

ANNUAL REPORT 2009/2010

Summary

Fermyinwoods Contemporary Art has been through a significant period of change this financial year. In October 2009, following a busy summer of exhibitions and artists in residence, the gallery at the Water Tower was closed, after 11 years, and the organisation was moved first to offices in Brigstock, then to Vincent, Sykes and Highams' offices in Thrapston. A temporary Director was appointed in October, whilst Rosalind Stoddart took Sabbatical leave. Fermyinwoods continued to develop its education, artist residency programme and off-site activity.

During the autumn and winter Art Reach consultants worked with the staff, Board and other key stakeholders to develop a detailed, strategic Business Plan for the next 3 years. As a result of this process, the organisation decided to work across the whole county of Northamptonshire from its office base, and to start to develop plans for a new Arts and Education Centre.

This year Fermyinwoods showed three exhibitions at the Water Tower, which were attended by 1,196 people. In addition, over 400,000 people experienced our off-site artist installations. Fermyinwoods has worked with 15 different schools and 14 community groups, as well as running an education programme for members of the public. A total of 3,670 people (2,058 adults and 1,612 children) participated in 89 events, which clearly demonstrates the value and interest in our off-site and participatory event activities. Some highlights of the year are presented below.

We are grateful to many funders, supporters and partners, without whom our work could not take place, including: Arts Council England, Corby Borough Council, East Northamptonshire Council, the Forestry Commission, the Heritage Lottery Fund, Land Securities, the National Trust, Northamptonshire County Council, Northamptonshire Community Foundation (Constance Travis Trust Fund), Northamptonshire Enterprise Ltd and Vincent, Sykes and Higham LLP.

Exhibitions & Workshops at the Water Tower gallery

Until 26 April 2009

Double Signature

Boyd & Evans, Helen Evans and Heiko Hansen (He He), Bryan and Laura Davies, Susan Bonvin-Andrew Eden



New work created by four artist collectives, including painting, photography, film and design, whose work is created through the sense of a joint identity.

Press Coverage: exhibition featured in the Evening Telegraph (Mar & May 09)

Boyd & Evans and Susan Bonvin-Andrew Eden also led an *In Conversation* event.

Image: He He, *Paris Corby*, 2008

10 May - 26 July 2009

Fascismo Abbandonata – Fascism in ruins

Dan Dubowitz and Patrick Duerden



An exhibition of photographs by Dubowitz and text by architect Duerden, documenting the abandoned and forgotten youth camps constructed along the Tuscan and Emilio-Romanian coasts during Mussolini's regime.

Toured to The British School at Rome (May 2010)

Press Coverage: exhibition featured in *The Architect's Journal* (Jun 09), on the Frieze website and previewed in *The Guardian Guide* (May 09).

Image: Installation photograph

Architecture based Workshops: *Floating Structures* for Corby Swimming Pool's opening were created in collaboration with artist **Alexandra Julyan**. A series of three-dimensional models were made by the Kingswood School and The Corby Business Academy. In June, Patrick Duerden led a walking tour through Corby, highlighting some of its iconic buildings.

9 August - 18 October 2009

Natural Responses

Claudia Fährenkemper, Alex Metcalf, Jacques Nimki, Martin Prothero



Artwork was exhibited by four artists all undertaking residencies at Sudborough Green Lodge. Fährenkemper worked with Leicester University and used their Scanning Electron Microscope to photograph wild flowers, seeds and pollen. Metcalf brought the natural world into the gallery through an installation made of branches, Prothero highlighted the tiny tracks left by insects and small animals in his carbon drawings, and Nimki created delicate drawings of local weeds directly onto the gallery walls.

Press Coverage: exhibition featured in *The Guardian Guide* (Aug 09) and *Nene Valley News* (Aug 09).

This was the last exhibition held at the Water Tower gallery space.

Image: Installation shot by Andy Eathorne

Off-site Artist Installations

There was continuing press interest and coverage of *Stone Clad Cottages*, Richard Wood's installation at Sudborough Green Lodge in Design Magazine (Spring 09) and Another Magazine (Spring/Summer 09).

18 September – 17 October 2009

I want nature

Jacques Nimki



The artist had researched the plants growing in the wild flower meadow in Fermyn Woods, which Natural England has designated as a significant SSSI site, therefore valuable for research and to be protected. Nimki planted a meadow of wild flowers (weeds) of these species in a shop unit, at 66 Corporation Street, Corby, in partnership with Land Securities.

Press Coverage: the installation was featured in the Evening

Telegraph (Oct 09) and in an editorial in Artist Newsletter (Nov 09). The project was also used by the Arts Council as a case study for the *Art in Empty Spaces* programme.

Workshops: people were invited to a photo-shoot and to dance in the meadow while listening to MP3 players to celebrate the end of the installation.

Street cameras indicated that approx 375,000 people walked past the shop windows during the exhibition period, which was a 9.2% increase over the previous year.

1 May – 31 October 2009

Tree Listening

Alex Metcalf



Metcalf's installation enabled visitors to Fermyn Woods to listen to the water moving inside Silver Birch and Oak tree trunks. Additional workshops with adults and children included tree identification and listening to the individual sound each tree makes as it moves.

Press Coverage: BBC Northamptonshire's website (Jul 09), the Nene Valley News (May & Jun 09) and the Evening Telegraph (April 09).

The figures from the Fermyn Woods Visitor Centre indicated that approx 62,000 visitors had engaged with the installation.

5 & 6 November 2009

Watch This Space, Lyveden New Bield



A show of light, digital art projections, dance, performance, fireworks and music brought the story of the Gunpowder Plot to life at Lyveden New Bield. The project was a collaboration between the National Trust, artist collective Watch This Space, artist Sophie Cullinan and pupils from Brigstock Latham Primary and The Kingswood Schools.

Over 1,000 people attended this event over the 2 evenings.

Press Coverage: the event was featured on the Independent's website (Nov 2009) and in Nene Valley News (Oct 2009).

The Emperor's Breakfast

In July, Matthew Oates ran an event in Fermyn Woods, tempting the rare Purple Emperor butterfly from its perch high in the trees to a table of prepared food in the middle of the woods. This event was covered by The Guardian (Oct 2010) as part of a four page spread about the butterfly in the G2 section.

X6 Collective

The artist collective, X6, organised an exhibition at the Water Tower. An associated seminar explored ways in which artists respond to site, place and space, with Richard Wentworth as a keynote speaker, alongside John Plowman from Beacon Arts and artists from the Natural Responses exhibition.

The Big Draw



This annual event, taking place each October was led by Martin Prothero for Fermynwoods in 2009.

Prothero had also mentored the X6 artist collective and ran a series of workshops based around the Danish Shelters in Fermyn Woods. Students from the Corby Business Academy stayed overnight in the woods with Prothero, exploring the tracks left by the local wildlife and Prothero led members of the Little Udders Nursery on a sensory walk through the woods.