



# BEEE Creative CIC

Connecting People to Opportunities

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## Whitepaper

### Becoming a dance intern.....

Becoming a dance intern.....we speak to two of BEEE Creative's dance interns on their experiences.

As part of the [Exhibit 2020](#) project, BEEE Creative provides the opportunity for two students to do a dance internship and experience the different aspects of working on a community arts project.

Anna and Meriam both started in March this year, just as the UK went into lockdown. Both working from home, they only knew each other's names from practical email exchanges. So, in order to get to know each other, Anna and Meriam collaborated to produce the following which documents their individual journey's to becoming dance interns for BEEE Creative.

### An introduction to Carrie Washington and BEEE Creative.....

Each in their final year of study - Anna at Middlesex University and Meriam at Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance – they had met Carrie during one of the guest lectures she delivered at both institutions and got to know about her and BEEE Creative.

**Anna:** *'I had met her a couple of times during my three years. Carrie had contacted one of my friends who had done some volunteering for her before, for volunteers for the Dance Re:Ignite Festival. She passed it on to a few of us. So, I helped out on the festival day in March 2019. That's where I met Carrie properly for the first time.*

*She mentioned an internship for the Dance Re:Ignite project and when the advertisement for that came out, I applied. I've always been interested in project management, maybe sometimes even without realising it. We also need to do a placement in our last year, so it was kind of ticking both boxes. I applied back in September, had an interview with Carrie, and got the first internship.'*

After her internship on the Dance Re:Ignite project, Carrie asked Anna if she was interested to join as an intern on the [Exhibit 2020](#) team.

**Meriam:** *'Carrie gave a lecture for our Community Dance Development module. She taught us how do you set up a budget and those kinds of things. Jennifer Irons, one of the artists on Exhibit 2020 was a guest lecturer as well. Everybody was so inspiring. At our programme we learn how to set up a project proposal and apply for funding. And then we learn how to set up a workshop series and make a lesson plan. But there is a lot of nitty gritty in between we*

*don't really learn about. I saw the internship as an opportunity to learn that part of the job. Especially because Carrie is really good at those things.'*

Some hesitance of taking on a job in Hertfordshire, whilst living in London, was easily settled as most work would be done from home.

### **Lockdown - adapting the internship**

BEEE Creative's [Dance Re:ignite Festival](#) took place the weekend before events started to get cancelled due to COVID-19. Consequently, both Meriam's and Anna's internships were adapted, along with their courses, to meet the adapted conditions with many workshops moving online.

**Meriam:** *'We have classes online, some pre-recorded, others are live through Zoom. One of the assessments, leading a community dance workshop has moved online, so we're going to teach online too. The project proposal that we have to write and present, doesn't really change. The only weird one is choreography. But at least we have classes.'*

**Anna:** *'We have had to navigate our way through the changes, but we have followed Carrie's lead.'*

### **Exhibit 2020**

Within Exhibit 2020 Anna and Meriam each have their own area to focus on. Anna supports with the general administration, the organisation of the residencies within the project as well as practical support during these events. Meriam supports the project management, focusing on the community workshops and the Young Creatives strand of the project.

**Meriam:** *'Due to Covid-19, we have had to adapt ourselves. So instead of organising the workshops, I've been working on an information flyer about the project. I am also delivering content for social media. And then somehow, I came up with the idea for a [blog series](#). So that's what I'm working on now'*

How has your work changed?'

**Anna:** *'It's kind of picking up whatever is needed. At the minute I'm doing a lot of fundraising strategies and rescheduling things that we can look into for future projects. Doing the small number of bits we can, to prepare for when everything starts up again with the residency strand of the project. It's kind of a balancing act at the moment.'*

Having been thrown in the deep end by starting at the dance project management company during these challenging times, they still deem themselves lucky, recognising the value of their experiences:

**Meriam:** *'At first, I was a bit afraid that there wouldn't be enough work to fill my two days a week. I was completely wrong. Because we can't do certain things, it has opened up the time for things like the blogs. It's useful to recognise that this unexpected freed up time allows to do things that were waiting for a long time.'*

**Anna:** *'I suppose, I'm fortunate to be in a company at this time to see what happens, to experience it first-hand. Being able to be a part of and witness an organisation move forward without shutting down. No halting everything out of fear but going head-on. Figuring out how best to carry on and still do what we were planning on doing, but in an altered way.'*

### **Not being prepared, but ready to adapt**

Both Anna and Meriam are impressed by Carrie's adaptiveness and the way she cares for the organisation, using it as inspiration for their own future professional practices.

Anna describes what she takes away: *'The need to always be prepared for the worst and being able to adapt to any situation within project management. Though this is a very extreme situation that no one could really ever fully prepare for, I think Carrie has done so well just trying to pick up and do what we can at the time. I suppose it's not preparing for it, but just being ready to adapt to anything that may happen.'*

*Also, the fact that BEEE Creative works completely remotely. Carrie uses that to keep the communication going and how to best utilise its benefits. It is a company with many different strands and projects all running at the same time with many different people that work independently but are all working toward the same thing and do so successfully.'*

**Meriam:** *'Carrie stays supportive to everybody in the company, she has such a heart for the company and everybody that works for it, that she really supports that. I feel very lucky.'*

### **Learning opportunities**

Despite the challenging circumstances, the aim of the dance internship is for them to learn about the different facets of project management. What opportunities did they have/get to expand their knowledge and skill set?

**Anna:** *'The things I've learned are almost the smaller parts of the project management. Things that you kind of know are there, but don't realise how important and imperative they can be to projects. For example, I had a couple of sessions with Kirsten [Hutton, external evaluator, ed.] learning about evaluation. Also learning from Carrie about the way that she works, because she can just do so many amazing things all at the same time and can somehow navigate all of it. She's always ten steps ahead of what she wants to do and the way that she projects the progression of the company. It has been really interesting to watch that and shadow. Carrie has been great at providing any training she can that caters to the topics I am interested in to further my knowledge.'*

**Meriam agrees:** *'I feel Carrie is really supportive in what you want to learn and what you want to do. Through hobbies and volunteering work I already developed some skills and now that are all coming together, I can actually do them as my job. I realised that I really love doing things like designing a flyer and I get so happy from those interviews and setting up those blog series, writing the briefs.'*

*I am actually becoming more interested in the whole project management side. It's a comfort that this makes me happy, because as a community dance artist, I will have to set up my own projects and do the management. It can be really hard if you don't like doing that part, especially in the beginning, when you won't have the money to outsource it.'*

Meriam recognises what Anna says about the small parts of project management; *'I still remember graduating from medical school including three years of clinical internships and working on wards. Then you are suddenly a doctor, you're in charge. There were so many things you didn't notice before. So, I'm very aware that is going to happen here too when I finish. Of course, there will be things I need to figure out on my own, but having this internship gives me head start. Plus, building a network is really useful. Another goal this year was to see a bit more of England instead of just London, it didn't really happen so far with everything shutting down but, hopefully during the summer I'll get the chance to go to Hertfordshire and see that part of England.'*

## **Future**

Anna has now finished her studies, and Meriam is nearly done too. Both will have to wait a while for their graduation ceremonies though. But what are they planning on doing after their graduation and when their internship finishes?

**Anna:** *'I'm currently applying for the master's in Dance Producing & Management at London Studio Centre. My internships with BEEE Creative have really helped develop my knowledge and experience within this sector and played a huge part in me deciding to further my education within it.'*

**Meriam:** *'There are lots of things I want to do. The biggest one is doing a PhD. I want to research why dance is so beneficial for your health, combining my backgrounds in dance and medicine. I'm trying to figure out whether I want to do it in the Netherlands or the UK. Apart from research, I want to teach dance. I have lots of ideas for community dance projects. But what I heard from all the artist guest lecturers at Laban, is that often the first 2-3 years you're working on projects from other people, getting the experience and then you go into setting up more of your own projects. Another thing I would really like to do, is bring dance to the medical world. For example, by speaking about dance and how dance influenced my perspective on medicine or to use dance to promote wellbeing for healthcare professionals.'*

## **Transition**

Anna, having picked up that Meriam went to medical school, got curious and wanted to know how and why she transitioned into community dance from being a doctor.

**Meriam:** *'I started dancing quite late, at the age of 23, I was in my last year of medical school. Funnily enough after a year of dancing I felt it was more than just a hobby. But I had just started. By the time I did become good enough to consider applying for a dance degree, I was too old, especially for Dutch standards.'*

*It took a whole while and a lot of detours and figuring out how to make dance my profession. I did look at dance therapy, but I'm more into public health and preventative medicine and a therapy setting is not my thing.*

*Then I found this community dance programme. It was the missing puzzle piece that connected healthcare and dance and teaching, which are the three things that I'm incredibly passionate about.*

*During my specialisation in Youth Public Health, I really started to struggle working as a doctor. I'm a person who does really well working on a project basis. I'm innovative and creative. But the medical system I worked in is an ongoing, never ending process and there's no time for creativity because everything needs to be done as efficiently as possible. I felt I couldn't be me and that drained me. However, my passion for public health didn't fade, I just had to find the right way to channel it.*

*Considering dance as a profession, I've always known dance and healthcare had to come together, I just didn't know how. I still hadn't a clear idea when I moved to London and started my studies, but I've learned much since then. As I said earlier, I have plenty of practical ideas now. At the same time, there's so much more to discover and learn. I'm eager to get out into the world as a community dance artist and see where the path will lead me.'*

*If you want to take anything away from that story: listen to your heart and go for it, don't let adversity hold you back.*

**Meriam:** *'One of the things that I learned over the past few years that I've done this course is patience. When I did my audition, I had glandular fever. I got in, but I had to defer a year to recover. After my first year, I was pretty much broke, so I had to go back living with my parents - after living 15 years on my own - to work and save money, so I could afford as well as enjoy my second year. Officially it's a one-year full time course but it took me four years in total. I learned to be patient. I don't know if it's getting older or that I'm really listening to my heart, but I'm now able to trust things will come at the right time.*

*From the moment when I really started considering dance as a profession, I guess it took me 6-7 years to the point where I'm now. So, it takes time. And who knows where I'll end up in ten years' time.'*

## **Surviving Lockdown**

At the time of writing, lockdown is not fully over so Meriam and Anna have responded to a question from the [Surviving](#) Lockdown blog series: How do you keep yourself motivated, learning and creatively inspired during this challenging period?

**Anna:** *'It has been really tricky to stay motivated and creative. As I have had university work to complete and obviously this internship, it has helped to give a little bit more structure to my weeks. I have also been taking some dance classes online and one of my friends who is a gym instructor has been leading zoom workouts for me and my friends which has been really*

*fun. Even scheduling small things like that into my diary has also really helped me to keep a structure and ultimately stay motivated in lockdown.'*

**Meriam:** *'I definitely recognise that. The first few weeks I only had this work. The workdays would be perfectly fine. The other days I would feel lethargic. I would do a class here or something there, but not much. Now that school has started, I'm actually quite busy again, but somehow even though I'm busy, I do find time to do other things as well. I think that structure is really important. Cause I'm living alone, all contact has gone online, skyping with friends and family, helps getting some downtime in my schedule. And I've been doing lots of crochet.'*

As mentioned, BEEE Creative continues to work hard to adapt to COVID-19 measures. Providing [activity](#) packs and moving sessions online, even whole projects. Anna and Meriam are working hard to support the adaptations as well as preparing for the moment when they can reconnect face-to-face, and finally get the chance to meet in real life.

#### Info box – Anna

Name: Anna Quiney  
Study: BA Dance Performance,  
Middlesex University, London  
Role BEEE Creative: Exhibit 2020 Intern  
Favourite museum: V&A Museum  
(<https://www.vam.ac.uk>)  
Go-to art form: Dance  
Pets: Dog



#### Info box – Meriam

Name: Meriam Broersen  
Study: Postgraduate Diploma in Community  
Dance, Trinity Laban Conservatoire for  
Music and Dance, London  
Role BEEE Creative: Student Intern – Project Management  
Support  
Favourite museum: Zuiderzee museum (NL)  
(<https://www.zuiderzeemuseum.nl/?lang=en>),  
Museum of London (UK)  
(<https://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/museum-london>)  
Go-to art form: Dance  
Pets: 2 Cats

