

hybrid: arts

Hybrid Arts Annual Report 2008/2009

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Profile

Hybrid Arts is a not for profit company, operating as a social enterprise. Formed in 2003 from a combined background of 30 years of arts practice, development and education, Hybrid Arts is dedicated to creating opportunities for young people.

Hybrid Arts provide an innovative creative learning experience, where young people form part of a dynamic environment in which they can develop their creative passions and learn new skills in the process.

We provide a chance for the community to experience first hand what life is like in a pioneering simulated studio environment within the creative industries.

Creative practice is integral to our success in designing compelling training packages, and we undertake research, development and production of creative projects that are diverse as they are innovative. At Hybrid Arts young people have access to studios equipped with industry-standard hardware and software, and sessions are delivered by practising artists – we believe that being part of a professional learning environment has a positive motivational impact on society.

The Hybrid model is being recognised regionally, nationally and internationally. Our most documented work is our progressive activity with 14-19 year olds who are NEET (not engaged in mainstream education, employment or training). Close working with this challenging but often inspirational group of young people has helped to shape Hybrid Arts, and our experiences have resulted in Hybrid Arts being approached by government agencies from across Europe to be used as case studies to demonstrate best practice. One group in particular generated a great deal of attention from educators, MPs, young people, the local community and policy makers.

We work by the ethos that young people who have failed to benefit from the mainstream educational process can be motivated by involvement in the creative technologies. These technologies are a fantastic medium for harnessing creative potential and providing young people with the motivation and confidence to pursue their chosen path, whether that means entering into further education, employment in the creative industries, or something entirely different.

Our promotion of alternative learning practises has placed us at the forefront of educational innovation, and our vision is in tune with the Government agendas for children, young people and digital inclusion. In 2008 we were visited by Liam Byrne MP, Minister for the West Midlands, who said: “You see a lot of things in this job, and you should be really proud of what you’ve done here. It’s one of the most extraordinary things I’ve seen since I became the Regional Minister.”

Hybrid Arts have a European presence and have worked on digital media projects with new and emerging communities and economic migrants. We are looking to set up new projects to collaborate on digital technology as a mobility tool. Utilising the European Social Fund Hybrid Arts’ have developed a training programme in Creative Technology to the Portuguese community in Leamington Spa, which has grown in the last five years from just 25 people to 4,000, made up almost exclusively of economic migrants who were an invisible and disengaged community within the town.

Redirection

In 2009, Hybrid Arts underwent a period of reflection, where our priorities and goals as artists and education providers were re-assessed. It was agreed by all of the team that our creative focus as an organisation had, at several points over the previous year, become sidelined somewhat as financial necessities took priority. It was decided the time was right to re-assess the balance, ensuring the embedding of artistic integrity into all of our activities was put back at the top of the agenda.

Wherever possible, creativity will act as a key deciding factor in choosing which contracts to accept, pursue, where to channel our resources, which partners and practitioners we involve ourselves with. This led to a discussion about moving to new premises that really work for Hybrid Arts. A new mission statement was produced and we have created a new website which reflects both our creative integrity and political positioning.

We had emerged through a turbulent 12 months stabilised and thinking positively. In this economic and social climate in flux across the world, social enterprises can come into their own. We feel all we have been working towards in educational reform since our inception is finally coming into action – significant changes in education policy are now being put into place, and Hybrid Arts are at the forefront of these changes. We are one of the first providers to be delivering the Creative and Media Diploma, and we are positioning ourselves as key providers of Foundation Learning Tier delivery.

We are positive about the future of Hybrid Arts and are excited about how the company will evolve in the coming years.

Mission Statement 2009

Supporting the production and promotion of art, technology, culture and education since 2003

Hybrid Arts is a social enterprise that puts creativity back into the classroom. Over the last seven years the Company has driven policy, research and practice by commissioning artists to engage and educate young people aged 14 – 19 who do not fit into school structures.

Our core value is to build cultural and social capital by fostering creative expression and a sense of belonging to the wider community. Our core purpose is to deliver learning that inspires, motivates and qualifies young people who, for whatever reason, do not fit or thrive in current mainstream education.

By using the conduit of creative technology we foster confidence and engagement for learners to make cultural products and succeed.

We have achieved the implementation of innovative educational learning by working with local authorities, government agencies and research institutions. With the current educational reform well in place we are uniquely positioned to work with partners to contribute to the educational landscape of the future.

Hybrid Arts is uniquely led by creative practitioners with the vision and professional experience to demonstrate creativity can be at the core of a sustainable society, on a local to international level.

Anticipating and leading change, Hybrid Arts are expanding curricular to incorporate creativity into environment, society and identity themes. As a company, our nimble and networked structure based on use of web 2.0 has enabled us to connect and collaborate with external ideas and synergies. Future development will focus enterprise and entrepreneurship on a social network platform.

Hybrid Arts wish to promote the well-being of individuals, families and communities through education, prevention and empowerment. Hybrid Arts feel what we do is now more important than ever – we have a commitment to our young people and in this social, economic and environmental climate in flux, enterprise

and innovation can thrive.

Business Plan

Hybrid Arts will be producing a Business Plan around new sustainable premises for Hybrid Arts. Initial advisory meetings have been set up with Kate Barnard, Head of Arts at County Arts and Arts Development Officer for Warwick District, Mair Evans. We are aiming to produce a draft by Feb 2010.

Partnerships and acknowledgements

Hybrid Arts are great advocates of partnership work, associating regional and national with partners in the field of creative industry business and fostering these partnerships for mutual benefit. We have an incredible network of partner organisations who work with us to support, develop and deliver our service.

Funders: Learning and Skills Council, Heritage Lottery Fund, British Council, Youth Music, Warwickshire County Council, Warwick District Council, Arts Council England, Primary Care Trust, Drug and Alcohol Action Team, Youth Offending Service, CSWP Ltd, Warwick Area Fund

Partners: Warwickshire County Council, Coventry Development Agency, Coventry Transport Museum, Lighthouse, Blitz Games, Warwickshire College, North Warwickshire & Hinckley College, Tony G Ltd, Mo Jooste Ltd

RSA - Directors Tim Ellis and Stella Carr were invited to become fellows of the Royal Society of the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce, which works towards removing the barriers to social progress. The insight and expertise of the Fellows play a crucial role in both the development and application of new thinking. Fellows are invited for their achievements and contribution to the arts and society.

Company Structure

Hybrid Arts has 3 Directors with experience of a wide range of vocational education enabling the company to draw upon a breadth and depth of practice to deliver this project. An additional two Trustees have a specialist representation in Finance and Community. Hybrid Arts are fortunate to have a Patron Ursula Russell MBE, former Chair of Learning and Skills Council, Board Member UK Skills.

Strategic Director: Stella Carr, BA Illustration and Graphic Design, 15 years teaching of Art and Design in Further Education, 15 years community arts development including posts with Warwick District Council, Stratford-upon-Avon District Council, Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council, and Warwickshire County Council.

Creative Director: Tim Ellis, Music/performance industry experience, 15 years owner/manager of leading music engineering studio, 25 years professional performance and touring including BBC broadcasts.

Financial Director: Sarah Jones, experienced bookkeeper and office manager.

Writer & Researcher: Gemma Corden, BA English, freelance writing experience.

3 Qualified Peer Mentors - Young Agents of Hybrid Arts; these are 18 year olds, two of whom have been young offenders. The Young Agents have received CRB checks, training in drug and alcohol misuse and teenage pregnancy and sexual health. They act as external ambassadors of Hybrid Arts and are currently nominated for three national awards for their contribution to their community and the staying safe creative technology products they have produced. The role of these Young Agents would be to act as peer mentors and support and guide the learners.

Creative technology tutors: Hybrid Arts contract freelance artists as trainers. These trainers have a wide experience of delivering training within and outside of formal education. Their collective work experience ranges from teaching degree and masters University students to being well known nationally and internationally experts within their specialist creative technology worlds. Hybrid Arts selects trainers who first and foremost can demonstrate an empathy and aptitude for delivering effective training to disaffected disadvantaged young people. Secondly they must demonstrate an high level of creative knowledge within their field.

Volunteers; Hybrid Arts enjoys the community support of a growing number of volunteers who provide support and assistance.

Staff Update 2009

Hybrid Arts are attracting a high volume of artists, trainers and volunteers. We put a series of adverts in the Job Centre at the end of August to seek out new creative talent to build up our portfolio of freelance trainers. The response was phenomenal. As a direct result of this activity we have taken on two new trainers in Web/Media and Music, due to start later this month. SI will be leaving Hybrid Arts. LG will now become more involved at Indestructible and will no longer be delivering the Re@ctiv8 programme. We have also taken on a volunteer to help us with one off film/training/technical needs. He has already produced some fantastic creative work for Hybrid Arts and we look forward to continuing this relationship. Hybrid Arts are working towards delivering the Future Jobs programme – a government initiative to ensure jobs for young people who have been signing on for more than 39 weeks. To be updated at the next board meeting.

Curriculum Update

Hybrid Arts are no longer going to delivering qualifications with NOCN. We are moving to NCFE, who offer more flexible and creative learning programmes.

The Foundation Learning Tier will be coming into place in Sept 2010 and we are working towards being part of his delivery. This change is very exciting for Hybrid Arts.

The government are introducing the Diplomas – the new qualifications designed to provide high class vocational learning for students. Hybrid Arts will be delivering the Creative and Media diploma with Campion and Southam Schools, placing us at the forefront of educational reform.

Project and Commissioning Update

Summary

2008/9 saw our relationship with a number of local schools develop. We are working towards developing these relationships further in line with the ongoing curriculum changes in the UK. After finishing delivery of Music Tech programme in franchise with Warwickshire College in July, we will not be repeating this contract in September, due to funding restrictions that have had to be put in place at the College after their LSC finding was reduced.

The Re@ctiv8 programme continues to be a success, with excellent student progression and engagement. This programme is being terminated in 2010 and replaced by the Foundation Learning programme, which Hybrid Arts are involved in.

Key Projects

Indestructible Music Club This project is one of Hybrid Arts' biggest successes – the club continues to grow and is busy all days of the week.

In 2008 we responded to mass self-referral by developing a project called Indestructible. This project created a music performance space that young people can attend to create music, be part of an audience or undertake associated role of running and marketing a venue. Indestructible operates with the intention that young people who are otherwise disengaged from education are inspired through hands on experience to enrol on further formal training programmes delivered by Hybrid Arts leading to qualifications. We initially secured three year funding to run a youth club at the centre - this came in the form of a partnership with

Warwickshire Youth and Community Service - their funding was over subscribed but we managed to strike a 'hybrid' deal with the department and in particular the local Area Manager Dave Jones - the youth club continues to deliver two evenings a week and offers 'open mic' studio sessions, rehearsal facilities for bands and facilities to learn music technology. Anyone that joins the club is able to get involved with setting up or performing at 'Underwired' the regular gig at the centre.

In 2009 we delivered the **Narrowing the Gap** at Indestructible – a project funded by Warwick District Council to stimulate enterprise and provide disadvantaged young people aged 19-25 with a qualification in enterprise around the music business. As part of the programme, young musicians associated with Hybrid Arts Indestructible Music Club made initial steps towards setting up a label, Hybrid:cuts, to help market and distribute their original music. The main drive behind the project was to encourage enterprise in the young musicians. Participants recorded demos and set up a market stall at Leamington Farmer's Market to sell them. A copy of the evaluation can be obtained on request.

At the end of 2009, Hybrid Arts were successful in applying to Youth Music to deliver their project, **Hybrid Musical Youth**. Hybrid Musical Youth will offer music tuition for young people in Leamington Spa and Nuneaton. We are recruiting young people who are not benefiting from private music tuition but have an interest in developing their skills. Aspiring young composers, producers and performers will be encouraged to create, practice and perform new music. Hybrid Musical Youth will take place once a week at our music club, Indestructible, and once a week in Nuneaton, until May 2011. Sessions will be two hours long and involve a music leader, a junior trainer and a peer mentor. Over the course of the project we aim to engage over 100 young people aged between 13 and 25. A strategic element of the project is to provide peer mentors with youth work training to help address the short fall of music equipped youth workers in the County service. Due to start January 2010.

www.myspace.com/indestructiblemusicclub

Sow the Seeds This was a Heritage Lottery funded project that explored the cultural diversity, past and present, on allotments in Warwickshire, in partnership with The National Allotment Society, Warwickshire County Record Office. The project aimed to promote an understanding of allotment gardening amongst young people, highlighting the importance of maintaining, promoting and protecting the allotments as heritage sites. The end product is a series of interpretation boards sited at a series of allotments across Warwickshire, and a website. The project is now nearing completion – this has been delayed due to the finalisation of the website taking longer than anticipated, due to some technical issues with moving servers. We are working towards sending off the final report to HLF by the end of January 2010.

www.hybridarts.co.uk/sowtheseeds

Extraordinary Cycles Launched in September 2008 in partnership with Coventry Cycle Museum, this ACE funded participatory project was designed to create a uniting cultural force between cycling, sonic art and dance performance. The project was twice awarded the 'Inspire Mark' - one of only three licences in the region. The London 2012 Inspire mark recognises outstanding projects and events helping deliver the Games' lasting legacy. Highlights of the premiere display can be viewed online.

The July 2009 Open Weekend launch was a success despite the poor weather. Copies of the evaluation can be obtained on request. Footage and images are available to view on our website. However, despite all the positive feedback and excitement surrounding the project, it's future is currently uncertain – we were advised to put in a second application to the People Dancing fund after being originally turned down for funding to support the 2009 launch. (We decided to go ahead with the launch anyhow as so much was at stake, but this pushed us to the limit both financially and psychologically.) Following advice, we sought advice and guidance from the directors at MotionHouse Dance to support our application. But at the time of going to print, we were informed our bid was not successful. Full update at the next board meeting.

www.youtube.com/hybridfilms

Mobile Unit Hybrid Mobile is our portable creative technology facility. Funded by The Learning and Skills Council in 2009, the resource is designed to deliver state of the art creative art and media technology training, engagement and production, in any location across the county. The current change in society, and the way in which we all communicate, has resulted in Hybrid Arts development of training services that embrace Internet based social networks and Web 2.0. These systems can enable communities and individuals to join in with the growing global movement and social network using a common, user led web based communication platform. This is the first time Hybrid Arts has had such a facility, and it will allow us to expand our delivery as a company.

Financial Overview

Looking to the future we are aware we need to work on our cash flow – the ongoing problem that is a direct result of not being core funded and having to broker individual contracts. Hybrid Arts are strategically working towards positioning ourselves more strongly and are attracting more contracts. We are now Key Clients of Warwickshire County Council and have developed our presence in the north of the county also. We no longer have a presence in Rugby.

Vision for the future

This report demonstrates that Hybrid Arts can support young people in an innovative way that is distinct from any other organisation in the region. We have established a track record of positive outcomes and partnerships and are constantly seeking to develop these further. Through sustainable premises, Hybrid Arts will continue to build capacity and breath of provision.

Hybrid Arts has experienced rapid growth since it was formed in 2003 and developed a regional reputation for the delivery of high quality specialist training in creative industry technologies. After almost five years of delivering our services Hybrid Arts are ready to examine our long-term sustainability by building on our specialisms, pushing the boundaries of creativity and broadening our delivery by utilising our new mobile unit.

We are intrinsically geared towards enterprise, demonstrated by our innovative practice and unique method of delivery, whilst simultaneously maintaining a healthy balance between this business activity and our social community-based commitment. Hybrid Arts work on the premise that the need for young people to be supported to gain further education and training opportunities will never go away - however training and employment opportunities improve, there will always be a place for the support Hybrid Arts offer. Hybrid Arts feel what we do is now more important than ever – we have a commitment to our young people and in this social, economic and environmental climate in flux, enterprise and innovation can thrive.

After 6 years of being at the forefront of innovate educational practice combining creativity with vocational learning, we are starting to witness the educational landscape in this country shifting – the opportunity to make real change happen is now. We will strive to combine life-changing training with a creative edge – Hybrid Arts is coming into its own.

We are in the initial stages of exploratory discussions around becoming a registered charity. Charity law is more straightforward than in the past, and we feel we are currently restricted about funding streams we can apply for without have charity status. Maybe the time is right for us to make the change. Hybrid Arts are seeking professional advice from our partners at Coventry Development Agency and board members. Our researcher is looking into the legal implications.

Hybrid Arts are thriving with new creative ideas for 2010 and beyond. We would like to take the opportunity to thank everyone for your ongoing support, invaluable advice and creative input. We are very much looking forward to working together towards an exciting new focus for the organisation.