

**Festival Makers Awards Scheme** 2010 -12, was an audience and professional development scheme for talented emerging and mid-career designer-makers, enabling them to work with young people and families in North Hampshire to create public artworks for Basingstoke's World Party in the Park in celebration of the Cultural Olympiad. The World Party was devised by The Making to celebrate the culture of the diverse communities in and around Basingstoke through the arts and especially to raise the profile of large scale visual arts and making in the festival context.

Over two years the scheme provided six selected makers with a £4,500 bursary to make original large scale work inspired by one or more world cultures and developed and produced during an artist's residency in a North Hampshire school. They also received considerable professional development support and mentoring from The Making during the programme.

The finished works were displayed at World Party in the Park in early July 2011 and late June 2012, where the makers ran or supervised workshops for families related to their productions.

The Making delivered the programme in partnership with Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design, the borough councils of Basingstoke and Deane, Rushmoor and Test Valley, six local schools and colleges and Hampshire Museum Services, and was financially supported by the National Lottery through Arts Council England, Hampshire County Council, Basingstoke and Deane District Council and Sovereign Kingfisher.

### **The Aims of Festival Makers**

To provide opportunities for 6 emerging or mid career designer/makers to extend their practice by:

- designing and making large scale works for a festival in the public realm
- working with school pupils and their teachers to make the new works
- devising and delivering workshops for families at a large public event
- interacting with experienced craft educators and mentors to enable them to reflect on their work and develop their careers

The Making wished to:

- deliver high quality continuing professional development (CPD) for makers
- build the BME audience for craft and art in the public realm
- build a partnership with a university to deliver the programme
- extend existing community partnerships to deliver an ambitious festival World Party in the Park

### **Pilot programme**

A pilot programme involving two makers – weaver Rezia Wahid and sculptor Flora Gare took place in 2010. The makers were in residence at primary schools in deprived local wards of Basingstoke and made work linked to and displayed at the World Arts Day event in Basingstoke's Market Place on 3rd June 2010. The event included making and performing arts workshops and live performance.

The pilot

- provided a successful prototype for the next phase of Festival Makers
- helped to build an audience for the 2011 World Party in the Park event
- trialled partnership working with Basingstoke Multicultural Forum, the Willis Museum and other arts groups and communities for the next stage of the project
- promoted the project and engaged the local and county councils
- used artists from different world cultures thus attracting BME visitors who made up around a third of the audience

### **Partnership Working**

Making It Big Symposium 16th November 2010

In partnership with Central St Martins (CSM) a national symposium on making work for the public realm was held at Central St Martins' Cochrane Theatre. Through presentations from a range of experienced makers, public art producers and educators, the event, chaired by Simon Fraser, the MA 3D Design course leader, provided practical advice for emerging makers on ways to explore new approaches to their practice and to create innovative, large-scale public artworks. CSM's Widening Participation programme donated £5,000 towards the cost of the symposium and provided the project with free meeting rooms and use of the theatre. Widening Participation students were given free places to the symposium and four acted as volunteers helping with the bookings and management of the day. For a review of the symposium see: <http://www.themaking.org.uk/content/opportunities/ArtistResources/Review-of-making-it-big-Corinne-Julius.do>).

### Maker Selection

Six makers were selected through national competition from over 50 applicants. Four makers worked during 2011, and two in 2012. Simon Fraser, the CSM MA 3D Design course leader, led the 2010 selection panel while Elizabeth Wright, artist and CSM tutor, led the 2011 panel. Both provided the applicants with valuable advice.

### Community Partnerships

Despite a signed partnership agreement, The Making experienced difficulties in 2010 and 2011 in working with BME communities through a third party, the Basingstoke Multicultural Forum, a non-arts based voluntary organisation. As a consequence, in 2012 The Making worked directly with individual communities and groups. This resulted in much more focused and productive relationships and better artistic outcomes. Artists were commissioned to work on additional projects selected by the communities (and funded separately). For example, Mahogany, a Notting Hill carnival company, worked with Basingstoke's Caribbean community to create African themed Carnival costumes for their children to wear in the World Party Parade. The Filipinos wanted a replica Jeepney for the Parade, and The Making commissioned local sculptor, Richard Farrington, to build a 3-D replica to their specification for the children to decorate and for use for future events. Other local communities formally engaged in the event included the Indian, Pakistani, Cameroon, Nepalese and Chinese (the first time the latter had taken part in a public event in Basingstoke). They performed on the stage and/or provided food stalls, and their children took part in the Parade wearing national dress. The Chinese community also ran calligraphy and paper cutting sessions, the Indian and Pakistani groups ran henna workshops while the Caribbean community ran braiding demonstrations.

### The Festival Makers Programme

Taking the theme of world cultures as a starting point the six makers worked towards the production of new large works made in collaboration with teachers and students that were displayed at the World Party in the Park in July 2011 and June 2012. As well as installing their new commissions the makers delivered family crafts workshops to visitors to the event or supervised access to their works alongside the young people who had been involved in their production.

#### Phase One August 2010 – July 2011

Community arts practitioner **Jo Coles**, having recently returned from Poland, used her knowledge of Polish folk art as a starting point for her spectacular, large scale wooden Polish lady sculpture – the Polska Pani, whose clothes hid secret dioramas of landscapes or interiors made from found objects, accessed through little doors. Sixty pupils at Kings Furlong Primary school made pecking chickens which they carried in the World Party's Children's Parade and placed next to the Polska Pani in the park. This work was extremely well received, with the public greatly enjoying its interactivity.

**Ian Kirkpatrick** was inspired by the stories carried by classical Greek vases, and used modern day containers (cardboard boxes) as a base to tell new stories through his striking artwork. He worked with 8 Andover College students on an extended Level 3 Diploma art course. They wanted to shed light on how globalisation had shaped their cultural experiences as they told their own stories visually on their contemporary containers. He then used this information to create a major piece of his own – a giant wine-box which was used to toast the end of the first World Party.

Ceramicist, **Rosanna Martin**, worked with an entire junior school, 137 children, in Basingstoke to create a celebratory and colourful display of large medals made from porcelain. The children enriched the medals with stories and portraits to celebrate their individuality. They then made ribbons for the medals which they wore in the World Party's spectacular children's parade and were then able to keep.

Brighton based graphic designer and maker, **Nick Sayers**, creates spherical sculptures, shelters and lighting that explore mathematical geometry and the creative re-use of waste. He worked with 60 Farnborough school-children to build a spherical World of Cultures sculpture made from recycled material. It was made from an interconnected lattice of the children's silhouettes that served both as a sculpture and rollable play structure. It was displayed at World Party and is now housed at the primary school with the children that inspired it.

#### Phase Two August 2011 – July 2012

**Stuart McCaffer** is a sculptor trained in Edinburgh and the Royal College of Art and whose work deals with the illusion of reality. Stuart creates three-dimensional spaces where he disorients the viewer through sound, smell, light and film. Stuart worked with 24 Year 8 pupils at Bishop Challoner Catholic Secondary School to provide Eastrop Park, the location for World Party in the Park, with an unusual garden shed. "Shed some light" was in fact a camera obscura revealing to its many visitors an image of the world. Wooden trees cut in the shapes of the continents in reverse and placed in a seemingly random manner when seen from outside, coalesced into an image of the world map when viewed from inside the darkened shed. The young people worked with Stuart during the World Party managing the visitors to the shed and explaining the concepts behind the piece.

**Sarah Parsons** is a Brighton-based artist producing festival installations, props and moving sculptures. Sarah applied for an award to improve her engineering skills and develop a new way of working. Suffering from a serious medical condition she hoped that by working as an automaton designer with other artists managing some of the heavier tasks, she could continue to be employed despite increasing physical limitations. She made a metal Bird automaton with flapping wings and which carried an Olympic ribbon. It was placed on an Olympic-style podium beside the lake in Eastrop Park during the World Party. Her studio partner, Jo Coles worked with thirty pupils at Manor Field Junior School to make and emboss the bird's wing feathers and also to create fish to carry in the World Party Parade. Storyteller Chris Bennett was commissioned to write a special story about the Bird which he told at regular intervals during the World Party. At the World Party Jo ran workshops for children to make bird wing badges.

Both projects were experimental and technically complicated, presenting the artists with challenges to overcome. However, both worked well as 'festival art' and greatly appealed to visitors.

#### The makers' responses to Festival Makers

Every maker said that the opportunity had brought significant outcomes in terms of their practice. They rated the support of the making as very good or excellent. Two artists, Jo Coles and Sarah Parsons were experienced community facilitators and especially valued Festival Makers as a way to extend their art practice. The other four artists also extended their practice in a range of ways but found the teaching and facilitating experience valuable, increasing their confidence to plan and deliver workshops thereby opening up further possibilities in terms of work.

Sarah Parsons: "The process of applying, being interviewed and receiving the award was efficiently managed and I felt very well supported. During the site visits, production period and on the day of the World Party in the Park, the project was well managed by The Making. Email dialogue was quick and efficient, as was phone and postal communication. It was a pleasure to be involved with The Making from start to finish and I'm glad that I had the opportunity of the award as a chance for professional growth."

#### Makers' responses on the making of the commissions

Jo Coles "It was a great opportunity for me to make in a different way. As a professional maker of large scale pieces I usually make items of a more temporary nature. This piece enabled me to

make in a more durable way, and to combine elements of my small scale studio work with my community art practice.

Ian Kirkpatrick: "Festival Makers has unexpectedly, and very positively, affected my practice as an artist, as it necessitated me altering my typical way of working and take a more "hands on" approach to my art. I was heavily encouraged by The Making to include the manufacture of the sculptural object itself (rather than concentrate on decoration). I have shifted my practice to include the production of new sculptural forms."

Sarah Parsons: "I have created a substantial piece of moving sculpture in metal and wood of a size and quality I have not achieved before. I have employed specialists in wood and mechanical engineering. Now I have a highly skilled team that I can communicate with on a trusted level, in the future I can apply for commissions with similarly ambitious boundaries."

#### Makers' responses to the mentoring programme

Each maker had access to a mentor or supervisor who could guide them during the residencies and in the production of their commission. Each maker was also supported during the school workshops by The Making's experienced education staff. The makers also appreciated the support and interest they received from the teachers who hosted them.

Stuart McCaffer: "The help I received from the people at The Making was invaluable during the running of the workshops - they were able to help the children as well as help me with advice during all aspects of the three days at the school."

Ian Kirkpatrick: "It was due to the openness of The Making and their pairing of artists with supervisors that I was able to develop."

Rosanna Martin "It was a huge help to have support in the sessions at school."

#### Makers' responses to working with young people

The makers worked with around 300 primary school pupils, 24 secondary pupils and 8 college students, largely from deprived wards in Basingstoke and North Hampshire. All six award-holders engaged well with the young people and their teachers and received positive feedback. Their workshops at the World Party engaged a total of about 300 children and their parents while many hundreds of other people visited the Bird and its storyteller and the other artworks. BME attendance at the World Party events was around 40% of an estimated total audience of 8,000 people over the two years.

Nick Sayers: "My art practice was developed through involving children more in the creative process. The children seemed to like the sculpture and the production process. I'm proud to have made a sculpture that won't just sit on a plinth, but that can be used as a plaything too."

Rosanna Martin: "This is the first time that I have worked professionally within a school environment, so it has been a hugely valuable experience. I think it will increase my future employability. It is also the first time I have composed and run workshops without collaborating with other artists. This has increased my confidence in my abilities."

#### Teachers' comments

"Working with an audience widened the students' experience and scope."

"I thought what Stuart achieved and the outcomes were very exciting and the learning opportunities went beyond what could normally be achieved within the classroom on a day to day basis. When I mentioned to staff that we had made a giant pinhole camera that one could actually get inside and see an inverted image, they were absolutely amazed. Thank you again for providing us with such an opportunity for our students."

#### **Conclusion**

Festival Makers achieved the aims of providing significant professional development for six

emerging or mid career makers to extend their practice. Each maker produced an art work that extended their artistic practice and received support from experienced makers and educators. Five of the six makers extended their experience of working with young people and their teachers in school, and in festival family workshops. Additionally The Making, through the Making It Big symposium, offered a significant professional development opportunity to 130 students and other early career makers. The partnership with St Martins School of Art contributed directly to its success.

By embedding Festival Makers in the World Party in the Park, making, craft and design became a central component of the event and the associated workshops, alongside the more well known performing art forms. By strengthening community partnerships during 2011-12, The Making built an audience for making from BME communities, both in craft workshop delivery and through participation. Making was accessed by a new audience of hundreds of young people in the school workshops, the targeted community sessions and in the World Party family workshops. Festival Makers enabled a BME audience of over 3,000 to engage with art in the public realm at the two World Party events which were colourful, relaxed and celebratory with a great sense of shared community – a significant achievement and the result of strong vision and commitment by The Making.

**Penny Jones**  
**Festival Makers External Evaluator**