

Case study

Jennifer Mulcahy

Details

What:

Jenny Mulcahy participated in a three month research residency at the Aberystwyth Art Centre in Wales. The residency enabled her to create a series of small scale ceramic and mixed media works suitable for use as embellishments on one-off fashion garments.

Jenny also created work as a direct response to the very different landscape and environment she was experiencing in Wales for the first time.

The works formed a narrative of her stay and some will act as maquettes for future works.

Jenny extended her professional networks through the project and was able to meet and spend time with Michael Flynn, a leading European figurative ceramicist. Jenny also visited Stoke on Trent to attend the British Ceramics Biennial and to view the historical and contemporary ceramic collections held at the Stoke Pottery Museum.

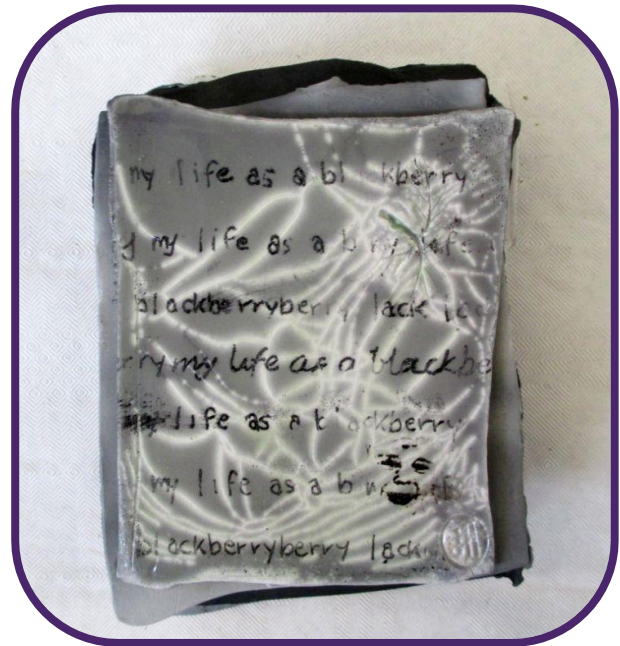
As a result of the relationships established through the residency, Jenny has been invited to participate in an exhibition at the Aberystwyth Art Centre in September 2014 and has had work accepted for the *Button Project* curated by Bath Spa University's Dr Jo Dahn.

When:

September to November 2013

Where:

Aberystwyth Art Centre, Aberystwyth, Wales, United Kingdom



Jenny Mulcahy, *My Life as a Blackberry*, 2013. Artist book - Ceramic (detail). Photo courtesy of the artist.

Arts Queensland contribution:

\$5000– Individuals Fund

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Links:

Axisweb interview with Jenny:

<http://www.axisweb.org/features/news-and-views/in-focus/interview-with-jenny-mulcahy-aberystwyth-arts-centre/>

Jo Dahn's Button Project:

<https://www.facebook.com/JoDahnButtonProject>

Outcomes

- Jenny created three series of experimental works relating to the Welsh landscape which have been retained by the curator of the Aberystwyth Art Centre for an exhibition in September 2014. Two series featured prints and imprints of local grasses found outside the studio and were made from paper-thin stoneware which had been saggar fired. The third series referenced the rugged hills of slate, traditional Welsh hats and the Welsh diaspora caused by famine in the 19th century.
- Ten of Jenny's works will be included in the *Button Project* curated by Dr Jo Dahn of Bath Spa University. This opportunity came about through contacts made during the residency.
- Prominent UK artist web site, Axisweb, will feature an interview and article about Jenny, helping to profile her work to new audiences and a different market.



Jenny Mulcahy, Button - Ceramic and glass frit, 2013. Photo courtesy of the artist.

Learnings and reflections

The project Jenny originally planned was not possible due to changes required by her host organisation. She shared some reflections about what happens when things do not go to plan:

'One of the difficulties when applying for residencies and/or for funding to participate in residencies is that the applicant needs to have a strong and well defined plan of what they anticipate achieving during a specified period of time ... However, it can also be the cause of great stress to the participant, if things, for a variety of reasons, do not go according to plan.'

Jenny advises building in some flexibility to a project to take account of the unexpected but also to allow the project to be responsive to the environment.

Jenny acknowledges there were some upsides to the changes. She was able to make some experimental works she would not have attempted otherwise and various artistic directions have resulted from this.

Jenny also felt the residency helped her make important personal connections:

'Being able to demonstrate my work to a wider audience has opened up a range of opportunities for me. An invitation to be involved in the upcoming exhibition at the Aberystwyth Art Centre, having work accepted for the Button Project and an invitation to apply for a residency program in France came about through other professionals visiting my temporary studio at Aberystwyth and seeing what I was doing.'