**INVITATION TO APPLY**

**STUDY WEEK DEVISED BY JESSE DARLING**

**20-23 JUNE 2016**

“To whom it may concern,

I am an artist (you too, maybe? But it doesn’t matter if you’re not). Before I was an artist I worked in many different kinds of jobs and in some ways they were harder and in other ways easier. One of the hard things about being an artist, as opposed to being a cook or a bricklayer, is that it is difficult to know if your work is “good.” This is difficult mainly because for many people – including me, if I’m honest - it can feel like the ways in which people work out whether the work is good or not only make it harder. The words used to praise things or criticise. The prices attached to things. The more I think about the field in which I work – contemporary art – and all the ways in which it is corrupt (including the history of colonial appropriation; the careless instrumentalisation of identities and ideas; the role art has played in neoliberal gentrification) the more I twist myself up in knots.

Lately I have been thinking about how my work as an artist could have value outside of the market and the discursive traveling circus in which information and opinion are reified as meaning. In a secular world it feels like art – both the objects (works) and the process (labour) would be massively useless, or worthless, if we stripped away all the commerce and concept. The extraordinary exchange in which ideas become money is quite magical really, like water into wine - and there are plenty of artists who devote their whole study to this alchemy. But me, I’m sceptical of enlightened attitudes to magic, since I feel like we’re a faithful species, always believing in something or other - and like Mulder & Scully, I *want* to believe.

At art school you’re supposed to develop a practice. I know this because I teach there sometimes. Everyone tries to understand what their practice could be, even though for many people the whole notion of an art-school-standard ‘art practice’ seems like something you have to invent out of thin air. But Wiktionary defines practice like this: “the actual application or use of an idea, belief, or method, as opposed to theories relating to it.” I tell my students: whatever you can’t stop doing? *That’s* your practice.

Wiktionary also suggests that practice could be “the customary, habitual, or expected procedure or way of doing of something.” In other words: a ritual. And then there is the religious associations of a *practice*, of course: and maybe it’s true to say that contemporary art is a kind of religion, with its own icons, scripture, and epistemology.

But since thinking about contemporary art only twists me up in knots, I’d rather focus on the *practice*, on the habits, on the actual applications: the rituals themselves. Ritual is also a word used to describe the mechanisms people use to calm down or feel more in control; tapping, counting, stimming, washing your hands. When people try to quit their addictions, often they say it’s the rituals around substance use that they find hardest to let go. Rituals are the application of a certain kind of desire: a way of praying through doing.

During this study week I want to see if it’s possible to locate this hard-wired mechanism in myself, and to find out together with others (maybe you?) whether ritual practice is a hard-wired mechanism in a group dynamic, or in a temporary community. In this way I hope to be able to think differently about the work we do as artists, organisers or relational beings.

If you have a response to all or any of this, I would love to hear from you.

Looking forward,

JD”

Fr further information on Jesse darling’s work please click [here.](http://bravenewwhat.org/)

The deadline for applications for this Study Week is 12 midnight, Monday 16 May 2016

HOW TO APPLY

We accept applications through our Wysing Submittable online webpage. If you have any questions about the application process please contact us at info@wysingartscentre.org.

We ask you to answer the following questions and provide us with the information listed below, each as a separate document.

1. We invite you to make a response to Jesse Darling’s letter. This will form the basis of your application to join the Study Week (max 500 words)

2. Additionally, what do you think you can bring to the Study Week and what would you want to get out of it? (max 250 words)

PLEASE ALSO PROVIDE:

A statement on your work, if applicable (max 500 words)

A current CV, if applicable

A selection of 6 images of your work (or other relevant material such as video, sound etc, or send a document with links to websites hosting material such as Vimeo or Youtube) , if applicable

SELECTION PROCEDURE

Following submission Jesse Darling will select eight to ten participants for the Study Week. Selection will be based on applications received following the Call for Participation and on the information provided as described in How to Apply. The Study Week is open to anyone.

ACCOMMODATION

Wysing can provide accommodation in our farmhouse should you need it, at no charge. Some rooms are for multiple use. Facilities include shared bathrooms, a shared living room and kitchen. If you would prefer not to share the farmhouse then local accommodation is available online for you to book – hotels, B&Bs and AirBnB, etc.

FURTHER INFORMATION

The Study Week is free to participants. Food, cooking facilities and basic supplies will be provided. If you have any specific dietary requirements please come prepared with provisions or let us know in advance.

For any specific information please call 01954 718881 or email info@wysingartscentre.org.