

THE
TOWN
IS THE
VENUE

Deveron Express



/ 21 Years of Deveron Arts

**Autumn 2016
Hairst Harissa, Geology
and Ecology, Edinburgh
Art Festival, Lure of the
Lost, Walking Women,
Shelter Building,
Brexfast, Wild Floristry,
Caravanserai, 21st
Birthday, Howffs**

Deveron Arts is coming of age! On Saturday 3rd December we will be celebrating our 21st Birthday, looking back and looking forward. Working in Huntly since 1995, through the town is the venue mantra, we have brought 85 artists, musicians and writers together with our different communities working on over 100 different projects. Huntly has been our

research site, studio, gallery, stage and home over the years and, following an extensive reflection process, this occasion will allow us to take stock of the past whilst presenting our plans for the future.

Over the next few years we will be focusing on how sustainability is understood on every level: environmentally, culturally and socially, alongside what home means in a globalised world. With both a local and global approach to these ideas, we aim to link Huntly to other places, addressing both our town's challenges and identifying ways in which other communities and like-minded organisations can contribute, not only locally but internationally. Through activities we will be generating discussion on the production and consumption of food, the sense of belonging and freedom of movement and the importance of identity in regeneration. The social and economic challenges we face in Huntly are synonymous with so many other towns and communities across the globe.

With many communities now taking matters into their own hands, social activism, creative ideas and exchanges can become tools for discovering new ways of encouraging people to participate in the investigation of issues within society. We aim to explore this through a mix of short, research based, and longer term residencies. Deveron Arts aims to leave an artistic, experiential and practical legacy to be shared. Celebrate with us during a full and true town is the venue day.

*The Town is the
Venue: ARTocracy
in the Making, 3
December 2016*

Events will be scheduled all day starting with the Huntly Farmer's Market at 9am, The Square.

**Deveron
Arts**



Omar Afif, Rachel Ashton, Charlie Roy and Neil Hankin performing at Caravanserai Night, Stewart's Hall, 30 September

Omar's Spice Advice

Rass el Hanout

Rass el Hanout, translates as 'head of the shop'. Originating in North Africa, it is a distinctive mix of a number of spices and herbs, the quantities of which vary according to the maker.

Ingredients:

- 1 ½ tsp black peppercorns
- 1 tsp ground ginger
- 1 tsp cumin seeds
- 1 tsp coriander seeds
- 1 cinnamon sticks
- ½ tsp ground nutmeg
- ¼ tsp cardamom seeds
- ½ tsp smoked paprika
- 4 whole cloves
- ¼ tsp ground turmeric
- ¼ tsp sea salt
- ¼ ground all spice

Method:

1. Grind all the ingredients together and keep in an air tight jar.
2. When cooking, add Rass el Hanout to a mixture of fresh chopped garlic, parsley or coriander and olive oil, to create a marinade.

OMAR AFIF

CHEF / MUSICIAN / CRAFTSMAN

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Harissa making at Huntly Hairst, 3 September

/ Claudia Zeiske Conversation with Omar Afif

Claudia Zeiske: Hello Omar, you have been working with us on your project Caravanserai this year. This led to setting up your business bringing music, craft and cooking together. Tell us about where you come from and where you learned your skills.

Omar Afif: Hi Claudia, I am from Essaouira: a small town in southern Morocco by the sea. This is where I learnt different skills like boat-building and music. I started cooking a lot earlier, when I was two years old, when I lived with my grandmother in the countryside. She was the first person to inspire me with food.

CZ: How did a day with her go?

OA: I remember she used to wake me early in the morning to pick figs from the prickly cactus tree. We cleaned and peeled them before she made her rghayef, a breakfast bread with tea. After that she went to milk the cows, which I would help her with. The rest of the day we would be getting water, fire wood and taking all the animals to feed and drink at the river.

CZ: And what about the spices?

OA: Spices in Morocco are part of everyday life and in every meal that she, my mum or dad, cooked. The main spice mix is Rass El Hanout which means the 'head of the shop'. It combines cumin, pepper, ginger, smoked paprika, cinnamon, coriander cardamom, and whatever else you like.

CZ: Where does the music come into this mix?

OA: Music is in the culture and everyday life. Every afternoon when all the work is done, the family gathers for afternoon tea and cakes and play music, sing and dance together.

CZ: Where does all this take place, and what are the cakes made of?

OA: This took place at my grandmother Fatima's house where all the family would meet and bring something with them. Cakes are made of almond and peanut paste with flour, sugar and butter. What I love most is homemade bread with argan oil and honey with mint tea. Oh and homemade buttermilk!

CZ: Here in Europe, most people who become musicians learn their instrument by going to lessons, learning sheet music, and a lot of practice. If they are very good, they manage to go to a conservatoire or musical institution. Have you ever learned to read music? How does it work to become an accomplished Gnawa player?

OA: It's the same way in Morocco for modern instruments but for traditional instruments either you are part of a family that plays music or you learn with a master. In my case my

family were all traditional Amazigh musicians who did it for their own love and not for money or profit. Later I moved back with my parents to Essaouira and Gnawa music came more into my life. Especially when my dad moved to a new area in the old Medina, the house was next to what we call Zwouiya sidi Billal, a place where Gnawa practice and ritual happen.

CZ: And what about the craft? You built drums and boats - for whom?

OA: My first job was with a local thuya wood craftsman. After that, my parents split up and I had to leave school and move to Asafi, four hours drive north of Essaouira. I started a whole new life with a family I had never met before and worked with their wool business.

About five years later, I moved back home because I missed living with my family and then my father - bless his soul - got a boat-building apprenticeship for me. Later I ended up working 1400km south of my home town building boats for some years. After that I worked a bit more with boats in Essaouira but the government stopped the whole industry which meant that I had to find something else. So I started working in a music shop repairing and making instruments and also playing more music.

CZ: A real craftsman. Who were the boats for?

OA: Most of them were for fishermen, but also some people used them for migration and that's one of the reasons the whole industry stopped. So many people every year travelled across western Sahara to get to Morocco, hoping they would find a way to reach Europe. And my boats were a hope for them. Remember, that the Strait of Gibraltar is only eight miles to Europe, less than looking from Aberdeenshire over to the Black Isle over the Moray Firth. At the same time I was running a guest house that belonged to a couple from England. Letting people in and cooking for them, but also doing the repairs

and painting in the house.

CZ: You are such a polymath, Omar, what brought you to Scotland in the end? And what are you hoping to do now?

OA: It's just the way things worked for me. I haven't chosen it; I believe in destiny. The reason why I am in Scotland is another long story. I met Emma in my home town and she fell pregnant with our first daughter. So I decided to move here to be with my wife and my two beautiful girls Ameenah and Malika. What I would love to do is exactly what I have been doing since I moved here with food and music. This is to encourage people's interest in my culture, but also adding flavours of Scottish food and music to the mix.

I want to make people aware that we are all the same and what affects people here or elsewhere impacts on all of us. My message is unity, we have to be one to be able to make things work better for every one of us.

CZ: That is so nice Omar. Is Aberdeenshire your home now? And what are your hopes and ambitions for the future?

OA: Yes, I feel home here more than anywhere else now. My ambition is to make my Caravansarai music-craft-food business that I have built up with Deveron Arts work. I also have an idea to invite people to join me for trips to Morocco for food, music, and lots of spice!

CZ: That sounds like a great extension to the business. We hope it all works out Omar. We wish you good luck and thank you for being with us, with all your spices, your tunes and your smiles.

OA: My honour Claudia, and thank you so much too for the support and great opportunity with Deveron Arts and the amazing folk. I love you all so much.

omarafif.co.uk



The Path Travelled

/ Edinburgh Art Festival

Deveron Arts' Walking Institute headed to Edinburgh Art Festival in August for a day of discussions, that aimed to shift the perspective from male-dominant art history to reflect the role of women in walking and art. With contributions from Dee Heddon's *Walking Library for Woman* to Helen Stratford's *A Day with a Duck*, in which she mapped a town through collaboration with artists, local people and ducks, Walking Women focused on gender bias and whether a pathway can be built to a future without such skewed visions of art and authorship.

This discussion was continued the next day in *The Psychology of Long Distance Walking*, a conversation between physiologist Catherine Ward Thompson, Claudia Zeiske, Monique Besten and Anthony Schrag. Monique considered her experience of walking from Barcelona to the COP21 Climate Negotiations in Paris last year, and Anthony reflected on his 111 day pilgrimage to the Venice Biennale. This highlighted their different approaches to walking as an arts practice, and allowed them to consider how mentality, safety, encounters, route, and gender affected their journeys.

/ Brexit: Will We Walk Again?

As an organisation dedicated to working in local and global communities, the feeling post-Brexit was akin to, as one artist put it: the seven stages of grief. While it is easy to dwell on negative projections, we have strived to question and consider how we, as artists, can be positive and proactive with this situation.

At a discussion held in Edinburgh, We were joined by a number of representatives from various culturally and internationally connected organisations and individuals. Chaired by Norah Campbell, British Council Scotland, Alyn Smith MEP, gave an introduction that expressed a need to try to remain optimistic and work together on creative projects and cultural sharing.

The conversation kicked off with a mutual agreement of surprise and, therefore, worry about being disconnected from majority public opinion in Britain. Robin McAlpine, Director of the Common Weal, quickly weighed in that a love of Europe, does not correlate with a love of the EU, and that we should remain balanced in our reaction. He suggested Britain should stop questioning, and even insulting, the majority who voted to Leave, and rather

focus on what we want now. If it is cultural exchange we want, we can still do this, Robin insisted.

Other voices objected to the dismissal of the benefits of the EU. German artist Clemens Wilhelm, who often works in Britain and between other European countries, expressed regret for historic ties and for the opportunities of university cultural exchange, which shaped his own career, as it has many artists.

Nikolai Peterson, of the Goethe Institut agreed with Robin that the EU was primarily an economic project, but diverted to acknowledge that it had also brought prosperity, peace and liberty to Europe.

When Anthony Schrag halted the conversation to ask what we, as artists, can do post-Brexit to continue working together across Europe, Emmanuel Cocher, Consul Général de France, insisted that following through with Brexit is not a realistic outcome of the vote. He claimed that from a technical perspective, speaking as a diplomat, it could not and would not happen.

A rich discussion with so many diverse opinions on art and life post-Brexit left us feeling that the future is as uncertain as when we began, but that we must work together to continue our creative work and collaborations throughout Europe.

/ Gimme Shelter

For his project, *Exploration Aids*, Tim Knowles' held an off-grid workshop and symposium at Mar Lodge Estate.

Acknowledging hurdles of access, land use and accommodation in rural and urban contexts – as well as personal experience as an artist living in London – Tim has been constructing a network of howffs and temporary shelters, between Huntly and the Cairngorms.

Teaming up with local bushcraft venture Amara Woodland, Tim built on and continued to share practical skills of construction. As participants built natural shelters with material found in the woodland, we considered the different purposes of shelter. We questioned luxury versus necessity and lack of choice, in issues of survival, comparing the workshop itself to outdoor activities such as glamping, assessing the values in that.

Conversation continued the next day. Colin Shepherd shared his archaeological experience with the group, detailing ancient shelters. Rachel Hunt, University of Glasgow, gave a more contemporary account of both culture through the years, from the tradition of logbook entries to leave-no-trace. Karen Grant spoke of Reforesting Scotland and *A Thousand Huts* campaign, initiated to explore Scotland's hutting heritage and to promote simple structures as sustainable solutions for living, working and recreation. The promotion of such methods of shelters centres around accessibility, reconnection and confidence in the landscape.

Keep an eye out for more information on Tim's *Exploration Aids*, including tree canopies, secret barrel howffs and much more!



"Materials are scarce, fuel is in short supply, and prices are escalating. The choices are not clear cut, for these are complex times. But it is obvious that the more we can do for ourselves, the greater will our individual freedom and independence be." - Lloyd Kahn

The Path Ahead



/ Energised Landscape

A new project with artist Andrea Geile, *Energised Landscape*, will address issues of energy in our environment and day-to-day lives. From wind turbines to food consumption, Andrea is looking to connect with people and research different interpretations of energy.

This project will inform next year's Slow Marathon: Deveron Arts' annual 26 mile walk, now in its sixth year. The route will trace ancient sites and places of energised interest investigated by Andrea throughout her time in Huntly.

Slow Marathon Energised Landscape

14 - 16 April 2017

26 mile route created by artist Andrea Geile

Tickets on sale from January:
£35 (£25 Early Bird ticket)

/ 300 Years to Grow

Ben Macfadyen returns to Huntly this autumn to continue his work on developing stories to grow with the lifespan of the trees in Huntly's *White Wood*.

An oak tree takes 300 years to fully grow. Ben is thinking about legacy in regards to storytelling. Having written *The White Wood Story* earlier this year, Ben now wants to ensure it is told alongside the growth of the trees, for generations to come.

The White Wood Story centres around the idea that there are always various perspectives to historical and social events. Ben tells his

story from the perspective of animals, trees, land and light, incorporating issues such as freedom, resources, territory and ideas.

Hoping to ensure the legacy of the story, Ben will be taking the tale out into the community through visits, trips and other events surrounding Huntly's *White Wood*.

/ Those Who Will Never Visit

On 5 August we held one of our Friday Lunch Talks, with artist Saddam Jumaily. From Iraq and now living in Jordan, Saddam is an artist who could never visit us here in Huntly. Connecting over Skype, we heard about his work as a painter in exile, and about his home city Basra, where he was a professor at the art school.

We are now developing further strategies to ensure the stories, experiences and skills of those who will never visit, are not unheard. Partnering with Yorkshire Sculpture Park, Deveron Arts is offering virtual residencies to those who, for whatever reason, will never visit. Iraqi artist Azar Othman will be the first to join us and will give an introductory talk next month about his participatory practice.

Winter Walking Challenge

Huntly and District Development Trust are teaming up with Deveron Arts to collect miles!

We're collecting 11,053 miles from Huntly in Scotland, to Huntly in New Zealand. Clock your own miles and submit them to us by text or email

Winter Solstice Walk

21 Dec, 7.30am, Huntly Mart

To mark the darkest day and to celebrate the days getting lighter again, come along to our annual Solstice walk up the Clashmach Hill.

Huntly Histories Walking Group

A new group, with Networks of Wellbeing, to explore Huntly's rich history, thinking about the future of our town.

Walk 1: Huntly's Shops with
Patrick Scott

28 October, 10am, The Square

White Wood Walk

11 Nov, 1.30pm - 3pm

Start at War Monument

Bring Picnic

Bring Your Own Greens!

Foliage Festive Floristry

5 Dec, 6pm, DA Office

Tickets: £5 Booking Advised

Friday Lunch Talks

1pm, Deveron Arts kitchen

14 Oct, Ailie Rutherford, Artist Talk
28 Oct, Phil Gaitor, School Sytems
4 Nov, Bob Donald, Slow Food
18 Nov, Azar Othman, Artist Talk
25 Nov, Jim McEwen, Public Health
Across the World
9 Dec, Alan Macpherson,
Ecopoetics

Suggested Donation: £2

Notices

Our Guests

Colin Shepherd, Archaeologist / Rachel Hunt, University of Glasgow / Karen Grant, 1000 Huts / Alison Boulger, Florist / Norah Campbell, British Council Scotland / Room 13, Art Collective / Robin McAlpine, Common Weal / Emmanuel Cocher, Institut Français d'Ecosse / Nikolai Peterson, Goethe Institut / Remco de Blaaij, Centre Contemporary Art / Kate Deans, Creative Europe Desk UK / Philip Deverell, Creative Scotland / Lara Demori, Art historian / Sarah Yearsley, engage Scotland / Samuel Bricault, Musician / Alyn Smith, MEP

Artists:

Hanna Tuulikki, Monique Besten/NL, Clemens Wilhelm/D, Thomas Huber/D, Wolfgang Aichner/D, Norah Campbell, Alicia Bruce, Janie Nicoll, Hilary Nicoll, Curator, Subir Hati/India, Hu Weiyl/Taiwan, Saddam Jumaily/Iraq, Noura Al Khasawneh/Jordan

CHRISTMAS LUNCH

1pm, 16 Dec 16, meet at Brander Building
Do you work on your own, or is your team too small to have its own Christmas do?

Join Deveron Arts and the Huntly Development Trust for our annual Small Business Christmas Lunch

With food from Omar Afif

People

Linda Bolsakova, Intern
Anna Reid, Intern
Andrea Geile, Artist
Ben Macfadyen, Storyteller

Shop

Lure of the Lost

Read about Anthony Schrag's pilgrimage to Venice and test out a bit of the route yourself!

£12

CAFE

Deveron
Arts

Huntly Farmers Market
First Saturday of Every Month
9am - 1pm

Join us for a chat at our seasonal pop-up cafe!

Saltire Commendation

Huntly's *White Wood* received a special commendation from the Saltire Society Scotland for the New Art in Public Places Awards.

The *White Wood*, a living monument to peace, was created by Caroline Wendling with the Huntly community in 2015.

Community Choir

Monday evenings, all welcome from beginner to experienced singers. All ages welcome!

Contact: ruthgrant01@hotmail.com

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FRIDAY LUNCH

Every Friday at 1pm Brander Kitchen
Keep an eye out for our programme of lunchtime speakers

Fancy giving a talk? Get in touch!

Opportunity!

We are looking for volunteers to get involved and lend a hand! Deveron Arts' 21st birthday celebrations, gardening in the Brander, or cooking at a friday lunch.

Get in touch!

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Deveron Arts works with the context and identity of the town of Huntly in Aberdeenshire. Here, the town is the venue, research base, studio, gallery and stage for artists of all fields and from all over the world. Engaging local people and the community in topics of both local + global concern, Deveron Arts works through a 50/50 motto, bringing together artistic and social relationships in a world wide network that extends throughout and beyond the geo-boundaries of Huntly.