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PRESS RELEASE

NEW REPORT INDICATES ABERYSTWYTH ARTS CENTRE ARTISTS' RESIDENCY PROJECT AN OVERWHELMING SUCCESS

Information begins....

A new report studying the first year of Aberystwyth Arts Centre's Artists in Residence programme has indicated that the project has been an overwhelming success. During this period eight artists have been based in studios in the new Creative Units at the Arts Centre, made up of seven artists from the UK and one international residency from Canada.

The idea of the programme is to give artists some much needed 'creative space', offering time out from the everyday constraints and demands of life in which to concentrate on their work. Both studio space and local accommodation is provided, together with a contribution towards living expenses. The programme, which saw two UK artists based in the Units at any one time for a three month period, was made possible thanks to the support of the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation. In addition one international residency was funded through Wales Arts International and Meduse in Canada, and one ceramics residency was funded through the Arts Centre's Arts Council of Wales Beacon award.

The report states that the programme offered a '*rich and beneficial experience*' to participants and also made a '*positive and dynamic impact*' on the life of the Arts Centre.

Artists praised in particular the location, design and facilities of the purpose-built studios and the friendliness of Arts Centre staff. They greatly appreciated having the opportunity to develop relationships with other artists and arts professionals, which has already resulted in some collaborative projects, and in exhibitions which will both be shown at the Arts Centre and on tour around the UK.

All the artists reported back on how the environment of the Arts Centre, which is a department of Aberystwyth University, with its diverse range of activities and events enhanced their experience and enabled them to be part of a vibrant social centre. They were also influenced by Wales itself – and in particular the environment of Aberystwyth. They had very fond

memories and a desire to return, or to continue to develop networks and produce work in Wales. One artists described it as *“the best residency I have been involved with to date”* and another commented that the Arts Centre’s new studio space was *“the most beautiful studio I have ever worked in”*.

Project co-ordinator Eve Ropek from the Arts Centre said:

‘We are very pleased to get such good a good report back from the first year of the project, and hope that this marks the start of a what will be an ongoing programme for us at the Arts Centre. The programme has been of great benefit to the Arts Centre, bringing in lots of new ideas and a creative energy which has helped with developing new audiences and stimulating the local artistic community. We see it as having a huge potential for development in building an international profile and further strengthening links with arts communities in Wales.’

The project continues at the Arts Centre this year, and from the start of June artists Priya Chohan and Annabelle Shelton will be based in two of the units, with international residencies planned with Finnish artist Riika Makikoskela in the autumn, and Haider Ali Jan from Pakistan in Spring 2011. Future residency calls will be announced on the Arts Centre’s website as they occur.

Applications are also now open, thanks to new support from the Laura Ashley Foundation, for a pilot residency in 2011 which includes an element of educational work, strengthening the links with the local community. The deadline for these applications is 30 September 2010 and artists interested should contact the Arts Centre direct on 01970 622887/ 621634, email Eve on etr@aber.ac.uk, or download information from the Arts Centre’s website at <http://www.aberystwythartscentre.co.uk/information/artistsinresidence.shtml> .

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Notes to editors:

Images for work created by the artists, artists at work in their studios, and the Units themselves are available on request.

The report was written by Claire Thomas.

Aberystwyth Arts Centre is a department of Aberystwyth University.

For more information contact Eve Ropek etr@aber.ac.uk / 01970 622887