

PAULA ARMSTRONG

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Having worked in the arts in some way for over 17 years what I can say is, I love what I do and I think that it's a privilege to share my passion for clay.

Since graduating I have worked as a professional artist, exhibiting, curating, and working to commission. To help share my passion for art and clay I have also taught regular classes in ceramic art as well as painting and drawing. I've also led many drop-in workshops and organised community arts projects from planning and funding through to delivering workshops to people with little access to art.

For my contemporary ceramic work I call upon inspiration from a wide variety of sources. I enjoy the challenge of creating finely balanced pieces and delight when my work has impact involving the viewer. Each piece is individually hand-built, most often in stoneware clay.

Along with this I have worked in local authority as Arts Development Officer and Development Officer, Lead for Arts and Culture. Both of these roles aimed to develop infrastructure in support of the arts, to help them flourish and grow. I've also had the pleasure of working in a number of voluntary and community arts organisations over the years including Open Studios Northamptonshire and Top Yard Gallery.

PROFESSIONAL ARTISTIC PRACTICE AND COMMUNITY ARTS DEVELOPMENT

1998 – present: **Paula Armstrong Ceramics, Freelance Artist and Consultant**

My work is two-fold. As an artist I design and build ceramic sculpture which I market and sell through galleries around the UK as well as teaching community workshops and classes for all ages and abilities across a range of crafts but especially in ceramics.

As a creative consultant I offer advice and support on community arts and engagement, strategic development, cultural event management, audience development, marketing and fundraising.

I enjoy working with people and have good communication skills. I thrive on variety and have excellent prioritisation skills. I am a conscientious person and pride myself on my integrity and determination to make a difference.

2012-13: **South Cambridgeshire District Council, Development Officer, Lead for Arts and Culture**

This was a diverse role working within the New Communities team taking the strategic lead for arts & culture.

Key responsibilities included:

- strategically supporting the transition of the dual arts programme to a self-sustaining model following grants cut and managing the Council's involvement and expectations,
- advising on and coordinating activity arising from planning applications that included specific public art content or contribution,
- replying to enquiries from arts and cultural organisations and individuals, sharing knowledge, advising on beneficial connections and working in partnership to deliver arts and culture benefits for the residents of the district,
- and establishing the procedure for the Community Right to Bid process.

2003 - 10: **Borough Council of Wellingborough, Arts Development Officer**

Development, management and implementation of the Arts Plan for Wellingborough including:

- Management and delivery of community art projects including Carnival workshop and Mas camp programme, Christmas lantern parade and SmART festival of the arts for families as well as public art projects such as the Silver Belles and Butterfields' Big Bugs, three artist in

residence schemes since 2005 each resulting in a permanent piece of public art for the town and open art competition, building a corporate art collection for the Council.

- Research, development and management of the Public Art Plan and Public Art SPD, working with Planners to ensure Public Art in its broadest sense was considered within the S106 negotiation process.
- Working in partnership with existing organisations to develop events and festivals with strong community focus including support for the Carnival, One World Week and Inter-faith Day events, Disability and Participatory Arts Festival, All Hallows fun day, Open Studios Northamptonshire and NTA programme.
- Development, management and assessment of small grants programmes for the arts annually distributing around 7 grants of £500 each, often seed-funding larger applications to other funders.
- Advocacy and promotional activities including writing committee reports and press releases; producing and editing Art at the Heart magazine; managing the website content for arts development; being an active member of the Northamptonshire Arts Partnership and Creative Northants steering group; attending meetings and conferences.
- Evaluation of activities; devising performance indicators and collating appropriate data to measure success.

2002-6: Access 2 Art

I was Treasurer and founder member of this group specialising in the development of community art projects taking arts into unusual locations, with the aim of increasing access to and participation in the arts. The projects cut across a variety of visual arts mediums but specialised in ceramics providing with experience of project planning, fundraising and budget management, establishing partnerships and locating interested participants, project and group promotion, evaluation and monitoring feedback.

2001-03: Open Studios Northamptonshire, Chairperson

I was responsible for the co-ordination, management and development of this annual visual arts event as part of the organising team. We introduced formal accounts and financial procedures, improved the balance of income between public funding and other sources working towards event sustainability, improved the promotion and took the brochure from black and white to full colour through business sponsorship, developed a logo and brand, introduced the role of regional co-ordinator and established a friends scheme with a programme of events and quarterly newsletter. In order to achieve this we created an ethos of partnership working and built the network at all levels from increasing artist participation to advocacy with funders and relationship management with sponsors.

EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE:

Paula Armstrong Ceramics and Crafty Parties <i>Artist, Teacher, Party leader and Consultant</i>	May 4 th 1998 - present
South Cambridgeshire District Council <i>Development Officer, Lead for Arts and culture (temp contract)</i>	October 2012 – June 2013
The Borough Council of Wellingborough <i>Arts Development Officer</i>	June 2003 – August 2010
Access 2 Art <i>Treasurer, founder member and programme deliverer</i>	February 2002 – August 2010
Northampton Community College <i>Part time tutor</i>	June 1998 – January 2005
Open Studios Northamptonshire <i>Chairperson</i>	January 2001 – November 2003

QUALIFICATIONS:

Master of Business Administration (MBA), Cranfield University	January 2010
BA Hons Design Crafts, Cumbria Institute of Art & Design	July 1997
City & Guilds NVQ 7306 Teacher Training (Inc. D32/D33)	
4 'A'level passes & 8 GCSE passes	

REFEREE:

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