

# CONGRATULATIONS TO ELLIE MOORE



Ellie Moore was the first student artist to be awarded a Bursary by the Boston Spa Art and Crafts festival. Ellie recently graduated from Lancaster University having been awarded a First Class Honours degree in Fine Art and Creative Writing.

We asked Ellie to tell us a little about her University experience and this is what she told us:-

The Boston Spa Art and Crafts Festival gave me my first insight into the possibility of being a professional painter. I was able to exhibit my work alongside the other artists, and even sold some of my paintings. I know it will take some time yet to start making a living from my art, but I've been building on that early experience with the Festival. Now I feel I have the confidence to go for it, full-steam ahead.

Much of that confidence stems from my time at university. Three years of hard work culminated in a First class degree, with a final challenge of co-curating an exhibition of professional work with one of my course-mates. Of course, it wasn't always plain sailing

and I had a few difficult terms. There were times that I even considered dropping out but only for a couple of moments! The final result was a fairytale ending to what had been a long and difficult road (I felt like I'd won the X Factor!).

One of the main problems I encountered was the focus of the course; while I personally prioritise technical skill and intrinsic value, the course was centred around the innovative nature of art, and the ideas that surround it. I found myself questioning my motives in choosing realism and copying from life or photographs.

I'd like to think I've reconciled my approach without losing my integrity, and my experience with the Boston Spa Festival has helped keep things in perspective. My three exhibition experiences boosted my confidence in my style and approach as a realist painter. Along with receiving lovely compliments and valuable advice, I always had an underlying feeling that there was value in what I was doing. The creative process is different for every individual and I had to trust that my stylistic choices were right for me.

I was lucky enough to receive the Festival's 2014 Bursary Award to help pay for materials during my degree. Over the three years I've used it to buy a range of materials, such as paraffin wax pellets, clay for moulds, large sheets of paper and a 9ft by 12ft piece of canvas for my degree show work. I've progressed from painting to sculpture to a hybrid of the two, which explores wax and wood carving, from large-scale to miniature projects, and every size in between. I've also tried experimenting with various methods of abstraction, though by my third year I'd settled on painting invented realist environments. I was really interested by narratives and parallels of the 18th century Enlightenment. I've really come to respect the potential of realist painting to manifest things of the imagination. I've almost had to re-learn the rules of perspective and lighting in order to fuel that pursuit, which has made me rethink old techniques. Whereas before I could create shadow based on the image or setting I was drawing, I now have to imagine where a source of light may be within my created scene. So, whilst I'm still using realism, I've learnt to do different and better things with it! I continue to believe that good craftsmanship is as important in art as good ideas.

My final year at University saw me jointly curating an exhibition called *Telling in Full*, held in Lancaster's Peter Scott Gallery, as part of the Lancaster Words Festival. The concept was to bridge Fine Arts and Literature through Ekphrastic translation (a vivid description of a work of art). We had to find funding for the project, which was through Lancaster University and Arts Council England, and was in response to an open call-out. Some thirty artists, including some American-based artists, took part and included fellow exhibitor at the Boston Spa Festival, Imogen Galloway, with her diptych 'Forbidden Entrance'.

I'll miss the dynamic cultural scene in Lancaster, with artistic and literary events running year round, some of which I've been able to volunteer in. The Lake District, and Lancaster's Georgian architecture, continue to inspire my work. Indeed both my writing and artwork have begun focusing on the 18th century. Ultimately the melting pot of ideas that comes with living and working with such a diverse group of people was by far the best part of university. They're not just friends for life, but tutors and mentors themselves.

I'm currently hunting for a studio space, and getting stuck into some new projects. I'd love to exhibit artwork in a historic building one day, and several of my ongoing projects are inspired by individuals from Yorkshire in the 18th century, such as Thomas Chippendale.

I'm also hoping to be involved in a weekly life drawing session; keep an eye on Gallery 42's website for further details.

I hope to exhibit with the Festival in the future, and look forward to seeing how it will evolve over the years, with such a dynamic and shifting range of artists involved. Certainly it will continue to inspire and promote young artists like myself as well as those well established in their practice.