

**CRESCENT
ARTS**

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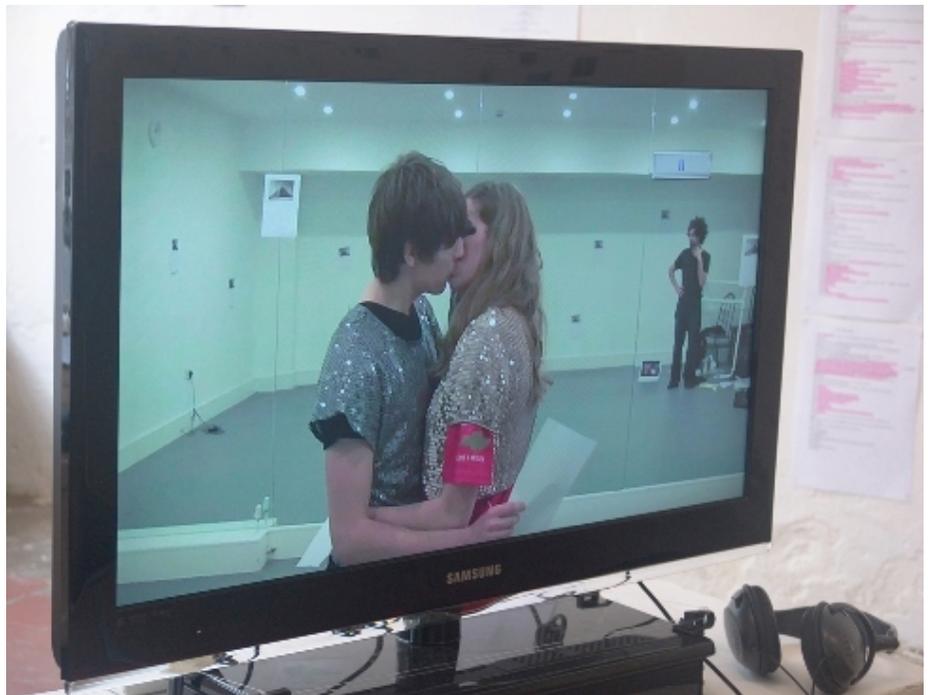
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Crescent Arts

Annual Report 2011 - 2012



Simon Farid, The Tragedy of Richard Anthony and Cleopatra Taylor, Crescent Artspace, 2011



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Introduction

2011-2012 was another challenging, yet highly productive, year for Crescent Arts as the Management Committee, the Director, and Artists worked together to deliver an ambitious programme of exhibitions, workshops and events.

Support from Arts Council England (ACE) to Crescent Arts continued through this transitional period, as the process of future funding transferred to the new National Portfolio Organisations (NPO). Crescent Arts is delighted to be part of the NPO network, with uplift in annual funding for the period 2012 – 2015. Slightly reduced ACE funding for 2011-2012 was offset by an additional Grants for the Arts award for our Professional Development programme 'Artist Writes'. Scarborough Borough Council (SBC) also maintained its funding to Crescent Arts, primarily as subsidy of our studio premises and facilities. We are immensely grateful to our funding partners for their vital support, encouragement and advice and look forward to reinforcing these partnerships in the coming year.

Key developments for the organisation during 2011-2012

Funding Partnerships: Crescent Arts looked forward to Arts Council of England National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) status with increased annual revenue funding for 2012-2015. Equally, we appreciate the continuing support from Scarborough Borough Council's Community Revenue Grant funding.

Crescent Arts Exhibitions: Highlights of the year included new video works by Helen Sear, Webb-Ellis and Simon Farid at Crescent Arts, Coliseum Whitby and Queen St. respectively. 'Anniversary' a powerful participatory performance of The Declaration of Human Rights, orchestrated by Monica Ross was produced with Scarborough Library.

Crescent Artstudios and Artists: Andrew and Caitlin Webb-Ellis returned to their studios in Bournemouth; Simon Farid moved on to a further residency in London. National call-out for studio artists resulted in Jade Montserrat taking up a studio in November 2011.

Professional Development: We were successful in an application to ACE Grants for the Arts for 'Artist Writes' and visited Istanbul Biennale for a second time, with accreditation to attend the opening weekend and networking events. We continue to work closely with Yorkshire Coast College BA Fine Art Faculty to encourage critical debate around artists'/students' practice.

Open-access Facilities: We offered a programme of well-attended workshops for artists, young people and adults, notably in printmaking. Karen Thompson's work as ceramicist-in-residence enabled increased access to and use of our ceramics facilities.

Marketing and Audience Development: e-newsletter subscriptions increased by a further 20% reaching over 600 contacts nationally. Attendances and membership remained consistent with levels achieved in 2010/11.

Management and Governance:

Crescent Arts Management Committee 2011-2012

Crescent Arts Management Committee members were elected at our AGM in November 2011, with two members standing down; Jo Beddoe as Chair and Sue Kennedy. The Management Committee as elected comprised:

Jan Bee Brown: Chair and Acting Treasurer.

Artist, freelance curator and theatre designer.

Shirlie Stone: Deputy Chair

Business Development & Marketing Manager and Publicist.

Neill Warhurst: Secretary

Technical manager and lighting designer.

Performance Production tutor at University of Hull, Scarborough Campus.

Ian Parkinson:

Artist and long-standing member of Crescent Arts.

Kathryn Standing:

Visual arts consultant/curator based in London.

Programme 2011 - 2012

Crescent Arts delivered more than it promised in 2011/12. We presented or co-promoted eight exhibitions and two off-site projects. We proposed 11 projects, delivering 12 (screenings, exhibitions, performances).

We continued to pursue a strategy of partnership-working to support artists and audience development. The sustained use of Queen Street as a 'project space' for artists, with public access, presented a unique opportunity in Scarborough and the wider region of North Yorkshire. We believe there is currently no comparable platform in NY which allows artists to produce and present ambitious and investigative new work.

The programme for 2011/12, shaped by the Director, promoted both resident and associate artists' work. 7 resident artists presented work through group and solo exhibitions, screenings and public commission. We sustained the highest affordable standards of production and presentation, exploiting a range of contexts - a car park, a cinema auditorium, Scarborough Library, Queen Street and our studio project space.

Resident artists Webb-Ellis were notably prolific in producing new video work (Clinging, Whitby Coliseum), and successful in promoting their work regionally and inter/nationally (Ever Remote, Water Tower Festival, Bulgaria). Simon Farid,

following an ACE GftA funded research visit to Egypt in 10/11, presented work at Queen Street in July 2011 (eliciting a thoughtful and perceptive ACE assessment by Judith King), and going on to work with AIR in London. Shop Lift, in partnership with Scarborough Borough Council, enabled a car park commission for The Spa by Webb-Ellis in May 2011 which continues to attract high level visitor interest and footfall of thousands. Crescent Arts' artists collaborated on 'The Drawing Room' to coincide with North Yorkshire Open Studios, challenging accepted notions of drawing, and engaging directly with visitors' responses.

Invited artists Helen Sear and Monica Ross provided the most accomplished work. Ross's 'Acts of Memory' at Scarborough Library demonstrated artistic integrity, attracting a rich diversity of participants from Scarborough's communities, with a strong ACE assessment from David Briers.

Exhibition openings attracted average attendances of 90 with recorded overall attendances of nearly 3,000 with further estimated audiences of 2500+. North Yorkshire Open Studios (NYOS) brought highest visitor figures (600+) of any single event, with wide popular regional interest. Printmaking and ceramics workshop activities continued to flourish, especially under the expertise and guidance of Dawn Brooks and Karen Thompson (74 sessions attracting 568 attendances).

Crescent Artists and Professional Development

We continued to offer Professional Development support to artists through subsidised studio provision, open-access facilities, workshop space, project development, networking and research. The Director and artists regularly reviewed professional development aims and objectives to support goals for 2011/12 (exhibitions, projects, research).

During 2011-2012 we accommodated eight studio-holders;

Dawn Brooks – printmaking

Simon Farid – video and installation

Jade Montserrat – printmaking, text and book works

Susan Slann – painting and printmaking

Karen Thompson – ceramics and drawing

Susan Timmins – painting, drawing and printmaking

Andrew Webb-Ellis – film and video

Caitlin Webb-Ellis – film and video

Three artists left Crescent Arts and we welcomed Jade Montserrat as a new resident artist. Through further recruitment in spring 2012, Steven Potter was invited to take up a studio on completion of his BA Fine Art course in Leeds.

Studio artists brought strong critical perspectives and energy to Crescent Arts' programme as evidenced by the work presented at Queen Street, off-site and in the studio project space.

Artists were encouraged to explore external opportunities for networking, exhibiting, funding, with some success (Webb-Ellis in Ever Remote, Karen Thompson and Dawn Brooks exhibitions in Malton and Hull). We subsidised resident artists to visit studios, galleries and events in the UK and visited Istanbul Biennale for a second time, with accreditation to attend opening events; establishing new contacts eg. Turkish curator Fatos Ustek. By these means we expanded our professional network, laying foundations for future collaborative work (Istanbul Biennale in 2013, Turning Point initiatives, and the education sector eg. Leeds BA and MA courses). Partnership with Yorkshire Coast College (YCC) continued with 'crit' sessions and a group project at Queen Street in August 2011.

We initiated the programme Artist Writes, with the support of ACE GftA, planning a series of workshops with eg. Akerman-Daly, Patrick Coyle and The Wild Pansy Press for 2012. Artist Writes is a major strand of Professional Development for Artists for 2012 onwards, and we view it as a means to increase the level of critical engagement with artists' work, through text and artists' writing.

All Professional Development was designed to support production, promotion and presentation of artists' work within Crescent Arts' public programme.

Access to facilities

We continued to provide access to printmaking and ceramics facilities. Open-access to facilities and workshops, especially printmaking, continued to be in regular demand by members and the public. Dawn Brooks provided an excellent course of printmaking workshops over the year. Improved access to ceramics facilities, especially kiln-firing services, was enabled by ceramicist Karen Thompson, with occasional workshop sessions to encourage new users and those with less experience.

Resident/associate artists provided a regular programme of workshops and outreach activities funded by peer organisations eg. Scarborough Museums Trust, WEA, Create.

Marketing

We reviewed Marketing Strategy in the course of reviewing our Business Plan and formulating a new Activity Plan 2012-2015 in line with ACE NPO requirements and our main artistic goals for the period.

Crescent Arts e-newsletter continued to be our most effective marketing tool with distribution rising from 500 to over 600 over 2011/12. Digital distribution

largely replaced print through regular e-news, website, listings and social media updates. We continued to update our database to manage e-distribution effectively, targeting local, regional and national audiences. Membership remained steady at 63, showing a small increase on 2010/11 (55).

We continued to monitor exhibition and workshop attendances closely through visitors' book, questionnaires, feedback and daily records. Exhibition attendances in 2011/12 sustained at nearly 3,000, despite slightly fewer 'exhibition days' (10/11: 83) (11/12: 76). The Shop Lift art/regeneration programme reached an estimated audience of 2,500+ ie. Webb-Ellis car park commission, and attracting strong local press coverage.

We trialled the co-promotion of Helen Sear's work with Duckett and Jeffrey's (Malton) to attract cross-over audience. Participation in events with regional/national reach (Museums at Night, North Yorkshire Open Studios) reinforced our profile beyond local engagement (overall attendances of 750+). We were encouraged by participation of some 60 people in Monica Ross's 'Anniversary' performance (which required some work on the part of participants to memorise sections of The Universal Declaration of Human Rights). The resulting event, in partnership with Scarborough Library, was both powerful and moving. Additional partnerships with University of Hull (School of Arts & New Media) and Yorkshire Coast College (BA Fine Art) sustained engagement with a core of some 50 student practitioner-participants.

Premises

2011/12 saw very little change in terms of our studio premises and we continued to explore external sites for presentation of programme. We maintained our Lease with Scarborough Borough Council (SBC) for the basement of Scarborough Art Gallery until 31.03.14. Proposed development of the building (Scarborough Art Gallery) appears unlikely in the very near future. Licences for current resident artists are issued in line with terms and conditions of our Lease with SBC.

We sustained use of premises at 14/15 Queen Street in Scarborough beyond the initial period of 18 months for arts regeneration projects. Queen Street is free of rent and rates. Essential costs and overheads were met from remaining Meanwhile Project funding through 2011/12. We continue to investigate alternatives for a permanent studio base.

Recruitment

There was no further staff recruitment in 2011/12, although uplift in ACE NPO funding offers the possibility of appointing to a part time marketing and/or administrative assistant post in 2012/13.

We recruited two new resident artists, selected from a regional and national range of applicants. Jade Montserrat took up studio residency from November 2011 and Steven Potter will take up a studio on completion of his BA Fine Art degree course in Leeds (2012).

Freelance and contractual staffing, including exhibiting and resident artists, played a critical role in the effective delivery of our exhibitions, workshops and professional development programmes (mentoring, curation, gallery installation, workshop coordination).

Finance and Fundraising

Sustained revenue funding from ACE and SBC, with an additional award from ACE Grants for the Arts for Professional Development (Artist Writes), allowed Crescent Arts to successfully navigate continuing changes in public funding for the arts in 2011/12, and to develop plans for the 3 year period to 2015.

Prudent financial management was required in 2011/12 following reduction in RFO funding from ACE by 6.9% (£39,082) and from Scarborough Borough Council's (SBC) Community Revenue Grant (CRG) by 14% (£8,600). Management Committee approved use of up to £8K from reserves to address a shortfall in funding and to sustain its Director's post through 2011/12

Negotiation of ACE NPO (2012-15) Funding Agreement, with review of our Business Plan, took precedence over other planning and fundraising activity in 2011/12, with formal approval in March 2012. Revised financial projections within the Business Plan 2011-2015 reflected levels of public funding for the period; ACE RFO/NPO funding and SBC Community Revenue Grants (CRG).

The promise of a 60% uplift in funding from ACE as an NPO (£70K+) from April 2012 was tempered by a reduction by SBC of some 40% of its CRG funding overall and to Crescent Arts for 2012/13 (£5K). Crescent Arts, with other ACE NPOs in Scarborough (Create, SJT) and Scarborough Museums Trust, in consultation with ACE/Yorkshire, is working to secure Local Authority arts funding for 2013/14 onwards. SBC CRG includes 100% rent subsidy (£4K) of our current studio premises below Scarborough Art Gallery.

Application to ACE GftA for £7.5K for Artists' Professional Development produced a grant offer of £3.6K for Artist Writes 2012 (currently underway).

We've re-drafted our Business Plan for 2012-15, with projections reflecting levels of future public funding (ACE, SBC) and to address:

- (1) sustainability and development of the organisation, its mission and core activities, including clear risk management procedures
- (2) achievable targets for income generation and fundraising
- (3) audience development through engagement, reach and digital media

Within the Business Plan (2012-2015) we propose fundraising at both regional and national levels to support:

- (1) professional development for artists
- (2) programme and projects
- (3) development of resources and capital projects

Key Trusts and Foundations have been identified as likely sources of funding for which we are eligible to apply during 2012-2015

Crescent Arts, as a registered charity, continues to benefit from 100% business rates exemption. Financial management was sound, with undesignated reserves standing at £8.5K at the end of 2011/12.

Priorities for 2012-2013

Key issues for 2012/13 are:

1. Maintain the capacity to develop innovative programme, delivering ambitious artistic goals set out in our Activity Plan 2012-2015
2. Governance and management: sustaining appropriate skills, level of expertise and staffing, to guide the organisation through to 2015.
3. Business Planning: maintaining focus on forward planning 2012-2015 whilst meeting short/mid-term aims and objectives for the organisation, with appropriate risk management in place
4. Funding: managing opportunities and constraints in public/private sector funding to the arts in this and future years
5. Fundraising: delivering sponsorship/fundraising strategy - meeting targets for 12/13 and working towards targets for 2013-2015
6. Marketing: developing strategy to build audience/membership/professional engagement and awareness via digital media, press/media coverage, print and networking in order to meet targets within the Business Plan
7. Diversity: continue to build diversity of artists and audiences through residency selection and targeted programme
8. Premises: pursue options for a permanent base for Crescent Arts.

Outline plans and objectives for 2012/13 and beyond:

Crescent Arts proposed programme of work for 2012-2013 will contribute to two of the five goals contained within Arts Council England's 'Great Art for Everyone'.

1. Talent and artistic excellence are thriving and celebrated through:

- studio, residency and production facilities for emerging artists
- professional development for resident, associate and invited artists

- a programme of exhibitions, visual arts projects and related activities as a platform for local, regional, and inter/national artists

2. More people experience and are inspired by the arts through:

- access to a programme of exhibitions, visual arts projects and related activities for public appreciation and participation
- open access, participation and training in use of our facilities for artists, members and the wider public
- creative partnership and collaboration with peer organisations, education sector, community interest groups, funding partners
- marketing to promote access to programme, professional development, facilities and resources

Priorities for 2012 - 2013 are as follows;

Support to artists:

- sustain subsidised studio provision for 7 artists, investing in production facilities, professional development and exhibition
- maintain changeover of artists, operating rigorous selection process to ensure quality, with average 85% annual occupancy
- develop regional/inter/national residency and exchange potential for 2013 onwards

Professional Development:

- extend partnerships with eg University of Hull, Yorkshire Coast College, Leeds School of Art to promote facilities and exchange.
- promote Artist Writes as a focus of critical activity, drawing upon high level expertise eg Akerman Daly, Patrick Coyle etc
- continue support through mentoring, R&D, travel and skills-sharing in project management, production and promotion.
- extend professional development 'offer' to a wider pool of artists and members in the region, according to demand.

Exhibition Programme:

- present at least 6 exhibitions and/or visual arts projects in 12/13 with collaborative activities providing a strong platform for artists
- deliver supporting activities eg workshops, screenings to encourage engagement and participation by members and a wider public.
- support resident artists to generate programme in 2012/13 with invited artists providing wider perspective (Wild Pansy Press, Patrick Coyle, Bob & Roberta Smith).
- participate in regional/national initiatives (Museums at Night, North Yorkshire Open Studios, Yorkshire Day Festival) attracting new audiences and enriching programme (eg. Future Shorts)

- exploit contexts to present work off-site eg Queen Street and to engage with local communities

Marketing and Audience Development:

- review strategy and embed marketing support in fundraising initiatives
- appoint a part-time assistant to develop digital capacity, marketing and audience research to meet targets for 12/13
- improve methods for audience intelligence, data collection and communication
- dedicate a larger % of budget to marketing, than in previous years (£2K:11/12; £4K 12/13)

Digital Resources:

- promote awareness of and access to Crescent Arts' work and resources through frequent digital communications eg e-newsletter
- the part-time assistant to extend digital capacity through e-newsletter, website interactivity, social media, blogs, digital artwork
- partnership (U of H) and training to enable resident artists to develop greater online technical and creative skills

Diversity and Equal Opportunities:

- build upon the work of 11/12 to attract an appropriate diversity of artists and audiences through residency selection and targeted programme
- focus partnership working on eg. student population offering diversity of emergent practitioners, participants, audiences
- continue to implement Diversity Action Plan for 2010-14 and review Equal Opportunities Policy, focusing on programme, recruitment, and engagement

Fundraising:

- Within the Business Plan (2012-2015) a fundraising strategy is being developed to support:
 - (1) professional development for artists
 - (2) programme and projects
 - (3) development of resources and capital projects
- The Director will lead fundraising initiatives supported by Management Committee, artists and members
- The appointment of part-time Administrative/Marketing assistant 2012 will support access, income generation, marketing, fundraising

Income Generation:

- Fundraising and income generation targets have been identified within the Business Plan 2012-2015
- Potential for income generation is identified as:
 1. hire and use of facilities (eg. space, printmaking, ceramics)
 2. studio rents
 3. membership subscriptions, donations and sponsorship
 4. workshops, professional development and ticketed events

Funding Partnerships:

- sustain productive dialogue within current funding partnerships and agreements (ACE / SBC), transparency and appropriate reporting
- respond to opportunities and manage constraints in public/private sector funding to the arts in this and future years

Governance and Management:

- sustain appropriate skills, levels of expertise within Management Committee and staffing, to guide the organisation through to 2015.
- recruit 1-2 further members to Management Committee in 12/13 with expertise to support fundraising and/or business plan development

Premises:

- maintain our lease with SBC for studio premises to 2015, with Business Rates relief dependent on charitable status
- investigate longer-term alternatives (eg Queen St.)

On behalf of the Management Committee I would like to express our thanks to our regular funding partners, Arts Council of England Yorkshire and Scarborough Borough Council, for their continuing support and encouragement to Crescent Arts. I would also like to thank members of the Management Committee for their hard work during 2011/12 and the resident artists for their creativity, commitment and enthusiasm. Stuart Cameron has provided strong leadership and vision throughout the year as Director of Crescent Arts and our thanks go to him for his persistence and considerable achievements. We are particularly grateful for the continuing support of all our members, and hope you will enjoy our programme in 2012-2013. We look forward to seeing you at exhibitions, workshops and events throughout the year.

Jan Bee Brown, Chair of Crescent Arts