

COCKPIT ARTS 3 YEARS

Dovile Bertulyte

- Jeweller



One of Cockpit Arts' newest arrivals is conceptual jeweller, Dovile Bertulyte, whose striking mixed-media pieces are already attracting the attention of major galleries in the UK. Dovile joined Cockpit Arts as part of the 2015/16 Creative Careers programme, which supports young crafts practitioners in the very early stages of their career. With support from the Business Development Team, and a year's free studio space, Dovile has been able to concentrate on streamlining her business and applying for further funding.

Dovile graduated from the University of Middlesex in 2013 with a BA in Jewellery & Accessories. She was accepted onto the Princes Trust Enterprise programme, which is where she heard about Cockpit Arts' Creative Careers. "In the craft world, Cockpit Arts is really renowned, so it was great to be offered a place here," she enthuses. Dovile arrived at the Holborn incubator in September 2015 and now shares a large studio with five other designer-makers.

One of the first things that Dovile had to address in her initial one-to-ones with the Business Development Team was her business model. She smiles when she recalls the range of collections that she presented at her initial interview with Cockpit. "I had four different strands to the business," she explains. "My Phobia collection, a range of leather accessories, some smaller, more commercial pieces that I'd made to sell on a market stall, and my latest silicone pieces that I was in the process of developing." She was encouraged to scale down her product offering to two core collections, focussing her efforts on what she does best: design and create unique jewellery in mixed media.

With these new, streamlined collections Dovile was encouraged to apply for New Designers 'One Year On'. She exhibited there at the end of June and, as a direct result, is currently taking part in a number of exhibitions at galleries throughout the UK, including Studio Fusion at Oxo Tower Wharf in London, Mission Gallery, Swansea and the Craft Centre & Design Gallery, Leeds.

Business Incubation Project Manager, Imogen Lawry, also worked closely with Dovile on her business plan, enabling her to apply for a loan through the Princes Trust Launchpad scheme. The pair now meets on a weekly basis. "As a small business you can easily get overwhelmed with everything," she admits. "Some days I would be stressing out with what to do and wouldn't do anything because I just didn't know where to start! Imogen has really helped me to tackle my time management and shown me how to prioritise my tasks."



Meanwhile, Cockpit's Business Incubation Programme Manager, Madeleine Furness, is helping Dovile apply for the Crafts Council's Hothouse mentoring scheme. Madeleine previously worked on the Hothouse team and has therefore been able to give Dovile some really insightful support with her application. "I have just emailed Madeleine to ask her to help me prepare for my interview, which is next Tuesday!" she smiles.

"The community here is amazing," she continues. "I've met so many great jewellery and textile designers that I've read about in books. Cockpit is a really interesting mix of people just starting out and those who are at the height of their career; it's nice for me to be able to see both sides."

There have been other benefits to being part of the Cockpit community. For example, Dovile had been struggling to find suitable part-time jewellery work to support her income. As soon as she arrived at Cockpit, she used the internal Google Groups to advertise for work, and now assists Cockpit jeweller Tamara Gomez in her studio one day a week. She has also benefitted from the wider reach of Cockpit's connections within the craft world, discovering a second job through Google Groups with a local watchmaker.

Dovile also credits the designer-maker directory on Cockpit Arts' website with driving a lot of traffic to her own website. Plus, she has enjoyed increased exposure at the bi-annual Open Studios events. "My type of audience comes to Open Studios," she says. "People are interested in crafts, they are interested in contemporary jewellery and it's nice to meet and talk to potential customers."

Dovile is very happy to have been awarded a further year's subsidised studio space at Cockpit's Holborn incubator. But she is already looking ahead to 2018, when she is hoping to get a permanent studio at Cockpit Arts. "I really want to get this business going," she says. "When my time with the Creative Careers programme is up at the end of next year, I want to apply for a full cost studio. Getting a studio here is one of the best things that have happened to me. It's changed my business and my personal life."

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Photos: Kamil Kurnikoff