

Fierce Festival Internship Review [Lili, 2020]

Fierce Festival has been a significant and highly engaging introduction to a career in the Arts. Having experienced the magic of Fierce from a few different seats - as an audience member, a volunteer, and an intern, I would recommend Fierce to anyone. This placement was actually shared between two of us - we are Lili and Waj, and we are part of the Birmingham based queer arts and music collective, Club Bandit. Until our return to Suki10c in Digbeth, you can hear our monthly Club Bandit Show on Komunal Radio (komrad.live) where we have been shedding some of our lockdown blues and rendering them as uptempo, experimental club mixes.

We have absolutely loved our Fierce experience. Even during the hardships of the pandemic, one of the most disorientating and uncertain times for the industry, the team were super accommodating and always full of inspiring, positive energy, and I am extremely proud to have worked with them this year.

Despite the distance put between us due to Covid-19, the level of communication on the Fierce team has been so efficient, yet attentive. Our meetings simultaneously covered a lot of ground, set everyone in the right direction for the week's tasks, and always encouraged free discussion which comes very naturally in this genuinely lovely group. These tasks consisted of a wide range of new and existing work, including writing a call out for a public art commission project and a Birmingham visit itinerary for the first stage of this, with plenty of research into local histories and areas of inspiration. Of course it is necessary to be aware of the likelihood of change and adaptation to fit around health regulations at present, but this is something that Fierce have been proactive to adapt for. With an emphasis on keeping ideas temporal, but not creatively limited, they set a perfect example of how the Arts are to react and respond to unexpected situations (there could not be a more practical skill in 2020!) Personally, I would say that this placement predominantly gave me the chance to develop and build on key skills, such as organisation, confidence, and lateral thinking skills. It was also interesting to learn more about the operational elements that we did not know much about previously or have any experience with, such as festival fundraising, and data handling from surveys and box office information. A particular highlight was practising drafting a budget for an arts and music event, with "free reins" whilst approaching in a way that is typically Fierce: curating with a political agenda that is experimental and queer, pushes the boundaries and dismantles the notion of sublimity, yet stays accessible for all.

We would like to thank Aaron, Catherine, and Pippa for their time and energy, for putting care at the centre of all of their work, and for going above and beyond to make Fierce the absolute force that it is today.