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DIY 6 LOW PROFILE proposal: What do you do with the leftovers?

Name and contact details:

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Region for the proposed project:

We would like to propose to hold the workshop in the South West region and if possible, in Plymouth. We would like to welcome artists familiar and unfamiliar with Plymouth - a city whose visual arts scene is still developing and needs artists to visit and engage with it. We are, however, happy to be flexible about the location of the project, and are always excited to visit and build relationships with new places.

Proposed workshop dates:

Sat 5th September, Sun 6th September and Sat 19th September 2009.

Description of proposed project: What do you do with the leftovers?

This workshop provides participants with the opportunity to take the time to examine, re-trace, take stock of, and realise the potential of the 'stuff' that is leftover from the artistic process of making.

The workshop encourages participants to think about the by-products of their practice - the tangents, the unrealised ideas and the leftovers - questioning how to turn the things that have been forgotten about, shelved, or disregarded, into the starting point of new artistic projects/artworks/artefacts/artists' ephemera.

Through an examination of artists' ephemera and a series of practical exercises, the group will seek to develop simple, low-fi and low-tech 'transformations' of their 'stuff' – concentrating on the re-presentation of 'leftovers' as work in its own right.

Workshop Rationale:

In our own practice, we have identified the importance of maintaining a loose collection of 'leftovers' – often drawing from these when thinking about developing new ideas. These leftovers are things that otherwise don't seem to fit, but when given time, offer new ways of looking at, or attending to, the concerns of our practice. We see the value in developing parallel outcomes that offer a less pressured way of making and showing. The ephemera that we have produced has become an essential addition to/component of our live work and practice.

The bookworks, stamps, badges and other artefacts (books, videos etc.) we make act as a way to introduce our practice (our aesthetic and our concerns) to others – offering a 'way in' to our work. We have found that there is a strength in the ability of these pieces to succinctly convey the character of our work – operating as alternative 'documents' that circumvent some of the issues involved when using photography/video within a performative practice.

We have identified that these ways of working with re-framing and re-ordering 'leftovers' could have useful applications for other practitioners. With this in mind, we have developed the following workshop outline.

Workshop Outline/Methodology/Schedule:

Day 1: Saturday / 12:00 – 5:00pm

The session will begin with an informal lunch (which we will provide), allowing participants to meet each other in a relaxed manner. During Day 1 participants will be introduced to the notions of 'leftovers' - through a series of writing, discussion, listening and presenting exercises, participants will consider what their leftovers are and why they 'left them behind'.

Prompts for these exercises will include:

- » Introduce your practice with reference to the phrases, "my practice is...", "I make...", "The challenges I face are..."

- » Asking “what are my leftovers?” and “why did I leave it behind?”
- » Brainstorming in pairs to develop strategies for re-presenting, re-framing and re-considering identified leftovers.
- » Exercises to think about concisely describing, giving ‘a snapshot of’ and picking out visual details - focusing this wider enquiry down into a couple of new exciting ideas/possibilities/elements to work with.

Throughout the day there will be a series of facilitated points of ‘making public’, sharing ideas in small groups for exchange and feedback. At the end of the first day, we will ensure that the group is taken to their accommodation and given local information about places to eat etc. We will arrange to meet up again at a designated time in the evening to go for a drink and get to know each other further.

Day 2: Sunday / 11:00 – 4:00pm

The participants will meet over coffee and the day will start with a semi-formal presentation of a range of examples of artists’ approaches to making ephemera in parallel to a live practice. This will facilitate discussion within the group about the possibilities available to them to develop and formulate the ‘leftovers’ identified in Day 1 into new pieces of ephemera.

This will be followed by another set of writing exercises using questions/prompts like:

- » what objects are you attracted to?
- » what formats have a particular resonance with your practice?
- » what are the object-related aesthetic choices you make that form the identity of your work? Could you create 2-word pairings that describe this tension?
- » what are the objects that already exist in your practice?

- » thinking about the examples you have seen, and thinking about the objects that you use in your practice as 'by-products' - take one object that you have previously used in a piece/performance and suggest a way/s that you could 're-frame' this object to create a new small self-contained piece.
- » if you took 4 objects from 4 different pieces/ideas and used them to make something new, what could that be? – choose 4 things that have not previously been put together/next to each other.

This session is followed by another informal lunch (provided by us), allowing for further conversation and networking.

In the afternoon session, participants will undertake another set of short exercises to prepare for the more substantial task of producing a new piece of artists' ephemera from the leftovers of their practice, that they will present to the group at the follow up session (2 weeks later). These short exercises will focus on material generated during Day 1 and the morning session of Day 2, getting participants to consolidate what they have already developed through a process of honing, selection and presenting to the group.

Day 3: Saturday (2 weeks later)/ 12:00 – 4:00

The session will begin with coffee and an informal lunch (provided by us), allowing participants to catch up with each other.

We will facilitate the group in spending a focused period of time exploring and examining each other's ephemera. This will be followed by a group discussion, in which all participants will present the work they have developed, receiving feedback and reactions from other participants.

After a short break, the group will re-convene to discuss and evaluate the process of looking at their leftovers – participants will be asked to focus on new insights gained, what new approaches they are developing and how they might be able to translate these approaches into making new live work (as well as new artists' ephemera).

The session will conclude with space for participants to write up formal evaluation of the project/workshop and a short period of informal time to facilitate further exchange/networking.

Outcomes and benefits for participants and yourself:

We feel that this workshop will facilitate informal networking for the leaders and participants (through lunches, adjacent accommodation and social meet-up in evening). By providing an intensive period of reflection, incorporating the production of a new small-scale (achievable and realistic) piece, the workshop makes possible the sharing of ideas, addressing of concerns, exploration of possibilities, facilitation of discussion, exposure to the work of others and the development (by participants) of practical and conceptual strategies for making new work. It will also allow participants to develop an increased awareness of an expanded performative practice - identifying 'leftovers' and 'by-products' of live practice as potentially rich sources for new work/ideas.

In addition, we would value this opportunity to expose our methodologies to the rigour of the group, allowing us to re-focus our continuing concerns with ephemera as an integral part of our practice. The issues discussed and explored during this workshop closely align with activities we will undertake as part of our forthcoming residency at Inbetween Time with Arnolfini (Bristol).

Proposed participants and selection process:

We envisage working with a group of 8 live art practitioners each of whom will have at least 2 years professional practice. We would like to invite interested artists to submit a short statement outlining their interest in participating in the project/workshop. We will prioritise artists who feel they suffer from hopping from project to project without thinking about what has been getting lost, who struggle to find time to think about the magnitude of possibility within their practice and who identify the benefits of working intensively to address these issues.

Budget:

Travel: participants to cover their own costs to and from Plymouth. Low Profile will have no travel costs.

Accommodation: We will pay for, and organise, 1 night's accommodation for the 8 participants @ £35 per participant = £280.

Venue: x3 day venue hire @ £50 per day = £150.

Artist fee: £450 = £225 per workshop leader x2.

Food: x3 buffet lunches + hot drinks for 10 people @ £40 per day = £120.

Total = £1000

Artist's biography:

LOW PROFILE is a collaboration between artists Rachel Dobbs (IRL) and Hannah Jones (UK). Recent performances include *DRY RUN part 4: MacGyver'thon*, Proximity Effect, Plymouth Arts Centre, *DRY RUN part 2: How to save your skin when disaster strikes without warning* and *DRY RUN part 3: Scale of Emergency*, The Royal Standard, Liverpool (2008) and *Show for You*, commissioned by Plymouth Arts Centre, PL:ay festival, Plymouth (2007).

LOW PROFILE's recent solo publications include *Worth The Trip*, commissioned by Newlyn Art Gallery (2007), alongside invitations to contribute to a number of publications, including *Minor Breast* (Braço de Ferro) (2008) and *OMSKbook* (ed Clare Moloney) (2007).

LOW PROFILE are Arnolfini Associate Artists.

Relevant experience:

Alongside their collaborative arts practice, Low Profile have been invited to speak at events focussing on unpacking approaches to practice including B+B's Art School series and AIR Open Dialogue events. Both Rachel and Hannah have PGCE certificates in Post-16 education and have undertaken guest lecturing at University of Plymouth and Dartington College of Arts.

Rachel has been lecturing in Fine Art at Plymouth College of Art for the last three years, where she facilitates students' engagement with live and context-led practices alongside strategic thinking about exhibitions and professional practice. Rachel is currently the recipient of AHRC funding to support her research as part of the MA in Contemporary Art Practice and Dissemination at Dartington College of Arts.

Over the last three years, in her role as Exhibitions Officer at Plymouth College of Art, Hannah has established and led many successful projects and residencies, working closely with artists to facilitate the development of ambitious projects including solo publications and new commissions by Craig Fisher and Ellie Harrison. Hannah also runs a student internship and volunteers programme at Plymouth College of Art, and offers informal mentoring for BA and MA students exploring curatorial practices and project management.

In 2007, Low Profile, in collaboration with onec, successfully initiated, programmed and co-project managed the PL:ay Festival- which attracted substantial ACE and local authority funding, and audiences from throughout the South West region.