

Case Study 5

Nathaniel Hepburn

Curator

'I enjoyed writing and talking about art so decided to study Art History and Theory at University'

Studied BA in Art History, MA in Gallery Studies.

Providing information and advice



Who I am: I am a curator of Mascalls Gallery, a public art gallery.

An example of my work: I am currently curating a major exhibition on the use of the Crucifixion in modern and contemporary art. The works are coming from major museums, private collectors and artists' studios across the world. I spent a long time researching artists and reading about their work before selecting some of the most important examples.

How I work: I manage all the gallery's functions including programming exhibitions, press coverage, marketing material, exhibition installation and education workshops. Once we have an idea for an exhibition and have located the works we would like to include, we write to all the lenders and persuade them to let us exhibit their works. We sometimes produce a catalogue which involves working with writers, a designer and printers. I also spend a lot of time talking to art critics, editors and journalists to get coverage of the exhibition. We prepare all the fliers, invites, leaflets and posters ourselves so I do lots of graphic design. I am also very hands-on and help with putting up exhibitions and then a couple of months later taking them down and packing them safely. We often need to repaint the gallery and sometimes build temporary walls and plinths for sculptures. Once the exhibition is on the walls we have a big opening and then we are busy with showing visitors and groups around the exhibition, running workshops and answering questions. It is certainly a varied job and with six exhibitions every year there are few quiet times.

Getting there: I have always loved art but I was never as happy with the work I produced as I wanted. Art and English were my favourite lessons and I studied both at A-level. During my A-levels I did work experience in a marketing

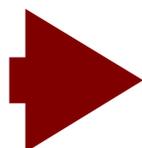
department of a college, then some time at an Architects. I enjoyed both and there is lots of marketing and spatial design in being a Curator. I enjoyed writing and talking about art so decided to study Art History and Theory at University of Essex. While there I started work experience at the local public art gallery, and also had a weekend job in a gallery selling work by local artists. I definitely preferred working with the famous artists - it is still exciting to hold in your (gloved) hands an original art painting which you have seen lots of times in photographs and you are so close to you can see every brush stroke.

A Master's degree in Gallery Studies helped me learn how museums work and the logistics of putting on exhibitions. After doing work experience in the University Gallery, I was offered a job and at the end of my year I put on my first exhibition – one of the paintings was nearly 500 years old! I did a number of exhibitions in London venues before being employed to set up and run Mascalls Gallery.

Volunteering is still very important in the cultural sector as it is a competitive area to get a good job. I have a team of interns who learn about putting on exhibitions, if they work hard they get to decide what exhibition to put on and choose what works go in work. Maybe some of them will be Curators in their own galleries one day!

Think about volunteering to work in a gallery to gain experience of the Personal, Learning and Thinking Skills (PLTS) needed to work in this sector.

What pathways could learners follow in order to enter this career? Learners could draw a progression pathway and consider their options.



For further information please visit www.mascallsgallery.org

Linked Activity:
School Gallery A05