

17/01/12

Victoria Gray
LUTF Scholarship Covering Letter

Dear LUTSF,

I am writing to you to acknowledge and report on the trip undertaken by myself and funded by LUTF. In November 2010 I was invited by Grace Exhibition Space in New York to present a development of the work 'Drei' (2010). With the financial support of the LUTF bursary I was able to conduct this trip between September 12th and September 18th 2011.

This trip not only facilitated the presentation of my performance work, but enabled me to complete a one week residency in the gallery, to co-facilitate a performance workshop, to discuss my processes and performance work with audiences in New York and to exhibit video and sculptural documentation of my work in the gallery following the performance. The multi-faceted outcomes of this project indicate that the aims and objectives of my initial project proposal were not only achieved but exceeded.

The highlights of my trip include the residency space in the gallery, the performance itself and the opportunity to hold a workshop. All three of these outcomes were discursive and enabled me to explore social and cultural factors that affect the production, presentation and dissemination of performance works across geographical contexts. This insight was broad, speaking to curators of galleries, editors of performance related journals, artists from various disciplines with varying degrees of experience and audiences.

Furthermore, I am grateful that the trip has had a lasting impact on my professional practice resulting in further invitations to present my work on return to the UK. It has also highlighted a number of further research opportunities in New York at NYU and Movement Research that I intend to investigate in 2012 onwards.

I have already shared my experiences with colleagues and students at York St John University in my role as Lecturer in Dance. I have shared documentation of my work and contacts with fellow UK artists resulting in those artists travelling to New York in spring 2012. Furthermore, I have presented my developed work from New York at two major performance events since arriving back, namely tactlileBOSCH, Cardiff as part of Experimentica Festival and at 11 11 11, In Remembrance, Manchester.

I am grateful for the support provided and the guidance in applying, booking and reporting on my trip. Without this bursary my trip would not have been possible.

I encourage future applicants to LUTF and commend the scholarship fund for the volume and diversity of the projects that it supports.

Regards

Victoria Gray

REPORT

Grace Exhibition Space – New York September 12 - 18th 2011

In November 2010, I was invited by Grace Exhibition Space directors, Jill McDermid-Hokanson and Erik Hokanson to travel to New York and complete a one week residency and subsequent performance at their Brooklyn gallery. Grace Exhibition Space presents over 30 curated live performance art exhibitions each year, showcasing new work by more than 400 performance artists from across the United States and the world since 2006. It is the only gallery in New York City devoted exclusively to Contemporary Visual Performance, spanning a trajectory that covers performance art, action art, interventionism, activism, experimental theatre, experimental dance,

sound art, video art and poetry.

Throughout 2010 I had been conducting practice-based research, investigating the relationship between performance and sculpture. I presented elements of this research at Independent Dance, Siobhan Davies Studios Feedback Forum and at Axis Arts Centre, Manchester. This body of research culminated in a performance titled – *'Drei'* which was performed at **O U I Performance Night #0** in October 2010 at Bar Lane Studios in York and at Chisenhale Dance Space, London, of which I am a member, in November 2010.

The residency at Grace Exhibition Space and subsequent performance allowed me to develop upon the ideas, movement and images presented in *'Drei'* and thus I was able to produce a new incarnation of this work. Furthermore, the curators Jill and Erik were keen for new works to be presented, perhaps in response or in relation to New York itself and/or the context of their gallery. The imperative to develop the work led me on an interesting period of research that drew connections between minimalist and post-minimalist North American sculpture, post-modern and current European experimental dance practices and performance art.

Prior to my visit to New York, the gallery outlined a schedule for the week. Arriving on the Monday (12th September) late evening the first encounter with the gallery space was Tuesday. I was able to spend time discussing my ideas with the curators and used the day to site my work in the gallery space. On the Wednesday evening, I co-led a Fluxus Workshop at Grace Exhibition Space for local artists and studio holders. In the workshop we screened video examples of Fluxus performances and discussed the use of the Fluxus Score in the making of performance works. Furthermore, we used Grace Exhibition Space's archive of books and ephemera to facilitate a 'study session' that enabled participants to handle and read contextual and historical writing and documentation on experimental performance practices. This session was rewarding and provided a platform to discuss how social, cultural and political differences, across geographical locations, directly affects the way that artists produce, present and disseminate their work. It also highlighted the developments and key shifts in terms of intergenerational practice and historical developments – focussing mainly on the 1960's to the present.

On Wednesday I took the opportunity to explore Manhattan and visited Judson Dance Theatre. I also contacted Movement Research in New York to discuss the possibility of conducting a future trip to develop this research further with their artist development programmes. On Thursday and Friday I was able to spend two full day's in the gallery, installing the sculptural objects that I would be using in my performance, rehearsing and plotting the work in space, setting lighting and testing sound equipment so as to present the work to a public audience on the Friday evening. Throughout these two days there was an opportunity to meet the other two New York based artists that were also performing; Hector Canonge and Kelly Pinho. Alongside myself, UK based artist Nathan Walker was also performing his work in the programme.

The performance on Friday 16th September was well received. Grace Exhibition Space make special efforts to ensure that artists and audiences can mix and thus, following the performance I was able to talk at length with audience members about my work. This was a new experience, finding New York audiences much more open and curious to experimental work, additionally, the questions were insightful and gave me time to reflect on the work. The objects that I and the other artists used in their work were left as an installation in the gallery and on the Saturday and Sunday the gallery was opened to the public. The gallery also presented video documentation of my previous performances that I have made since 2009 to the public as part of this installation. This was an interesting process, presenting the remains of the work as work itself and again, provided me with an opportunity to reflect on my work in a different way.

There were a number of positive outcomes from the project. Firstly, I have maintained a contact with Grace Exhibition Space and envisage a further trip in 2013 to perhaps present new work and research. This connection has led to further UK based artists working in performance to be invited to the gallery in 2012 and thus, has cemented a more meaningful international exchange.

Ugly Ducking Press, a publishers based in Brooklyn attended the event. Their publication Emergency Index, published in 2012, was introduced to me there and since, documentation and writing on my own and other UK based performance artist's work will be published in their forthcoming book.

Upon developing the work *'Drei'* at Grace Exhibition Space I was invited to perform developments of the work at further venues in the UK. The first, at tactileBOSCH Gallery in Cardiff

and the second at 11 11 11, In Remembrance in Manchester, curated by Michael Mayhew. I am certain, that without the opportunity to perform at Grace Exhibition Space, coupled with a focussed period of research and development in the gallery, these invitations would not have materialised.

As mentioned earlier, I aim to visit New York again in 2012 – 2014 and have clear developments and research that I would like to conduct. This would include visiting the Tisch School of Arts at New York University. It would also involve contacting Movement Research, perhaps to present work at their Feedback Forum at Judson Dance Theatre, at their Open Performance held at the A.R.T./NY's South Oxford Space, Brooklyn or to visit the twice annual festival.

Finally, this trip has impacted on my own artistic practice but also, has been beneficial to my students. As my role of Lecturer in Dance at York St John University I have been able to share my New York experiences with them, and have included new knowledge gained in practice, both in theoretical modules, but technical and choreographic ones too. In my opinion, the ability to continue an active performance profile nationally and internationally positively impacts upon my students' experience.

Without the bursary from LUTF I would not have been able to realise any of these potential developments, furthermore, I would not have been able to fund my trip to Grace Exhibition Space. I am grateful to the trust for their support both leading up to my research trip and post-trip.

I have included 3 images in this report. The images seek to provide a context for the trajectory of the work presenting 'Drei', the original work that I was invited to present, the developed work shown in New York and a subsequent performance, post-New York that demonstrates the benefits and outcomes of the scholarship.



Performance of 'Drei' at Chisenhale Dance Space, November 2010. Featured in Time Out London. Photograph: Elisabeth Blanchet.



Performance of 'Drei' at Grace Exhibition Space, New York. September 2011.
Photograph: Nathan Walker



Performance at 11 11 11, In Remembrance, Manchester. November 2011.
Photograph: Roshana Reuben-Mayhew.