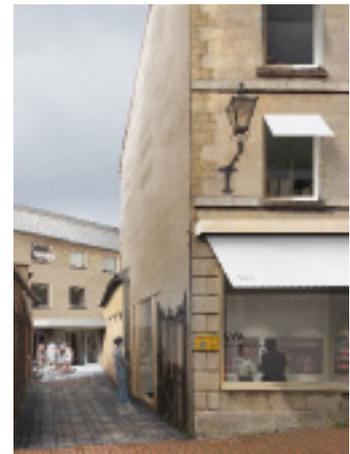




SVA studios designed by Tony Fretton Architects Brunel Goods Shed

Introduction

Stroud Valleys Artspace (SVA) provides studio space for professional artists and presents a year round artistic and educational programme with the Site Festival as an annual highlight. SVA serves local and regionally based artists through low cost studio space, a support and information network, training and opportunities to promote their work through the public programme. Local, regional and national audiences engage and participate with the SVA's innovative and diverse artistic programme which includes performance, exhibitions, open studios, film screenings, workshops and talks that occur throughout the year.



New exhibition/project space, studios and courtyard at SVA and designed by Tony Fretton Architects

Building development

During the last seventeen years of continuous activity SVA has made significant stages in its development with the major refurbishment of its John Street site in Stroud town centre, led by Tony Fretton Architects (Lisson Gallery, Camden Art Centre, Artsway). SVA moved back into the building in January 2007 after the completion of the first two phases of a £1.3 million pound refurbishment, and rented the first newly refurbished studio spaces in April 2007.

In 2011 SVA expanded its programme to a new venue - the Brunel Goods Shed, an industrial heritage building situated next to Stroud Railway Station.

SVA is currently refurbishing its 3-storey front building as part of the final phase of refurbishment to be completed by March 2014. This development will enhance SVA's visibility and public access through a new street-facing exhibition space, studios and courtyard space. Funding of £640,000 for this stage of SVA's refurbishment has come from Arts Council England, Summerfield Trust, Gloucestershire Environmental Trust and Stroud District Council.



'Bee Lines' Alice Forward , Site 09 Darbyshire Award winner SVA, February 2010



Site 09 Darbyshire selected exhibition, Museum in The Park June 2009

A little bit of artistic history

Initiated by artists for artists in 1996, SVA was set up in response to a local need for low cost workspace, exhibition and networking opportunities. From the beginning, the founder members of SVA realised that providing studio space alone would not produce the vibrant and engaging environment that many artists and audiences were seeking. The first open studio's event was held six weeks after moving into the John Street site in July 1997 and this annual event has since evolved into the Site festival, which last year involved over 250 local, national and international artists in 88 sites throughout the Stroud district.

SVA's artistic aim from the outset in 1996 was to increase opportunities for artists to present work by providing a high quality sustainable exhibition and project space at 4 John Street. SVA has a successful 17 year track record of programming visual arts exhibitions and projects in a range of diverse sites ranging from docklands warehouses, redundant mill buildings, empty town centre shops and the Goods Shed.

The current front project space at SVA has also been a part of this vibrant public programme from the early days of Year of the Artist, Re.projects, monthly reflux events, Resound weekends and other individual artists residencies, projects and exhibitions. This space, which was not part of the phase 1 and 2 capital works was dramatically adapted in 2007 through the installation of a fire corridor which in effect left a dark black box as the project space. Whilst this enabled greater opportunities for media based visual works requiring complete black out it had a negative impact on SVA's visibility and public access.

SVA has recently expanded its programme to a new venue- the Brunel Goods Shed. The programme covers a broad spectrum ranging from performance art, experimental music, public interventions, dance, video, film, spoken word and installation.

Whilst SVA will continue programming exhibitions and events at the Goods Shed, empty shops and other alternative spaces, the new exhibition/project space will offer an amazing opportunity to curate a really high quality visual arts programme, attract and engage new audiences and significantly improve the cultural vitality and built environment of the town centre.

Alongside the annual Site festival and open studios events, SVA has worked on many projects with artists and artist led groups in the past which have included Elixir commissions for Gloucester Royal Hospital (2006-7); the Hub Musicians collective and events (2002-07), International exchange project with Morocco (2008-10) ; Resound (2000-2013), Negative Space film screenings(2011-13), Mezz artist talk and screenings (2009-12) along with many other diverse artistic and educational events.

SVA has worked with Darbyshires for the Darbyshire Award exhibitions (2008-2010) and the Darren Almond 'Sometimes Still' installation in the Goods Shed (2012) which was also supported by White Cube . A highlight this year was in May when SVA supported INDEX an artist led gallery space based in Stroud to present 'The Sky Has To Turn Black Before You Can See The Stars' a new piece of work by Siobhan Hapasaka in the Goods Shed for Site Festival 2013. Also in the same festival John Wood and Paul Harrison's '10x10' film was screened in SVA's front project space.



'The Sky Has To Turn Black Before You Can See The Stars'
Siobhan Hapasaka
Goods Shed, Site Festival 2013



Sometimes Still' Darren Almond,
Goods Shed, Site Festival 2012

Artist led collaborations

A collaborative, informed and outward looking stance has always been part of the SVA ethos and the development of a dynamic arts infrastructure that engaged with the wider contemporary art scene has been an essential part of supporting local and regional artists. Key to this was the creation of physical and critical spaces in which art and ideas could be presented and debated, as well as produced. This artist-centred approach and a desire to promote experimental and critically engaged practices has led SVA to develop a model that was closer to that of a flexible 'agency'. Through the collaborative involvement of active artist-members a wide range of events have been developed through a process built on necessity, interest or opportunity rather than through the establishment of a formal exhibition programme. Another essential ingredient has been to develop the artists network far beyond the confines of the Stroud district. By initiating collaborations with artists and organisations across the UK and beyond, SVA continues to build a profile and a constituency that engages on a regional, national and international level.

There is now an opportunity to use this collaborative responsive approach in the programming of the new exhibition space. By working in partnership with individual artists, artist led groups, curators or producers, SVA hopes to provide some of the necessary tools i.e space and time for the sustainable and creative growth of ideas needed to present a critically engaged exhibition programme.

Links

www.sva.org.uk
www.sitefestival.org.uk
<http://www.tonyfretton.com/stroudart.htm>
<http://www.willisnewson.co.uk/elixir-project.html>
<http://www.sva.org.uk/some-vacant/>
<http://www.sva.org.uk/programme/archive/2007/resound07.html>
<http://www.mezz.info>
<http://www.darbyshire.uk.com/darbyawardinterim.html>
http://whitecube.com/news/darren_almond_at_site_festival/
 Siobhan Hapasaka Site Festival 2013 <https://vimeo.com/65993669>

Mission Statement and Vision

Stroud Valleys Artspace Mission Statement

Stroud Valleys Artspace's (SVA) mission is to raise the profile of artists and their role in the community by supporting the production and presentation of their work, thereby increasing opportunities for access to and active participation in the arts for a diverse range of people. SVA will enable artists to work without undue financial pressure within a practical supportive framework through the provision of space, resources, training and support. SVA aims to act as a catalyst for experimentation and collaboration by promoting a programme of innovative projects to the general public. As a unique cultural focus for the community, SVA will make a significant contribution to the economic prosperity of the area.

Vision

Multi dimensional project

SVA is an ambitious artist led project which is developing a unique environment of professional arts activity in Gloucestershire. Successful capital and revenue funding has built the capacity of SVA enabling the organisation to provide a permanent and supportive production and presentation space for artists. SVA is a multidimensional 'space' provider which includes studio, project, exhibition and event spaces. SVA aims to initiate, commission and promote an accessible and innovative programme of projects in collaboration with regional, national and international artists.

The capital project

In 2007 SVA completed the 2nd phase of a £1.6 million refurbishment of a 7000 sq.ft warehouse building in Stroud town centre that it previously occupied, taking ten years of studio practice and projects into a new phase. The acquisition and renovation of this building has enabled SVA to permanently provide good quality low cost sustainable workspace, resource facilities, project space and a support network to a wide number of artists. The design of the building reflects the innovative and collaborative nature of SVA's artist led programme, providing vital arts infrastructure and an interactive cultural focal point from which a high quality arts programme will be promoted. The final phase of the development September 2013 -Spring 2014 will enhance SVA's visibility and public access through a new street facing gallery, studios and courtyard space.

Artistic programme for the general public

At the heart of SVA's vision is an ambition to engage new and diverse audiences and participants in its activities to create a greater appreciation and understanding of artists and their work. SVA's innovative artistic programme will create new opportunities for participation at all levels and strengthen the cultural diversity of the locality. This will be achieved through an annual festival of the Contemporary arts, open studios, exhibitions, performances, film and video events, installations, residencies, public art projects and an integrated educational programme.

Investment in artists

On a local level this is being achieved by providing vitally needed low cost workspace, facilities, training and a supportive network. Bringing in regional, national and international artists to participate in a diverse range of exciting projects will raise the profile of Stroud and the members of its artistic community. SVA aims to strengthen networking, stimulate critical debate, and encourage new ways of working for many participating artists. In particular the creative use of new technology will be supported, developed and promoted. SVA will support the professional development of artists, enhancing their economic status and employment opportunities.