our classroom community?

This conversation would be explored through a series of practical and theoretical exercises, we will try some drama games, play with words and ideas. We will do some exploratory making tasks, that have no outcome except for to think through doing.

Once we have established what is important to us about this concept and what we would like to say about it to others, we will enter the design phase. During this phase we will explore different ways that we could convey our message and try out a number of techniques. This will enable us to identify what they best media is, what do we like making? Which is the most affective? This will involve zine and poster making, printing, photography, film and installation. Perhaps we will make an artwork through cooperation and collaboration.

Once we have collated the design, we then go into a production phase. This will be a hands-on, practical, problem-solving experience. Perhaps our design doesn't work so well? Or isn't as expected? How can we make it better? How can we innovate? Does it match our original intention? What we make in the production stage will be decided by the pupils from the experience of the first two weeks. They will be presented with a number of options and then will take one forward... this could involve anything including an acting/ singing intervention, making a publication, film or exhibition or experience for others to enjoy.

The final stage of the project will be the celebration. It is expected that the project will end in a formal presentation; of a film, a seminar/ talk exhibition etc. Whatever is chosen should include participants in the planning and delivery.

I am happy to discuss the delivery of this project, but I think that conceptually it will work best with pupils around 8-10 years. In terms of language, I am committed to learning Spanish, but I am not yet fluent. It would be good if the students wanted to engage with learning English as part of this project. In fact, the language exchange could be something that could be built in - I would love for them to teach me Spanish!

COLLABORATION WITH OTHER CREATIVE ARTISTS

In the UK

I have established connections with a number of institutions, delivering outreach and engagement work on their behalf in a range of settings, including schools.

This includes:

The Whitworth Art Gallery

The Manchester Art Gallery

The Centre for Chinese Contemporary Art

The Harris Museum

The Lowry

In addition to this, I am active within a number of Artist groups including the Castlefield Gallery Associates and the North West Art and Health group.

I am also part of an artist-led independent art school, the Islington Mill Art Academy.

In Madrid

I have connections with a number of artists who I have met through exchange programmes to the UK. It is possible that they may be invited to collaborate on this project if successful, and also it is possible that they will support my work in Madrid.

ACTIVITIES RELATED TO THE PROJECT

CFCCA: NEWTOPIA PROJECT

Newtopia was a project delivered with the Centre For Chinese Contemporary Art (CFCCA) and Caldershaw Primary School in September - December 2011. For two months I worked with two classes in a Primary School exploring the theme of 'Utopia'. During this time I worked with the children to explore ideas of perfect worlds, how they would function, feel, what they would look like, what would be in them.

After this period of exploration, we then worked with the children to produce an exhibition for the main space of the gallery. The exhibition showed both process and outcome. Including installation, sculpture and film. The children really had the opportunity to express themselves and their ideas, everything from the title of the exhibition, to how the work was displayed, was decided by them.



Manchester Art Gallery: Family Art Club

Between October 2015 - March 2016 I hosted six month residency at the Manchester Art Gallery, running the Family Art Club. This programme commissions artists with a process-led experimental practice to design sessions that whole families can participate in together. The purpose is for families to critically engage with the exhibitions in the gallery through making and doing.

Activities that I designed for this project included alternative life-drawing, collaborative painting, textile exploration, projection and sound work.

Please visit the following links for images:

https://www.flickr.com/photos/manchester_city_galleries/albums/72157662215492106

https://www.flickr.com/photos/manchester_city_galleries/albums/72157663738628214

https://www.flickr.com/photos/manchester_city_galleries/albums/72157661225823504

The Eleventh Hour: The Harris Museum

The Eleventh Hour was a project delivered with a primary school on an Army Barracks in Preston. I worked with a group of pupils from across the school age range over the course of four months. During that time we explored the concepts of a painting by Percy Day entitled 'The Eleventh Hour'. We explored ideas connected to the painting including compassion and caring. During this time we tried lot's of things including model making, collage, drama, costume making and writing.

Following our exploration stage we decided that we wanted our response to be in the form of a zine publication. We then worked together on producing artwork that would go into the zine including drawing, writing, collage and photography. The zine was then printed professionally and distributed in the Museum to other families who visited the exhibition.

