

Annual Review

2009/2010



SOW
somerset
art works

Message from Chair

In spite of the looming threat of funding cuts to Arts Development across the whole of the county, Somerset Art Works continues to thrive and forge ahead by expanding and improving a wide range of services to its many artist members. These in turn provide plenty of opportunities for artists to practice and share their particular art forms with members of the public; young, old and in-betweens, through all kinds of community activities and projects, and in partnership with other art or non-art based organisations. All current and past projects feature on the website - why not check them out now and see the wide range and exciting variety.

The Art Weeks have settled well into the new annual pattern, with their alternating emphasis of 'Exhibitions and Events', in 2009, and 'Open Studios' in 2010. Our visitors this year have really appreciated the chance to see artists working in their differing creative spaces, and the opportunity to talk with them face to face about what they do, why, and how they go about producing their work. Equally, artists have enjoyed direct contact with the public and have valued the feedback.

Our website reflects the widening scope of SAW's activities, showing details of individual artists work, all past and present projects, links

to other organisations, and details of current listings. SAW has its own Blog and interactive links to Facebook and Twitter. The website is comprehensive and regularly updated, so if you want to know more about us just log or blog on!

We really value the 'Friends of SAW' group, who help sponsor our post-graduate artist placement each year. This group has also recently introduced a new Corporate Sponsorship Scheme, which invites businesses of all kinds to invest in and benefit from their involvement with SAW. These are both great ways for art lovers to support us in supporting artists and the arts in Somerset.

Thank you to all our Funders and Friends for their support over the past year and for the year ahead.

Pauline Watson



Ceramics by David Brown, Paintings by Peter Messa, Small Wonders, Air Gallery, Wells, Art Weeks 2010 Special Exhibition. (Image by Laura Rouse)

Promoting the Visual Arts in Somerset

Since 2002 SAW has worked with a wide range of partners to provide opportunities to develop new audiences for the visual arts in Somerset.

The Art Weeks programme aims to fulfil this objective.

Somerset Art Weeks 2010

Somerset Art Weeks is a countywide celebration of the variety and quality of contemporary Visual Art to be found in Somerset. 2010 saw Art Weeks return to its roots with an Open Studios event, opening the doors to more than 200 artists' studios and giving the general public the opportunity to cross the threshold of the artist's sanctuary. More than 55,000 visits were recorded as visitors travelled across Somerset to see the diverse work created by its artists.

“ An eye-opener as to the variety of talent in Somerset. We were made welcome and appreciated the artists taking time to talk about their work and the effort to make it happen. Looking forward to the event next year.”

Art Weeks 2010 Visitor

“ Once again, I was surprised by the number of visitors. Also in view of the financial situation, I was also surprised at the amount of sales, which was double the amount in 2008. A good event!”

Art Weeks 2010 Participant



Jelly and Tea, Megan Calver,
Clayhidon Village Hall, Art Weeks 2010.
(Image courtesy of Megan Calver)



Ceramics by Laura Pearcey (Image by Rick Crane,
Style by Emily Jewsbury, Location: Barrington Court).

Investing in the Arts Community



Spotlight, Ilminster Art Centre, Art Weeks 2010 Special Exhibition (Image by Laura Rouse)

Professional Development is a core strand of our work and, in order to invest in the quality of future projects, we work with arts professionals of all kinds.

Current work and recent developments include:

Internships

The creation of a paid post-graduate internship, now in its second year, involves work experience within the organisation and support for the intern to develop project work and a show during Art Weeks. The 2010 intern was Natalie Parsley. We have also offered work experience to local students and incorporated placement opportunities for artists within our project work.

Critical Art Forms Groups

The introduction of 'Critical Art Form Groups' initiates small networks of artists/makers working in specific art forms to meet and share experience and practice.

Curatorial Services

Set up in 2009, we have since delivered ten exhibitions and three commissions. Curatorial Services is steered by a group made up of a fine artist, an applied artist, a commercial arts agent, and one of SAW's Creative Producers. The service supports the development of showcase opportunities, new audiences and ways to raise the quality of production. We also provide advice to organisations and individuals in developing exhibitions and projects.

Working with Children and Young People

SAW is committed to supporting projects that develop young people's artistic talent, as well as building relationships between schools and the community.

Working with YAP (Young Art Promoters)

SAW has worked in partnership with Spæda over the past three years to engage children and young people in Art Weeks, including school tours, studio visits and workshops. This year, we worked together to showcase young people's work at the Octagon Theatre. We supported the presentation of a large scale interactive work produced by YAP, a group of young people aged 11 to 19, who worked with a professional artist. Alongside this, we also displayed works from local schools and young people.

“ I am very proud to see our work showing to the public. I enjoyed working with the artists, it is fun and I learnt a lot!”

YAP member

Safe Routes Summer School, Taunton Journeys



Creative Exchange for Early Years

In partnership with the Little Big Bang Project, we supported two artists to open their studios during art weeks and work with groups of children under five years of age.

Taunton Journeys Project

Last Summer Somerset Art Works worked with Taunton Academy to run a 'Safe Routes' Summer School. The project worked with young people who were due to start at the school in September and existing pupils from years 8 and 9. Participants were allowed to explore different ways to document and create work around their journeys to school.

Students kept journals, learnt print making, created models of their fantasy transport, explored ideas of their dream school and developed skills in a range of 2D and 3D art forms. The project served to facilitate their transition from primary to secondary education.

“ I feel that this experience benefited this group immensely. Moving from primary to secondary school is a daunting experience and this settled them in gently, introducing them to their surroundings and making friends in their new year group.”

Julie Roberts Lead Artist,
Taunton Journeys

Artists working in the Community

A key part of our creative activities for all ages is bringing artists, individuals, generations and families to work together in their local communities. This aspect of our programme has to date attracted interest and funding from non-arts local authority departments and voluntary sector sources and continues to provide important experience and employment for artists.

Making Matters

Making Matters is part of the Somerset-wide Company of Voices intergenerational project. The aim of the project is to bring together older (50+) and younger people (under 25) to work together on positive activities that are of benefit to the local community. Through 2010 SAW has developed a diverse programme of projects engaging over 200 participants. Working in partnership with organisations and individuals across Somerset, SAW has engaged a number of artists to work with communities and develop projects that use Making as a catalyst, to bring the generations together and ultimately benefit community cohesion.

Making Matters Great Crane Intergenerational Project



“ I wasn't that confident about the art activity but once we got going it was really interesting to see what people came up with.”
Great Crane Project Participant

“ As an older person I feel socially invisible, but coming in and working with the young people has really made me feel as if my voice is heard, and I am respected.”
Volunteer Great Crane Project



Making Matters Great Crane Intergenerational Project

Working in Partnership

Our success has meant we have been able to grow as an organisation, but have been careful to remain at a manageable level. We have demonstrated our professionalism and resilience over this period, and built a strong reputation for working flexibly with artists and non-arts organisations, whilst ensuring that the quality of the work is never compromised. Our recent partners have included Spæda, CHYPPS, Somerset Rural Youth, VISTA, Age Concern, Next Step Volunteering, Regal Theatre, Carymoor Environmental Centre, The Great Crane Project, state and public schools including emerging academies. Private sector clients have included The Millers at Glencot and Mazda.

SAW continues to be a lead Reveal partner with The Brewhouse Visual Arts and Somerset Film. Reveal is an evolving partnership committed to raising the profile of - and increasing public engagement with - the contemporary visual, digital and applied arts in Somerset.

We appreciate your support

We would like to thank everyone who has supported the organisation - every contribution helps to enable our activities with artists and the communities of Somerset.

About SAW

Somerset Art Works (SAW) exists to promote the visual arts and create opportunities for visual artists in Somerset by advocacy, promotion and development.

SAW is an artist-led organisation and Somerset's only countywide agency dedicated to developing the visual arts.

The core of SAW's philosophy is to provide opportunities for artists and makers to make new work and in the process to engage with a variety of organisations, landscapes, communities, and to network with other artists. Equally important is for them to have access to support, training and mentoring throughout their project. SAW also encourages artists to take risks and try out new ideas and processes. Our commitment to developing the visual arts in Somerset includes recruiting artists nationally and internationally to bring the best practice into the County, as well as nurturing and celebrating the resident talent we have.



Paintings by Kitty Hillier, Reveal Emerging Artist Award Winner 2009, exhibition in Art Weeks 2010 at Black Swan Arts, Frome. (Image by Laura Rouse)

Contact us

If you would like to find out how your community can get involved or if you are an artist or maker living and working in Somerset and would like to find out about opportunities locally:

Please contact us at the SAW Office

SAW LTD

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Bow Street, Langport
Somerset TA10 9PR
Tel: 01458 253 800
info@somersetartworks.org.uk
www.somersetartworks.org.uk

“ I'm delighted to be a patron for SAW. Somerset is a part of the world that is rightly famous for its diversity: in food, drink, landscape, culture and art. Travelling around the county during Somerset Art Weeks, you can enjoy all of them.”
Kevin McCloud



Somerset Art Weeks 2011:
Exhibitions and Events
17 September – 2 October

Around Here Project, Langport. (Image by lead artists Sue Palmer and Simon Lee Dicker)

Cover image: Sculpture by Sara Ingleby-Mackenzie, Ceramics by Lucy Brown, Small Wonders, Air Gallery, Wells, Art Weeks 2010 Special Exhibition. (Image by Laura Rouse)