



## **Flaming Tips.....Training in the Dark Arts of Fire, Special Effects and other Night-time Tricks for Outdoor Performance**

### **Artist Training School 2010**

Essex County Council, in partnership with Chelmsford Borough Council Cultural Events Team and Walk the Plank, an internationally renowned outdoor performance company, are devising an ambitious large-scale outdoor performance for 2012.

In the build up to this project, a training programme comprising several Artist Training Schools is being developed. The first will be a five-day residency hosted by Walk the Plank in Essex from 27 - 31 October 2010 (inclusive) focussing on outdoor arts that relate to night time events, including fire technology, illumination and animation, pyrotechnic effects etc.

We are seeking expressions of interest from artists and creative producers who have a desire to develop and extend their practice in outdoor arts. The Artist Training School is aimed at emerging artists who are interested in developing outdoor work, or practitioners who want to expand their skills and thinking around site-specific and larger scale work.

### **Opportunity**

Since 1992, Walk the Plank has developed outdoor work that responds to particular locations and occasions, often engaging local people as participants as well as spectators. The company's portfolio of projects ranges from small scale installations to large scale epic performances for thousands. Trainers will include Liz Pugh and John Wassell, co-founders of Walk the Plank, who have worked with teams of artists from both performing arts and visual arts backgrounds, as well as engineers and inventors and technicians, to create amazing work all over the world. ([www.walktheplank.co.uk](http://www.walktheplank.co.uk))

Using a combination of skill-based training, collaborative learning, opportunity for reflection and debate, and hands-on activity (in response to a brief), participants will develop their ability to respond with flair, resourcefulness and flexibility to the demands of place, time and budget. We will help you face the many and varied challenges of making outdoor work and the unknown. As part of this residency, there will be the opportunity to present new work at ESSEXstreetdiversions on Saturday 30 October in Chelmsford.

In a few days we don't expect to turn you into a pyrotechnician or a director, but we will give you the tools that enable you to think about scale, about the relationship between the work and the audience in an outdoor context, and about the production issues and H&S considerations in a way which supports rather than hinders your artistic vision. This training will enable you to create celebrations that are both meaningful and engaging for your audience, whether your budget is £500 or £15000.

We will expect people to work together, in an inclusive and collaborative way, and we will aim to support the access requirements of deaf and disabled participants to work alongside able-bodied/hearing participants.

## **Eligibility**

Places for Essex-based artists and/or deaf and disabled artists will be prioritised but we welcome applications from across the region and nationally. We'd like to hear from artists and creative producers who can demonstrate either a desire to develop their practice in outdoor arts (if new to this context) or a clear rationale as to why this would be a development of their current outdoor practice.

Due to the intensive nature of the residency it is expected that you will participate in morning, afternoon and evening sessions each day. Your place at the residency will include meals and overnight accommodation. There is no charge for Essex-based artists, deaf and disabled artists to participate in this programme. Artists based outside of Essex will be asked to pay a fee of £150 (£100 if under 25).

## **Application process**

Please tell us, in no more than 500 words, why you would like to participate in the Artist Training School, including what you hope to bring to it, and what you would like to gain from it. Please also send us your CV.

## **Deadline for submissions: 20 August 2010**

If you would like to discuss your application, please call the Walk the Plank office on 0161 736 8964 and ask to speak to Liz Pugh. Please email your application to [info@walktheplank.co.uk](mailto:info@walktheplank.co.uk) or send to:

Essex Artist Training School  
c/o Walk the Plank  
The Wheelhouse  
72 Broad Street  
Salford  
M6 5BZ



## What will the course offer?

### **Practical hands-on sessions alongside reflection around how to make shows work.**

Site-specific and site-responsive work – encouraging students to work with the outdoor location (in Chelmsford linked to ESSEXstreetdiversions) looking at how to choose a site and how to plan the event to maximise the budget and its impact on the audience.

### **The design and delivery of a show/installation**

**a)** Practical exercises with personal reflection, critical debate and trainer feedback built in... in threes or fours, making a piece of work that responds to a theme, to a location, to a time of day etc; timed challenges and creative problem solving with minimal resources; working with what's there, visible and invisible.

**b)** Work together in small groups to develop one or two of those pieces into a piece of work that is put in front of an audience at ESSEXstreetdiversions on the penultimate day.

**Case studies** – presentations by producers and artists about a variety of projects – outlining scale, partnerships, process, budget, timeline, highlights, challenges, unexpected outcomes; questioning ; **skill share** – I can teach you to walk on stilts...what can you teach me?; and time for personal reflection on unexpected outcomes.

**Nighttime:** Outline of the palette of skills and techniques; and then considerations that might come into play in how you use different elements.

- Fire and fireworks – using fire to animate landscapes – using fire to create images – integrating performance with fire and pyro – the legislative and other demands around fireworks – safe working with danger
- Fire drawings and fire sculptures – lanterns – participation
- Lighting – from low volt to landscape – designing for cityscapes and rural locations – illuminating structures
- Flames, gas and other special effects – how to integrate fire into images
- Music – live and pre-recorded, composing for outdoor theatre, working with sound, using ambient sounds, being heard
- Movement – choreography - thinking about how the audience might move through or around the space – integrating performance and procession
- Food – how to use food to make people feel good – from catering for your team to offering food to your audience
- Decor – how to transform the space – temporary decoration – using decor to delineate space
- H&S and risk assessment; planning and budgeting; portability – making what you've got pack into a van.

## **The Sands, the Time, and the Salt of the Earth: the 2012 Big Event**

**The Sands, the Time, and the Salt of the Earth** is an ambitious countywide project that will span 3 months – a journey around the county from May through to July 2012, culminating in a finale event in Hyland's Park in Chelmsford on July 21, one week before the Opening of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Two visitors, as yet unknown, whose identity will be revealed at the beginning of the Journey, will start their individual travels in different fashions: for example, one might arrive by sea from Harwich or by air at Stansted; another might be uncovered in an archaeological dig at a school in Essex. The two visitors will then make their way across the county, visiting town shows, village fetes, school events or festivals, before they meet, for the first and last time, at Hylands Park on 21 July.

**The Sands, the Time and the Salt of the Earth** will be a memorable world class event that actively involves the audience, as participants as well as spectators, marking a special moment in our history.

London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games present an opportunity to ensure a meaningful legacy for Essex. The training programme is designed to develop the capacity of local artists to participate in this project and to encourage artists to lead future celebrations at local and regional level.

It is our intention to be able to commission artists to deliver outdoor performance work that becomes part of this project.

### **ESSEXstreetdiversions 2010** ([www.chelmsford.gov.uk/streetdiversions](http://www.chelmsford.gov.uk/streetdiversions))

Saturday 30 October 2010 marks the eighth successive year for the free showcase of diverse and high quality international street theatre and outdoor arts.

Some of the finest street performers from the UK and beyond will roam Chelmsford town centre, at first in daylight and then crossing over into the twilight hours, as the festival in 2010 displays a 'dual personality' at summer's end. In this new twist to the format, at a time synonymous with curious and spooky goings on, the Artist Training School work will be profiled.

Traditionally, the festival that marked the end of the 'lighter half' of the year and beginning of the 'darker half' was called Samhain (pronounced "Sa-win") and later as Halloween. During this harvest festival, people believed that the veil between this world and the otherworld became thinner and this theme will be played out at ESSEXstreetdiversions this year. Bonfires played a large part in the Samhain festivities and people would often walk between two fires as a cleansing ritual, so visitors to Chelmsford can expect flames to play a key part in the evening's events. Another custom that we're very familiar with today is the wearing of costumes and masks which was originally done to copy the spirits or placate them. On Saturday 30 October, adults and children alike will be encouraged to dress-up to help create a carnival atmosphere in the town centre at what will be a spooky yet cheerful community celebration of the changing seasons.