

darts



Case Study

Tasha's Traineeship with darts

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Traineeships at darts

darts is a leading organisation and centre of excellence for participatory arts, with a local and national reputation for delivering high-quality creative activity that responds to immediate need. Scores of artists have begun their career with us as trainees, paid interns or through peer mentoring programmes. With the positive impacts of participatory arts on health, wellbeing and education now more valued than ever, there is a rapidly growing need for specialist facilitators who can deliver this work.

Aligning with Levelling Up priorities for the North of England and fulfilling the need to build a strong workforce of talented, passionate artists with a diverse and flexible skillset, darts' ambitious traineeship programme equips local artists with the tools to expand the scope of their practice, whilst building up the essential network of talented arts facilitators in the North. darts traineeships provide passionate artists with the opportunity to develop their practice and gain insightful experience into community arts – such as co-design, delivery, project management and working with a wide range of participants, including some of the most vulnerable people in the community.

Trainees first observe a range of experienced participatory artists leading sessions with different groups, with opportunities to discuss their approach, way of working, and chosen art form – whether that be visual arts, music, drama or dance. As the traineeship progresses, candidates are supported to design and deliver short activities within sessions, eventually being supported to lead a while session with a group. darts' traineeships are paid and are designed to fit around candidates' individual practice and other responsibilities, enabling them to learn, develop and grow their practice as a valued member of the darts team alongside existing commitments.

Tasha's darts journey

Tasha began her journey with darts as a teenager – first volunteering for exhibitions and events at The Point, but soon realised that it offered so much more, and became a regular participant in darts' music and visual arts workshops. Just before completing her GCSEs, Tasha made the decision to leave mainstream school and started home education; the programmes at darts became even more important to Tasha, enabling her to discover her artistic talent, connect with her creative background and explore new ways of making and sharing art.

“My family has always been pretty creative... with a background in music and theatre, so I've always had the chance to play around with things... before my GCSEs I dropped out of school and went home ed and just kicked my music and art into gear and just really enjoyed it... then went onto the avenue of pursuing it practically rather than just a hobby.”

Tasha told us that, having explored different artistic media through sessions at The Point, her art became a real vocation. She went on to study animation at university, enjoying learning new skills, expanding her practice and developing new techniques. However, Tasha found that, although the course was enjoyable, it didn't equip her with the practical knowledge and diversity of skills that she needed to pursue and build up her practice independently. She struggled to find opportunities to grow as an artist in her own right.

“Even though I thoroughly enjoyed it and managed to improve my art a million-fold, when I left, other than preparing you to go straight to a studio role there wasn't really an option other than setting up a shop... and it's actually really hard.”

Hearing about the traineeship opportunity, Tasha jumped at the chance to learn more about arts facilitation and ways to diversify her practice. With darts having played an essential part in her creative journey as a teenager, coming back to The Point as an artist with an established practice felt like coming full circle. For Tasha, the traineeship seemed to offer the chance to impact the lives and help grow the creative talents of young people in Doncaster, just as she had experienced as a darts participant growing up. She told us that the traineeship enabled her to give back to the community, helping guide other young people in Doncaster on their creative journey while developing her practice as an artist.

“When I heard about this traineeship, I was thinking I'd wanted to get back to darts, and it [darts' work] had developed since I was there... I wanted to help offer something to kids who went through the same thing as me, and who wanted to explore art.”

Tasha's personal and artistic development

After successfully applying for a traineeship, Tasha joined the programme running from January – March 2023. With trainees observing and supporting darts' professional arts facilitators in a huge range of programmes – from a children's song writing workshop (First Verse) to Dance On, a movement workshop for over 55s, Tasha was able to learn from experienced artists across a huge range of art forms.

“Whereas before I was just starting to realise the various applications for animation or my music, I didn't really know what to do. The traineeship has really helped me grow the confidence and know-how to combine visual arts with music, or facilitate different workshops.”

Tasha told us that, as the traineeship progressed, she began to recognise the personal – as well as professional – development that it enabled. Working alongside darts' artists, and sharing her work supporting workshop delivery, her confidence grew. By learning more about arts facilitation, co-delivery and combining art forms, Tasha expanded both her skillset and creative ambition, learning how to pull together different strands of her work to create an enriching experience for participants. She told us that this opened up new opportunities that hadn't been available to her before the traineeship programme.

“It's massively helped with myself as a person, and career-wise, I've found so many things I could potentially do and choose between.”

Tasha's traineeship experience

"It's been overwhelmingly positive. I had such a lovely time coming back to the space after such a long break... it had been 6 years, and in that time I had really developed my practice, come back, had a personal crisis... it was almost like coming home."

Having been involved with The Point from a young age, Tasha found that coming back to The Point – somewhere she knew well and had grown up with – meant that she felt confident to push the boundaries of her work, taking it to new levels and in new directions. Working in this environment also helped develop Tasha's personal approaches to work and creativity which, in turn, positively impacted her art.

Moving forward

Equipped with diverse skills, experiences and renewed ambition in her creative practice, Tasha found that the traineeship soon opened up new avenues of work and creativity. She told us that it provided her with unique learning and skills, informing the way she approaches her creative practice moving forward.

"I learnt so much, things I'd never have thought about.. the way I'd approach a project, or a situation or a brief... I've absorbed so much information that it's drastically improved everything that I thought I could've improved before coming here. It was a lot of fun."

Spending time at The Point enabled Tasha to immerse herself in Doncaster's emerging creative scene and make connections with other artists. In turn, this brought new and exciting opportunities that she feels she never would have been exposed to before. From completing an animation degree and struggling to find exciting opportunities that fit her creative vision, to building connections and establishing herself as an artist, Tasha's told us that her outlook and prospects as a young artist have drastically improved thanks to her traineeship with darts.

"I've made connections – within a couple of weeks there have already been jobs or opportunities coming through from being in this space and making that conversation with other creatively-minded people."

The role of darts in Doncaster

From her time as a home-educated student, to emerging as an artist in her own right, Tasha told us that darts provides a unique opportunity for participants and creatives in Doncaster:

"There's been a push for creativity in Doncaster recently, which is great, and it's so important. But there are a lot of organisations that say they're accessible, but they're not really... for there to be an organisation that's local, that caters for everyone, across different mediums...building communities of all ages, genders, abilities and stages of health, it's not seen enough anywhere and it's super important."

Some final words

"I've had such a lovely time. There wasn't a single day when I didn't want to be here."