



I'm Mrinalini, and I have been Graduate Intern (Creative Programmes) here at ARC for the last 5 months.

When I heard that I had been chosen for the job at ARC, along with the sheer excitement of having a job, I was filled with a mild sense of fear. Having graduated with a degree in Interior Architecture, I did not have the chance to gain any direct creative programmes/learning experience. However, I was certainly up for something new and ready for the challenge. I soon realised that my role as Graduate Intern (Creative Programmes) would give me invaluable experience for the PGCE course that I had been accepted onto - commencing later in 2015. When I arranged to meet my Manager, she was very welcoming and took an interest in and considered my future plans, to make my experience at ARC as valuable as possible. As the internship unfolded, I felt less of the initial nerves; thoroughly enjoying the range of activities in which I've had the chance to be a part.

Before moving to Stockton for this job, I was mainly based in Middlesbrough during my time at University, so I was interested to see all that Stockton has to offer. Throughout my time as an intern, a variety of projects aiming to bring out the positive aspects of Stockton have taken place, like the 'Psst... - the Loudest Whisper' and the 'I love Stockton Me' event. The new fountain on the High Street has also opened during the time I have been working here; it's been great to see people coming together on sunny days (and some not so sunny days!). It is incredible to see the positivity and how everyone unites in this friendly town.

During the five months of my internship, I have appreciated the way my Manager has given me certain tasks within projects to work on independently. It's been good to have regular tasks to get on with every week too, like putting together and sending out the Dance Hub email, which is set out to a list of dance contacts in the region.

Overall, my experience here at ARC has been a fulfilling one. I have had the opportunity to be involved with a great variety of projects that are hosted by ARC, some of which take place each year. An example of this is the county finals of Poetry by Heart; a poetry recital competition for young people aged 14-19. The tasks for this project involved creating signage, certificates, a slideshow and programmes for the evening.



Poetry by Heart
Wed 11 Feb 2015



Film Explorers
Mon 16 - Fri 20 Feb 2015



The Opening of the High Street
Sat 21 Mar 2015

Film Explorers, a five day workshop course on filmmaking aimed at 13-17 year olds ran for the first time this year and was very successful. My tasks for this project involved initial research into existing bursary schemes, designing a feedback method - to gain constructive feedback about what the participants thought about the sessions - and helping in the running of the workshops.

PULSE is an annual North East dance project, with a sub-regional showcase being hosted by ARC each year. The preparation tasks for this project included putting together a programme, creating signage for the day, thinking of fun and interactive ways to gain feedback about the day from the participants, creating entertainment for the day - by designing quizzes, questionnaires and competitions for the participants - and helping to run the event on the day.

An Evening with the Silvers is a showcase performance by the Silver Singers groups and ARC-ulele. For this project, I was responsible for putting together the programme and helping to run the event on the day.

I have also enjoyed doing some research for upcoming events such as the fathers' workshop run by Theatre State, REACH research, Dementia/Arts research and research into organisations working with asylum seekers and refugee, to name a few.

On a weekly basis, I have had the opportunity to help with a group called Staying Out, a community project aimed to provide care and befriending services for older people on release from hospital. ARC's involvement with the project is to run a weekly programme of arts & crafts activity. Sessions have included mini ukulele lessons, visits from Stockton Mobility Service, visits from with a poet who later put together some original poems inspired by the participants, and a variety of on-going painting, craft and modelling projects. The Staying Out sessions at ARC offer people a chance to come along, feel a part of the group, meet new people and make new friends. We have lunch together and there is always a guaranteed game of dominoes! Through this group, I have become more aware of the issue of isolation for older people and the importance of carers and befrienders in helping people to regain independence and socialise.

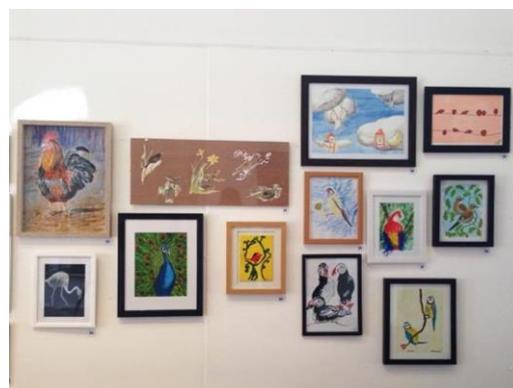
I've also had the opportunity to join in with the Silver Creative Arts that is offered by ARC as part of the Silver programme. This class enables over 50s to meet together and be creative, learning a variety of art and painting techniques. I have loved getting to know the participants, seeing them weekly, hearing about their thoughts on art, artists and art galleries. Some of them even gave me some advice for when I start my PGCE! I have also attended the weekly Silver iPad Creativity classes, a new project which has been running this year at ARC, with support from Awards for All. During January to March, we visited a number of different venues, offering taster sessions introducing people to the iPad and many of the people who have attended the course came along to one of those sessions first. It's been interesting to see participants develop confidence in using a range of creative applications and, through that, of other digital platforms.



PULSE 2015
Sat 21 Mar 2015



The Art Room
Mon 30 Mar 10am-4pm



Silver Creative Arts Exhibition
Thu 9 Apr – Fri 15 May



An Evening with the Silvers
Thu 14 May 7pm

Right from the first day of working in the Administration office at ARC, I have felt very welcome and have enjoyed the experience of working in an office. When I was in university, I was never interested in an office job and I struggled a little with the initial adjustment into working at a desk for a whole day, but soon got used to it. For example, one of my tasks was to find secondary school and college music contacts, to whom we could promote ARC's monthly Open Mic sessions for 12-18 year old performers. To do this I was required to make phone calls. This was something about which initially I was quite nervous, but my Manager was very helpful in giving a few tips on how to be more effective when speaking on the phone.

I do not have one specific favourite moment from my time here, but moments which rank high on the list include working with Silver Creative Arts, as they are a talented group. For a month, the participants were able to display their work together as a collaboration titled *Flock*, a bird themed display in the retail space. Each piece was individual in its style, using a variety of materials and techniques. It has also been fascinating meeting with the Staying Out participants on a weekly basis and seeing how much they have grown together as a group, as well as regaining their independence individually, since January. I also enjoyed helping with The Art Room during the Easter week – a day of art & craft activities for 7-11 year olds. The participants were given the opportunity to try painting, printing, drawing, sewing, textiles and sculptures. The best part about the day was seeing the children leave with a bag of all their creations and the pride in their faces as they showed their parents what they had made. Every so often, the catering team has also brought culinary 'experiments' up to office – a good end to a busy week! I thought it was great how all of the departments in the building work so well together, always taking a keen interest in making ARC a better place.

Although I never saw myself working in an Arts Centre, I have appreciated all the experience I have gained. I have learnt a lot from the Silver Creative Arts practitioner and my dream of one day becoming self-employed has been fuelled greatly from meeting a variety of self-employed people during my time here. It's been really interesting to see how many different people ARC caters for, a lot more than I realised. I also like the way the staff in the Administration office have a chance to attend an informal welcome events arranged for artists that will be developing work and performing in that upcoming week, as it gives a chance for office staff and artists to familiarise themselves with each other in the building.

My immediate next step is still to be decided. I will be looking to find a temporary job until September when I move to Carlisle to start a PGCE in Art & Design to teach secondary school students. I have gained valuable experience here from everything I've done. I will certainly carry all that I have learned here into my future jobs, hopefully when I'm self-employed one day!



Staying Out (Art Activities)
Every Wednesday 10am-4pm



Staying Out
Every Wednesday 10am-4pm



Staying Out
Every Wednesday 10am-4pm



Silver Creative Arts
Every Thursday 10-11:30am