

Meet Gabby O'Connor

Published on LEARNZ (<http://www.learnz.org.nz>)

Job:

Artist, workshop facilitator and occasional science communicator.

Job description:

Research, painting, drawing, photography, video, teaching/preparing, documenting, collaborating, sculpture - making things!

Work background:

Worked as an art and design tutor at Massey University, Weltec, Whitireia and as an independent arts teacher within schools. I have exhibited in NZ, Australia, Japan, UK, Canada, Holland but I also do exhibition and theatre design and collaborate with scientists, artists, musicians and communities. I used to teach dance, gymnastics and work as a waitress and I have done many weird odd-jobs while a student.

Favourite part of job:

Coming up with ideas and then being able to make them.

Least favourite part of job:

Admin - writing proposals!

What I am working on now:

I am preparing to go to Antarctica and have been painting and drawing and making small videos and making sculptures about what I think I will see on the trip and getting to know some new cameras. I am also about to start a public mural project at the Westpac Stadium in Wellington where I am collaborating with two groups of school students to create two large murals. One will be completed before I go to Antarctica and one after.

A (humorous) story about a job that went badly and what you learned:

Well, last year I was working on the largest artwork that I have ever made for Ice FestNZ in Christchurch. This project was called Inland Ice and was 'the edge of the Ross Ice Shelf' made from recycled signage material, tyvek and plastic. I had been working 12 hours a day for 8 days straight outdoors on the 20m x 5m concertina structure and during the final evening, while I was meant to be sleeping, there was a terrible storm that damaged about 2/3rds of the work, knocking over scaffolding towers and causing havok. In the morning it was still too windy to start repairs and I was meant to fly out at 4pm. It was devastating and I was panicked - the artwork was literally flapping in the wind and time was of the essence, so I hunkered down in a sheltered area and developed a repair system. Flights were rebooked for the next day and at midday, the wind stopped and my assistant and I worked for 12 hours straight making repairs.

Meet Gabby O'Connor

Published on LEARNZ (<http://www.learnz.org.nz>)

The work ended up being stronger and better than before and only required very minimal repairs for the duration of the festival - a staple here or there. Collaborating with the weather was quite a challenge [and probably why I hadn't worked outside before] But it was worth it and I am pleased to work outside of my comfort zone and learn much more than a regular project and was very proud of what was achieved despite the adversity.

Qualifications:

Bachelor of Fine Arts-Sculpture at Melbourne University and Masters in Fine Arts at UNSW in Sydney.

Interests outside work:

Music, Dancing, Amateur DJ! But my life and work are quite intertwined.



[1]

Gabby O'Connor is an artist who will be part of the K131 science team studying sea ice. Gabby is standing beside her sculpture of the Ross Ice Shelf created for the Ice FestNZ in 2014. Image: G O'Connor's collection.

Meet Gabby O'Connor

Published on LEARNZ (<http://www.learnz.org.nz>)



[2]

Gabby beside another sculpture which was part of her 'What lies Beneath' exhibition. Image: G O'Connor collection.



[3]

Gabby works with local Wellington school students sharing science ideas through art. Image: G O'Connor collection.

Source URL: <http://www.learnz.org.nz/antarctica154/meet-gabby-oconnor>

Links

[1] <http://www.learnz.org.nz/sites/learnz.org.nz/files/b-si154-01-gabby-oconnor.jpg>

[2] <http://www.learnz.org.nz/sites/learnz.org.nz/files/b-si154-02-gabby-oconnor.jpg>

[3] <http://www.learnz.org.nz/sites/learnz.org.nz/files/b-si154-03-gabby-oconnor.jpg>