



Elizabeth Waddling

Growing up and living in Falmouth I have been surrounded by a very creative and artistic community. The whole vibrancy and unique atmosphere of the people and the Cornish landscape have influenced me, giving me a strong interest in the visual arts. It is not just the numerous galleries of Falmouth that have shaped my thinking, but meeting and being surrounded by creative people at the local art college.

After studying A/Levels in Art, Art History, Textiles and Classical Civilizations, I gained a place on the ABC Diploma in Art and Design at the Falmouth College of Arts, passing with distinction. There I spent an enjoyable year exploring and gaining skills in the different fields of art which enabled me to discover the aspects I wished to continue at a higher level.

In September 2003 I began a three year BA(Hons) Degree in Fine Art and Art History at Goldsmiths College in London. I made the radical change of location from Cornwall to the big city with no regret. I have always been a keen visitor to galleries not just in Britain but as far away as the Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg, Russia, the Guggenheim in New York and the Kiasma Contemporary Art Museum in Helsinki, Finland to name just a few. Living in London has been wonderful, with so many museums and galleries on my doorstep.

Shortly into my studies I became aware that my interests lay more on the art history side and I began to take courses in museum studies and curatorial knowledge. I realised that rather than my personal artistic practice, I was far more interested in museums and galleries and the display of art works. I wanted to learn more about the workings of different types of gallery. Before returning to my third and final year of study in September 2005 I took the summer break as an opportunity to find gallery/museum work and to take work placements.

I contacted Brian Stewart, Curator at Falmouth Art Gallery and was able to assist with the hanging of the show 'Patrick Woodroffe: Master of Fantasy'. Through Brian Stewart I became introduced to a fantastically organized work experience program. I joined a team to remove the previous work from the 'Passing Ships' exhibition, giving

me the incredible honour of handling some extremely valuable works of art. Assisting Brian and the gallery team gave me a wonderful sense of achievement and I was left feeling confident in all the tasks I carried out, as I was given excellent instruction and felt very much like a valuable member of the group. I was far from treated like the beginner in the group with the encouragement offered by the staff. I ended up involved in the hanging of the new canvases, the preparation of the gallery space, the packing and distribution of the previous work, and was given an insight into many of the tasks needed to keep the gallery running. One of the highlights of the experience for me was being given the task of briefing the electricians on the lighting desired for the show. Working on my own I was given the opportunity to use my own judgement and opinions. The friendly nature of the gallery impressed me endlessly and I was even able to meet the artist and exhibition sponsors, local solicitors, Hine Downing.

I very much hope to continue being involved with the gallery and intend to volunteer further. The professionalism and organisation of my work experience program with Brian has been invaluable. I feel very confident that I will be welcomed back in the future. I thank Brian and the all the gallery staff for a wonderful experience and hope to continue a close involvement with the gallery.