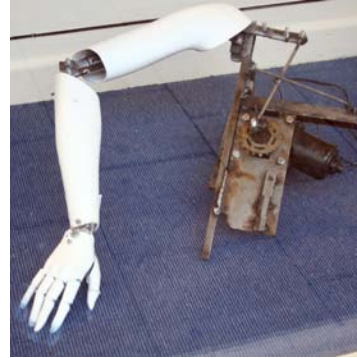


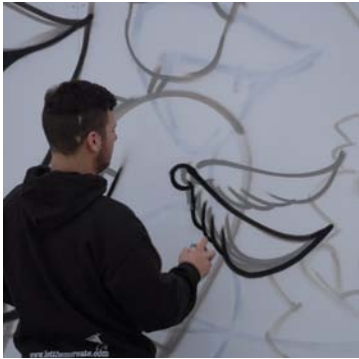
conjunc+ion08

review march 2009



“What a great way to get around the city...I loved the projections and pinhole photography”

Audience feedback



Consortium

Conjunction is led by a small steering group and curating team. The Steering Group is chaired by Catherine Fehily, Head of Arts Culture and Design at Staffordshire University and includes David Bethell, Director of AirSpace Gallery, Peta Murphy-Burke, Cultural Development Manager for the North Staffordshire Regeneration Partnership and Paul Bishop, Director of Let Them Create Gallery. The project has been managed by Matthew Clowes. The curating team includes Stephen Boyd, Ian Brown, Ian Vines, Andrew Branscombe and David Bethell.

Funders

Conjunction has received funding from Arts Council West Midlands, North Staffordshire Regeneration Partnership, Staffordshire University and Business Link.

Overview

Conjunction 08 opened on the 8th November at a variety of venues across the city. Stoke on Trent's first contemporary art biennial involved over 30 artists, exhibiting work in 11 different locations over a 5 week period. As well as traditional gallery spaces the biennial exhibited work in a variety of site-specific locations including Bethesda Chapel, the BT building and vacant retail units. Alongside the exhibitions artists and audiences also had the opportunity to attend artist talks, a panel discussion, enjoy a guided tour and benefit from professional business advice. Over a five week period more than 10,000 people attended an event or exhibition.

Background

The theme of Conjunction 08 'Fantastic, Found and Fake' was carefully chosen to engage with contemporary arts practice and stimulate a diverse interpretation. The theme also reflected the regeneration of Stoke on Trent, whilst its multi-sited events also reinforced a sense of place - past, present and future. The biennial features the work of both invited artists and artists that responded to an open call for submission. Conjunction 08 received more than 250 submissions from local, regional, national and international artists. The work chosen reflects a broad range of artistic practice and experience.

Artists

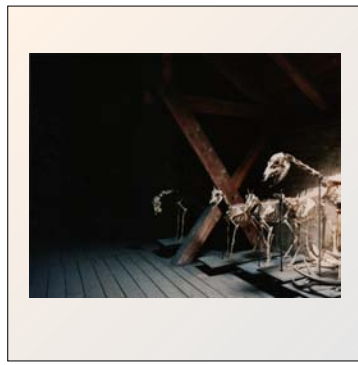
The biennial included work by Alex Frost, Hondartsa Fraga, Paul Vivian, Johanna Laitanen, Jonathan Callan, Chris Biddlecomb, Rich White, Ronnie Heeps, Michael Coombs, Pascale Canning,

Stephanie Davidson, Georg Rafailidis, Eagle and Feather, Louise Fago Ruskin, Littlewhitehead, Michael Shaw, Jan Dunning, Rinat Kotler, Peter Smith, NSEC, Visual Tourettes Collective, Kate Lynch, Jessica Lloyd Jones, Nisha Duggal, Gayle Chong Kwan and artwork by Staffordshire University students.

The biennial featured work from a small number of invited artists including Johanna Laitanen, Gayle Chong Kwan and Louise Fago Ruskin. The exhibitions programme also featured newly commissioned work, such as Ronnie Heeps' kaleidoscopic projection onto the iconic BT building and Kate Lynch's site specific artworks, informed by the local colour and patina of surfaces sampled at the venues used to host the programme. The exhibitions featured a broad range of artforms and disciplines including sculpture, performance, digital video and film, projections and photography.

“I just wanted to thank you for the fantastic way you had chosen to display my work. I thought it was a really interesting space, from both the foyer and within the room itself. I really enjoyed the exhibition. I was thrilled at how the images looked - thank you for all your hard work.”

Louise Fago-Ruskin, exhibiting artist



Marketing and Documentation

The marketing campaign consisted of -

- A series of 5 postcards
- A3 folded programme
- The launch of www.conjunction.org.uk
- Supplementary A frames / banners / vinyls at various exhibiting venues

Samples are enclosed

All printed material was distributed widely across the region and at all venues. The primary function of the marketing campaign was to raise awareness of the project rather than to generate significant audiences. A preview event on the evening of November 7th was attended by almost 150 people and the biennial successfully launched on Saturday November 8th.

Alongside the marketing campaign Conjunction commissioned video maker Gavin Repton and Staffordshire University student Luke Johnson to document the launch weekend and support the pr campaign. As part of the commissioning framework for Conjunction the consortium members also commissioned photographer Paula Moss to explore the theme in relation to the people, places and spaces that make up Stoke on Trent. This was a live commission that ran throughout the biennial exhibition period.

PR Campaign

The pr campaign was devised by FIDO pr agency and was delivered over a three month period from October 2008. The key aims of the campaign were –

- To promote the festival using a short but intensive programme of activity.
- To gain media coverage in both national and regional media prior to and during the festival.
- To develop new stories and photo opportunities as the festival evolved.
- To create and increase awareness of the event to ensure high visitor numbers and local community participation.
- To communicate the message that Stoke on Trent is using art as a basis for its regeneration.

The campaign successfully secured broad coverage in regional and national media.

This included Arts Industry, The Independent, Daily Mail, Radio 5 Live, The Sentinel, BBC Radio Stoke and BBC West Midlands News.

A full review and evaluation of the pr campaign is available.



“Great space, really enjoyed the artwork... a lovely video but what was it about?”

Audience feedback



Budget Summary

Income

ACE	£51,945
NSRP	£28,500
Staffordshire University	£2,000
Business Link	£2,940
	£85,385

Expenditure

Artist Commissions	£32,324
Marketing and Design	£10,612
PR	£8,944
Overheads	£8,439
Project Management	£12,000
Artistic Management	£12,000
	£84,319

Development

During the biennial the Conjunction steering group and curatorial team held a development day as part of the ongoing evaluation and review of the project. The members reviewed strengths and weaknesses of the project, discussed a new mission statement and outlined ideas for the biennial in 2010 and 2012. Conjunction is now at a critical stage in its development, over the coming months members must clarify both the vision and delivery of the project whilst securing further funding.

Future

Conjunction is an international biennial of contemporary art in Stoke on Trent. Conjunction delivers an engaging, inspiring and provocative programme featuring regional, national and international contemporary art that stimulates debate, challenges perception and facilitates positive change.

Summary

Conjunction 08 set out to achieve two main aims: to support, develop and promote the work of artists and arts organisations in Stoke-on-Trent and to change perceptions of Stoke-on-Trent, effectively communicating the quality, vitality and diversity of the city's artistic activity. Feedback from audiences and participating artists indicates considerable success on both counts and the consortium is now eager to plan for 2010 and 2012 on a larger, more inclusive and more international scale.

“Very interesting, well done... it's so worthwhile and really needed.”

Audience feedback