



## Interview with DIY Educate

DIY Educate is a new artist-led programme of talks, workshops and peer-to-peer crits launching on 26 February 2011 at Core Gallery, Deptford. Becky Hunter spoke with Core member, abstract painter Jane Boyer, about her involvement in the scheme.

**BH: How long have you been involved with Core Gallery? What got you interested?**

JB: I've been a member since October, so really it's just been a matter of a few months. I first learned about Core through reading Rosalind Davis' blog *Becoming Part of Something* (<http://rosalinddavis.blogspot.com/>). She has a blog on a-n Artists Talking ([http://www.a-n.co.uk/artists\\_talking/projects](http://www.a-n.co.uk/artists_talking/projects)), where I have a blog as well, and I was attracted by Rosalind's energy and her vivacity; she has great dynamism. I kept dipping into her blog, which was mostly about the development of Core Gallery.

**BH: Since the gallery is a co-operative, and all of the members have a role to play, what is it that you've been doing so far?**

JB: I came along with the understanding that I would be learning the ropes, trying to help Ros out, because she's the gallery manager and, as such, has had a lot of responsibility, for running the gallery and the exhibitions. Because I'm at a distance - I'm in France - I offered my services to her in a supporting role, doing computer work and writing. As things continue to develop it looks like my role is turning out to be one of financial and business advisor, because my background is in fact in business; I've been self-employed for most of my working life. I bring a lot of experience in business practice, things like writing business plans and the membership charter document we've just put together. So I'm starting to do fundraising and grant writing, looking at audience development and thinking of ways that the gallery can sustain itself.

**One of the ways that you're hoping to attract new members, or for the gallery to become part of a wider artistic community, is the DIY Educate programme.**

We're really excited about DIY Educate. It was developed by Rosalind and Elizabeth Murton, artist and Core Gallery associate member, and they wanted to offer assistance to artists in general, wanting to help young artists and perhaps artists who feel isolated, as well as new artists to the area who perhaps don't have a network yet. They really wanted to help artists to further their careers and that's what DIY Educate is all about.

**Is it something that independent curators and young critics, who might also be feeling isolated, would find helpful?**

Absolutely, I think anyone working in the arts can feel isolated. The other thing that we want to do through DIY Educate is to offer assistance to young curators. At Core Gallery we like to work with young curators and give them a place where they can develop and grow. The DIY Educate program is not only for artists, but for anyone else who wants to find their way in the art world and to find ways to work in the arts.



**You're working with some high profile practitioners, such as Andrew Bryant and Graham Crowley.**

We're excited to be working in partnership with some wonderful people. All of our partners have portfolio careers. Andrew Bryant is an artist and the editor of Artists Talking; he has great experience in teaching, curating and writing. We're also very honoured to have Graham Crowley working with us. He has the reputation of being one of the most distinguished living painters in the UK. In the one-on-one critiques that he offers through Core, he is very straightforward, yet he does it from a place of empathy, he's trying to find a way to help you achieve the things you want to achieve artistically. He was painting professor at the Royal College of Art from 1998-2006. The interesting thing about Graham is that he is forging a career outside of the mainstream. That's so important for artists who are self-taught, like me. He has found a way to establish a career without having gallery representation and that's amazing. He is a gem; it's a unique experience to work with him.

**Do you think that programmes like DIY Educate are springing up because the mainstream, or more commercial side of art representation, is now so exclusive that artists need other ways to emerge?**

Being an artist has become a very complicated thing because, simply, there are so many of us. It's not like, say, the fifties, where there were a few galleries, and they all knew one another and they all drank together [laughs]. It's a different situation now. It's not only the

exclusivity of galleries, but it's an issue of art education. Art education is still focused on how to express yourself, and that's not enough these days to be an artist.

That's really where we come in - we want to pick up where art education leaves off. For young artists and artists who are working in isolation, we want to give them the tools to further their career.

**To this end, what sorts of themes will the workshops cover?**

The very first workshop is on March 1st and it's a taster event so it's free for everyone. The topic is "A Practical Guide to Being an Artist".

**Sounds pretty useful...**

Yes, what a great title. Rosalind Davis is chairing the workshop and she will be joined by Nick Kaplony and Jack Hutchinson. Nick is an artist/curator and is Programme Director for Artquest and Jack Hutchinson is an artist/writer/educator and Communications Officer in AIR (Artists' Interaction and Representation). They're going to be discussing how to apply for competitions; how you go about getting an exhibition; how to approach galleries; how to create a peer network; and all the tools involved in seeking out those things.

**You're going to be giving a workshop (with me!) on how to write and talk about your work...**

Writing an artist statement is a white-knuckle time for most artists. Both you and I have experience on writing, talking and presenting ourselves for an audience, and I think that's the underlying current of this talk: how to present yourself.

**What about some of the other workshops that you'll be a part of?**

In September, I'm taking part in a panel discussion called "How to Build Your Online Profile & Blogging Tips." This is going to be a really interesting discussion because everyone on the panel is an award winning blogger and Andrew Bryant, Artists Talking editor, is going to join us again. Everyone on the panel is committed to writing a blog, keeping that journal, and keeping that presence.

**How can we find out more about participating in DIY Educate?**

It is all on Core's website (<http://coregallery.co.uk>). If you navigate to the DIY Educate page, there's information on all of the educators and how to become a member. We have a special offer with a-n at the moment. They have agreed, very generously, to partner with us. They are offering a £5 discount to DIY members on an a-n subscription, and we are offering a £3 discount to those same members. So, in essence, you can subscribe to both DIY and a-n for £38. We really look forward to meeting new artists and curators at the launch.

***Becky Hunter***

[www.coregallery.co.uk](http://www.coregallery.co.uk)