

2023 Anthropology Summer Internship Report

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Internship Period: June 30 – August 15, 2023 (200 hours)

My main duty was to assist the International Arts Carnival (IAC) held from July 14 to August 13, which is an annual summer festival targeted at children and families.

There were five interns (including me) and five Festival Assistants (FA) employed for the IAC. As the most difficult part was the planning and preparation done months before, there were not many challenging tasks for us. On the first day of the internship, our supervisor invited her fellow Assistant Managers to introduce how they work in ticketing and digital marketing, to give us an overview of organising a festival as a government office.

Being busy in the theatre is the most interesting part for me. Each intern was assigned to assist two or three programmes, out of eight in total. So, there are on average two interns and two Festival Assistants responsible for each programme. Only during the on-show periods, we showed up at the theatre to assist the show to carry out. We stayed in the office for most of the time. On-show duties include picking up and sending off artists (if they are from overseas), logistics, and welcoming the audience.

The first programme I assisted in was *Living Creatures*, which was an immersive local dance theatre piece designed for newborns up to 24-month-olds, held in the Black Box Theatre of Kwai Tsing Theatre from July 13 to 16. Before every performance, colleagues and I led the parents to settle down their stroller and baggage, line up, and take off their shoes outside the theatre. During the performance,

we sat at the side of the theatre to avoid any injuries. I sat at the corner where a set of lights were, behind the pink moving arch, which was the most dangerous corner for kids. It was an interactive theatre which performers acted according to children's reactions while following on



the planned flow. Every session was unique and unforeseeable since you would never expect how audience-participants react. I felt myself as a participant as well as I always kept an eye on kids who came near my corner. There were tense moments when kids were running to the heated lights when we caught them! This experience was indeed a participant-observation and made me feel that theatre is like doing anthropological ethnography. My personal takeaway is to rethink the boundaries and detachment between me and children, observing the parents and children and taking part as a caretaker.

The second programme was *POLIPOP* performed by *BRUSH Theatre* from Korea, which was performed at the Studio Theatre of Hong Kong Cultural Centre from August 4 to 6. It was lucky for me to witness how the local backstage crew and the foreign artist crew worked together to build the stage. There were two sessions of after-show talk, in which every kid asking a question was gifted a stuffed toy keychain of the character mascot "Mong", provided by the artists. Kids were so eager to raise hands and speak, and gave me so much pressure to choose them. Some even cried afterward since they could not get one!



Luckily, we helpers could get one although there was a lack of “Mong”! Besides, there was a backstage tour which participants were led to walk around the set and play with the hidden windows and rotating door, cooperating with live music and animation projection. The next



morning after the programme finished, I was responsible for escorting artists to the airport. Despite all the rush transporting trolleys and luggage, it was sentimental to send them off even if we did not have much time together, and proud to meet such a popular troupe.

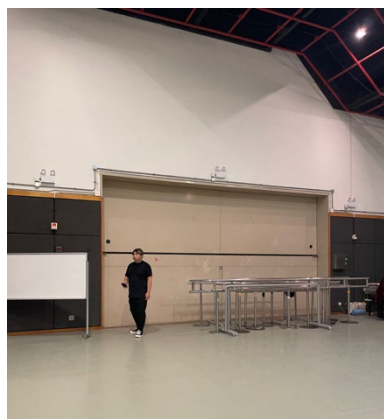
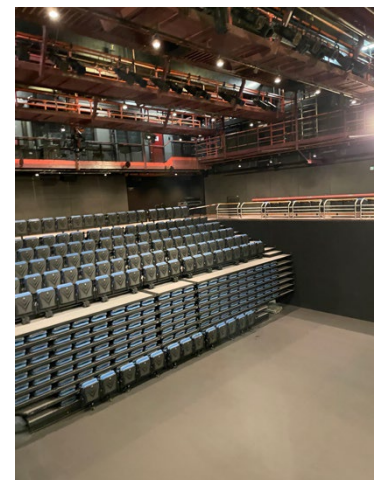
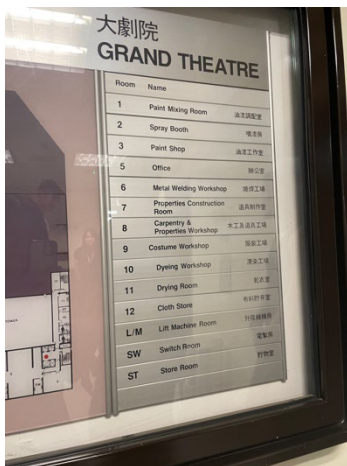
During most of the time in the office, we shared the before- and after-show tasks of all the programmes, and helped prepare for the next festival (New Vision Arts Festival). As most of our programmes invited overseas artists, we had to prepare a guidebook for each of them, which includes information on all the services they might need, such as banking and therapy. Also, refreshments should be prepared in their dressing room during the show period. I helped review the refreshment list, which requires expenditure to be on the economical basis with public funds. We were asked to unpack and pack the refreshments and tools (i.e., gaffer tapers) into boxes, and help with the transport. After every programme, copies of “My View Form” were collected and we had to type the audience opinion in the drive for the record.

Our supervisor had done her best to give us as much exposure to the industry as she could. Although we were not responsible for certain programmes and could not help with anything, she led us to attend the rehearsal and technical meetings of those programmes. Also, she asked us interns to write Facebook feeds for all the

programmes (which were unfortunately not used), and I found myself being a perfectionist made me difficult in writing. Also, we were asked to design an E-Programme for scanning (with all the graphics given) for each programme. It was challenging for me as it was my first time using Adobe Illustrator. It was kind of my fellow interns who were majoring in art and design to teach me step by step. (The photo on the right is my design.)



Thanks to this work experience, I had the opportunity to go inside the Hong Kong Cultural Centre, which is only available to insiders. I was amazed by the large space of workshops and rooms. I had never imagined that there was a lift machine linking to two dance rooms! As a lover of performing arts, I felt myself become a bit more than just an audience.



Last but not least, I am grateful to the department and the Festival Office for offering me this internship. It provided me the chance to step out of my comfort zone and do participation-observation in a government office. It helped me consider my future career path.