

Threads About

Since 2015 Threads have actively aided artist development through regular discourse and criticism outside main institutions. Through:

- *Providing an accessible “tool kit” for artists through “Threads Sessions”.*
- *Creating more opportunities for professional and artistic development to encourage the production of new work; boost exposure, confidence and creativity for artists.*
- *Aiding the development of connecting art organisations.*
- *Recycling existing venues by hosting residencies, Salons, exhibitions, screenings and peer led work-in progress critiques.*
- *Opportunities for showcasing and developing artists and their work.*
- *Peer-led development opportunities.*
- *Encouragement for the production of new work.*
- *Boost exposure, confidence and creativity for artists.*

Since 2015, Threads have consistently delivered open critiques, where artists are invited to present their own work in progress within a peer group. Threads activity has grown out of the ethos developed through this open crit platform. The crits are open to all artists and are not restricted by mediums or formats. In addition, those who do not have work to present are also invited to come and take part in conversations surrounding the creation of contemporary art.

In 2016 Threads' Directors travelled to Romania to join a cohort of participants from Romania, England, Spain, Sweden and France and achieved a European Certificate in Community Enterprise. Additionally Threads were awarded their first Arts Council grant for SMIF, an exhibition, screening and panel discussion taking place in Folkestone.

In 2017 Threads was recognised by A-N for the Artist-led Hot 100 organisations in UK. Also in 2017 Threads worked collaboratively with Canterbury Christ Church University to deliver a city-wide community project alongside the delivery of the BA Professional Practise module. This project's legacy has resulted in the formation of a new collective which has since curated at the Turner Contemporary. Threads were invited to curate the programme of the Strangelove Time-Based Arts 2017 Festival, which has seen further editions in Dunkirk in 2018 and London, Margate, Brighton and Folkestone in 2019.

In 2018 Threads delivered their second Arts Council funded project: a nine-month programme of micro-residencies. Artists were selected to take part in residencies and salons across Kent.

2019/2020 will see Threads residency project evolving nationally and internationally.... Stay tuned!

Who We Are

About the Team

Philippa

- *THREADS FOUNDER AND DIRECTOR*

Philippa founded Threads in 2015. Philippa has curated Strangelove Festival, project managed for Folkestone Triennial, lectured at CCCU and is local co-ordinator for an EU grants and development programme across the SELEP.

Faye

- *THREADS CO-DIRECTOR*

Faye is founder and Gallery Director of Casement Arts , a freelance archive curator for DACS and Hop Projects CT20. Additionally Faye project manages Strangelove Festival.

INSTAGRAM @CASEMENTARTS

Luke

- *THREADS CO-DIRECTOR*

Luke is the founder of O.PROJ an online platform for artists researching and creating-video art. He is also an artist and co- curator of Strangelove Festival.

INSTAGRAM @O.PROJ

Emily

- *THREADS DOCUMENTER*

Emily is a photographer focusing on analogue processes. Emily founded The Darkroom at Beach Creative, teaching darkroom skills to all ages & offering Arts Award to 11-25 year olds.

INSTAGRAM @THEDARKROOMBC

Juliana

- *THREADS ADVISOR*

Juliana's facilitating experience guided a testing period for Threads critiques during 2016.

Threads

Acknowledgments

DEC 2018

Confessions Of A Serial Creative - *FOLKESTONE*

MAY 2017

A-N Artist Led Hot 100 - *LIVERPOOL*

MARCH 2017

FAD Magazine - *ONLINE INTERVIEW*

FEB 2017

Folkestone Folks - *ONLINE INTERVIEW*

MAY 2016

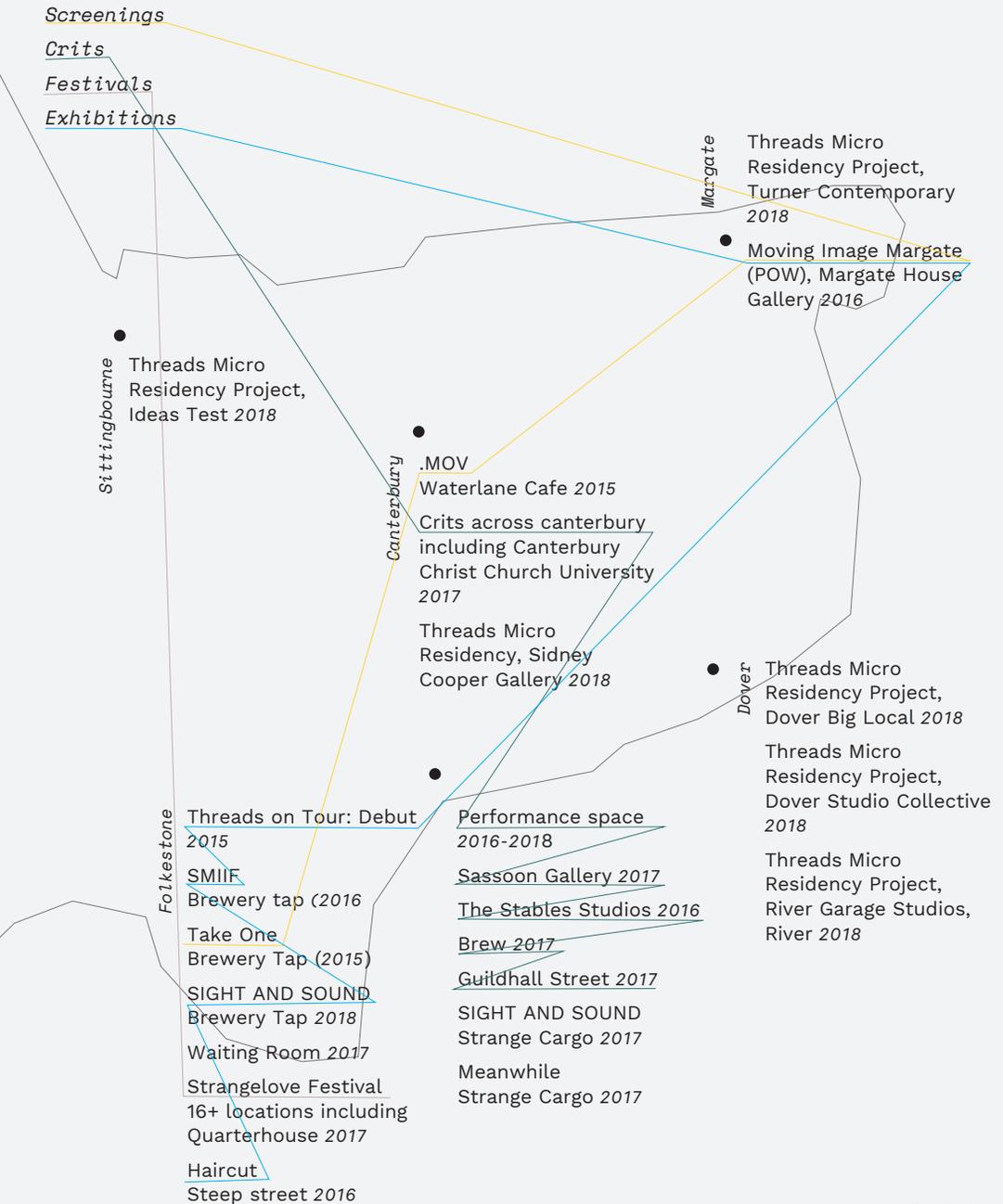
European Certificate in
Community Enterprise - *ROMANIA*

MARCH 2016

Noise Dolls Records - *PRINTED INTERVIEW*

Threads

Past Projects 2018





Micro Residency, Sidney Cooper Gallery APRIL 2018



Sight & Sound, Strangelove Festival, Strange Cargo 2017



Selina Bonelli, Micro Residency
Sidney Cooper Gallery APRIL 2018



Camilla Bliss, Salon, Turner Contemporary APRIL 2018



Joshua Hall, Micro Residency
Brewery Tap MAY 2018



Colette Patterson, Salon
Turner Contemporary MAY 2018



Micro Residency, River Garage Studios 22 NOVEMBER



SMIIF, Brewery Tap 2016

Threads

Micro Residency 2018

Having delivered over thirty visual art critiques across Kent, Threads identified the opportunity for development that exists in peer-to-peer activity. In answer to this, Threads curated a nine-month, paid programme of public residences, critiques and salons, supported by local cultural ambassadors.

By keeping every event open to the public, the project offered a uniquely different cultural experience for visitors, highlighting East Kent as a must-visit destination for contemporary art. Thirty-four chosen artists participated in residences at partner locations, including:

Sidney Cooper (Canterbury); UCA Brewery Tap (Folkestone); Ideas Test

(Sittingbourne); Dover Studio Collective; and Dover Big Local/ Art31 Gallery. A further eleven artists participated in Salons at the UCA Brewery Tap (Folkestone) and the Turner Contemporary (Margate).

Each residency day was public facing with an open door policy all day, making more creative spaces open and accessible. An open critique closed the day, these were peer-led discussions surrounding work-in-progress. They were free to attend and there was no pressure to present work. Artists were given the chance to discuss vital ideas and pivotal moments that could shape future work.

Salon events were held throughout the project. Differing from the residences and open critiques, salons offered selected Artists the chance to install and present work to an audience followed by a q+a led by a panel of experienced creatives. To mark the halfway point of the project, Threads held a celebration event at Sidney Cooper Gallery. All residency artists, partners and guests were invited to enjoy sound-art performances, talks and discussions around the importance of sustainable creative energy and identifying Kent as a culture centre, as well as an exhibition of micro-residency documentation and a glass of bubbly.



Laura Olohan, Micro Residency, River Garage Studios NOVEMBER 2018

Micro Residency Interviews 2018

Where do you see peer-led development existing in the future?

Murray O'Grady

I think the trend of artists leaving expensive cities will continue. Threads showed that it is possible to bring artists together from hugely different places and has been really successful in supporting those artists in cultivating wider networks.

What are your thoughts on peer-led versus hierarchical critique environment?

Murray O'Grady

In my experience, conventional hierarchical critique environments had a tendency to take on a kind of board room format; putting a 'finished' work through critical testing to see if it would 'stand up' in an exhibition context. Situations where a work, project, process or practice was in flux were often not treated as such and conversation still followed as if participants were talking about something entirely resolved.

Often I think that not enough consideration is given to individual context; is a conventional crit beneficial or detrimental to an artist/practice at a particular time? In some instances would it be more useful to critique something related to or informing the work rather than the work itself?

My experience with Threads felt very honest, considered and supportive. The peer-led crits provided artists with an opportunity to talk about work very much in progress and importantly within the context of their current personal circumstances (factors outside the practice that may be having a profound effect on the way in which artists are working).

Did the time and space of this residency allow you to explore and experiment new paths of your practice?

Frieda Ford

Yes, because it was only one day long I felt like I needed to try something completely new and bold as there was no pressure to result in something complete and developed. I first used a found object in this residency as I was keen to use something from the location itself. Since then I have been incorporating them a lot into my work.

Where do you see peer-led development existing in the future?

Christopher Collier

We face a crossroads. There's a crisis in arts education, from secondary through to postgrad. Student numbers are declining, with potential students cut off, or put off, by the disastrous marketisation of the sector in recent years.

The direction implied by this marketising tendency, suggests a future in which art is mainly reduced to advertising, to décor, or a pornography of the senses; art students as entrepreneurs bashing out competing distractions from an impending social unravelling. Peer-led initiatives might plug into this, as entrepreneurial start-ups, catalysing further value extraction via 'the creative industries'. On the other hand, peer-led initiatives might just open up possible routes towards the collective construction of a future, a "DIY" psychic commons to help in organising the emergence of an alternative social, and hence cultural landscape.

That won't happen on its own. The tendency will be towards the former. The latter will require a collective and organised effort.

What are your thoughts on peer-led versus hierarchical critique environment?

Rosina Godwin

The hierarchical environment of the art school is useful when there is a specific goal (i.e. to get a good grade), but can often feel dictatorial, with conflicting advice from other tutors. Peer lead critiques feel more supportive - they ask a lot of questions and make observations, which help identify themes and connections, and give advice on ways of moving forward.

Interview with Threads *by Miroslava Kotuličová*

This year's programme of crits and micro-residencies continues the established 'thread' in your practice (*ha! terrible pun!*), however, it is a lot more extensive and expansive. How did the preparation and planning for these sessions go? What did you set out to achieve by them?

This idea has been a long time in the making, discussions started with our key partners over a year before the project started. Each crit prior to the programme served as a testing ground for new ways to facilitate discussions around art criticism and professional development. Our open critiques cemented a central point that the residencies were able to expand from.

It was also very important to us to provide an open call that was free to apply to and more importantly a residency that paid artists for their time. Therefore removing financial barriers away from accessing creative development. We wanted to see this as the first in a series of residency programmes that can be developed and expanded upon. Exploring and experimenting was so important to us and give artists freedom to make new work.

What other Kent organisations have been involved with your programme this year and in what way? What was the motivation behind delivering the sessions in different locations rather than having one key space?

We were fortunate enough to work with some great organisations across the region. This allowed us the opportunity to showcase Kent's variety of dynamic spaces to both our selected artists and audiences.

We initiated a partnership with the Sidney Cooper Gallery very early on in the project planning stages. We received a lot of support from both the Gallery's Learning officer Ruby Bolton and Curator Katie McGown. Katie was also on our selection panel for the open call and on the panel of two of the salons.

We were keen to extend the project to Ideas Test in Sittingbourne. Our ambition and inspiration around the project was shared by both Jane Pitt and Jon Pratty who we met in February 2017 at Ideas Test. We wanted to contribute to the efforts made by organisations across Kent to "join the dots" and to help individuals navigate the cultural offer of this region.

What have the creatives you are working with appreciated most about your programme? What have they found particularly useful?

Our feedback surrounding the duration was positive as artists were grateful for time and space away from usual obligations. One focussed day dedicated to their practise, allowed artists to explore new routes, whilst being paid for their time. The fee allowed some of our selected artists to travel to attend our other events in the programme and connect with more artists.

How did you perceive the atmosphere / the dynamics of the sessions where artists who had not met before were asked to work in the same space for a day or four days? Have some of them influenced or inspired each other at all?

Each residency had a different atmosphere mainly created by the conversations that took place during the day between the artists. It is rare to be able to discuss your work as you create it, the opportunity for discussion increased the potential of what could be developed on the day.

There were some artists that collaborated on the residencies, working together allowed for them to appreciate the other's approach in tackling their work and influence their own practice.

Did artists come to micro-residencies with clear ideas about what they want to explore or could they change their minds during their stay? How much openness or flexibility was part of these events?

We wanted these residencies to be an opportunity for experimentation. Therefore we selected those who expressed how the time and space would allow development of their practice.

Artists had to plan what materials and equipment they would bring with them. Some arrived on the day with a starting point but with no intentional outcome, leaving room to play. We assured artists that the public crit, held at the end of the residency, was time to present and reflect work in progress

Most of the programme is available to be seen and experienced by public. You encourage visitors to drop by at galleries where artists are working, you welcome people and their feedback at salons and evening crits. What is the role of the public in relation to the artists developing their works? Why do you put so much emphasis on the visibility of artists' creative processes and the exchange of ideas/interpretations with visitors?

It's really important for artists to be able to discuss their practice outside of their usual peer group. We encouraged members of the public to ask: "why" therefore artists gain a different perspective.

Usually the public only experience art works once completed and hung in a gallery. By giving the public access to experience the process of art-making it demystifies what an artist's practice is, and shows what creating a practice could be. The emphasis is to expose people to new possibilities, a change of perspective and perceptions, that could lead to them finding a way of communicating themselves through an art practice.

Do you already have plans for another round of similar events?
What do you see your DIY gallery working on in the future?

Yes, we are planning an expanded version of our Micro Residency project that will be based around the experiences of the 2018 programme. The focus will remain on creating a development programme that still gives the artists time and space to develop their practice and engages the public. So both the public and artists are benefiting from the option of a shared dialogue.

We found that adding a panel to our Salons to be an experimental element of the programme that we'd like to continue to explore in future project. It would be great to see the 2018 residency artists as panel members of 2019/20 project to continue our ethos a peer network and learning.

We loved meeting new artists each month, seeing new work being created and having interesting conversations with artists as well as meeting new audiences. And are really excited about doing it all again!

Threads Sessions

Threads have taken the success of the open crits to introduce a unique peer-led approach to delivering professional development through tailored one-to-one Sessions. Including

*Discussion and development around work in progress
Portfolio reviews and curatorial thoughts*

*Support for creatives navigating exhibition and
funding opportunities*

*Guidance towards self promotion as a brand or
business*

Amplifying and building an impressive portfolio

Advice on starting artist-led initiatives

Choosing the most suitable start-up model

*Day to day running, including, book-keeping,
management plan, branding, marketing and audience
development*

*Support for GCSE/BTEC/6TH FORM students including
a review of portfolio and work- in-progress and in
the context of contemporary and art history*

Post education toolkit



Micro Residency, Sidney Cooper Gallery APRIL 2018



Micro Residency, Ideas Test OCTOBER 2018

With thanks



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