

Swansea Arts Showcase

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Introduction (500 words)

While asked to create a film festival, I teamed up with Sam Jones in order to create Swansea Arts Showcase, which as the name suggests, is to showcase the different mediums of artistry that can be found within Swansea, by opening it up beyond the filmmakers of the course in both past and present, and inviting those from other courses to showcase their talent, or for those outside of the university entirely. While filmmakers will be welcome, we both thought it to be important that other mediums can be highlighted and brought under a single umbrella for an event as a way to network and meet other creatives from different walks of life, as what is a film at the end of the day but art, and art another way to convey a story.

As previously stated, I will be working alongside Sam with him being the leader and the one behind the initial concept in this two man team, and the one doing the talking, while I run support wherever necessary and creating both marketing materials and setting up and running social media accounts. Due to this, I will be tackling this festival pitch from largely a marketing and graphics standpoint.

Aims

In researching for this event I am asking a set of questions to be able to better keep myself on track, these being;

1. What is currently available in Swansea or the surrounding area?
 - a. Anything similar? Is this too close to a pre-existing event?
 - b. Who runs/backs this event?
2. How do these events market themselves?
 - a. Is there a way I can improve upon it?
3. Who Is The Target Audience?
 - a. Surveys?

1. What Is Currently Available? (Case Studies)

My goal in research was to find other festivals and events in or around Swansea as a way of seeing what was missing, and to see what was already available/if the idea of *Swansea Arts Showcase* was already taken.

Starting a generalised search on eventbrite, there are plenty of crafts events around the planned time of our event, along with many outdoor cinema events, however by searching Swansea Bay’s official website shows that Swansea already has many art-based events. There are also plenty of bands having gigs across different venues, but from what I can see there aren’t any that tie art and music together. That being said, I settled on delving into these two, one new in Swansea and the other further out in Llanelli.

Event 1: Gwyl Tawe

Gwyl Tawe is a music festival held in Swansea's Waterfront Museum, with a large focus on the Welsh language, with each musical act being primarily Welsh speaking - it is a celebration of the language. Starting from its new home in the museum in 2023, with other venues in the past, Gwyl Tawe showcases some of the largest names in the new wave of Welsh artists; *Adwaith*, *Ynys*, *Sage Todz* and *Y Dail*, to name a few, and will be returning again later this year with a new lineup. In short; a line up of big name bands within the Welsh music scene. There is also a focus on art, that if my translation into English is correct (there is no English version on the poster), having an art gallery (*gweithiau oriel celf*) established during the event, though the music is the focus and highlight of the event.

It is a free festival open to all with no required ticket or prior sign up, due to it largely being outdoors (with an after party in the Bunkhouse bar, featuring the headliner *Melin Melyn*). There is also a team up with Swansea schools, along with what appears to be a theatre targeted towards families and children. This is also a full day event, starting at 10am, and finishing at 7pm(9pm for the Bunkhouse afterparty), and only takes place over the course of one day annually.

The festival is run under the Menter Iaith Abertawe banner, a group run by Tomos Jones, that focuses on promoting the Welsh language, and encouraging its use. Largely run from Ty Tawe, Swansea's only Welsh language shop, they regularly hold events such as music gigs every so often, along with "coffi a chlonc" (coffee and a chat) days a few times a week as a way for people to meet others and practise their welsh. They are in partnership with the larger Mentrau Iaith banner, Dysgu Cymraeg Bae Abertawe (which also support Welsh learning),

Despite being a large festival, it barely has a social media presence outside of its Facebook page, events pages and the Menter Iaith Abertawe website, though while attending events within the city I have noticed flyers strewn, therefore I am under the assumption that it runs largely on word of mouth rather than marketing online, perhaps to cater it more towards Swansea inhabitants rather than the larger populace of Wales (similarly to events held in my hometown of Llanelli, but under the larger *Menter Iaith* banner rather than *Ymlaen Llanelli*). Other than the date and time for the event itself, there isn't a lot of information available on

Ultimately, Gwyl Tawe is already a pre-existing festival that runs on the same track as what we have planned, though it has a far stronger pull towards music rather than other art forms so on that end Swansea Arts Showcase would not be a ripoff, and hopefully stands out enough as its own being.

Event 2: Llanelli Vintage Festival

Closer to home (for myself), Llanelli Vintage Festival is an annual festival that takes place in September in Llanelli. The Vintage Festival itself holds a mixture of classic car showcasing, food trucks, live music

and workshops, with plenty of stalls coming into the area to sell their wares. It is also an event that has been recurring for several years, with the earliest event (that I could find) being held in 2019. It is free to attend any and all Ymlaen Llanelli events, and they are all an all day affair with the Vintage Festival running from 10am to 6pm.

It is run by Ymlaen Llanelli, a similar organisation to Menter Iaith, that focuses on improving the working, living and visiting within the town, hoping to increase footfall by holding free events throughout the year. It is funded by a 1.25% levy on business units with a rateable value of over £5000, which then goes into the funding of bettering the town through planting flowers, creating murals and events in order to increase footfall and strengthening customer bases.

One downside to this event is that there isn't much information available on their website (ymlaenllanelli.com), but there's far more that can be found on their Facebook page (if you have the patience to traverse through all their other events), however from their facebook it is clear that they do have a baseline to every event that they have: food trucks, and music (especially when compared to their 80s festival, Augustfest - the beer festival, and the Food and Drink Festival; it appears we're very easily entertained in my neck of the woods).

Unlike Gwyl Tawe, Llanelli Vintage Festival (along with many of the other Ymlaen Llanelli event) do not have any real marketing or social media presence. From experience, a lot of it is (again) purely down to stumbling across their posts on Facebook, or stumbling across them in Llanelli town centre. The information that they do have on the Ymlaen Llanelli website is minimal, only disclosing the date and time that it is held, that it will have food trucks, and who to contact if you're interested in running a stall. It does not say what part of Llanelli it will be, relying on the fact that most would know based on previous events, presumably (however as someone who lives in Llanelli I also know how hard the festival is to miss if you're in the area, as it takes place in the town centre and the amount of people in the streets leaves a good idea of where it is).

How Do These Events Market Themselves?

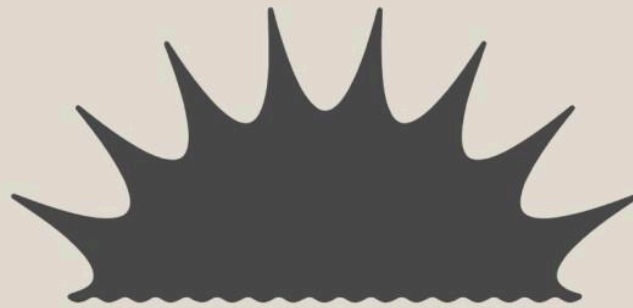
The short answer is; they don't. At least, not online or easily accessible. Both events have one thing in common and that is the lack of any major social media presence with it relying heavily on word of mouth and foot traffic to get by. Taking this into consideration, to make the Swansea Arts Showcase stand out, we need to firmly cement ourselves online, for us to be easily accessible and get our name out there - especially as a new event cropping up in an otherwise event heavy city (the Bunkhouse and Elysium alone already filling a sizable gap for artists and bands - though not together).

There is barely any information available outside of where and when it'll be held, not even reviews of past events across their sites. Gwyl Tawe, at least, releases a set list for the bands, while Llanelli Vintage Festival (or, any Ymlaen Llanelli event) barely even notes down the live acts (that are frequent at these events).

Gwyl Tawe does have posters available online that are also distributed in person at different venues. The posters have a simple colour scheme that is eye catching, and lists the acts that will be playing alongside the date and the sponsors of the event.

08.06.24

ABERTAWE



GŴYL Tawe

AMGUEDDFA GENEDLAETHOL Y GLANNAU
NATIONAL WATERFRONT MUSEUM

BITW



BREICHIAU HIR



CIGOFOD

HMS MORRIS



KIM HON



MELLT

N'FAMADY KOUYATÉ



PARISA FOULADI

WORLD CUB



PARTI CLOI: MELIN MELYN
THE BUNKHOUSE NOS SUL 09.6.24 / £10

GWEITHDAI CELF ORIELODL

FAMILIA DE LA NOCHE
(SIOE THEATR I BLANT A THEULUOEDD)

YSGOLION ABERTAWE

10:00-21:00

THE BUNKHOUSE

Abertawe
National Waterfront Museum

Swansea Arts
Festival

Swansea
Council

Swansea
Arts Festival

(example of the poster)

However, despite this, these are both successful festivals that have run for years with Gwyl Tawe previously being held at a different venue successfully for years before its move. However, Swansea Arts Showcase doesn't have the luxury of being a pre-existing event and we need to gain trust in other ways to build a name for ourselves. As a event celebrating Swansea, I also believe we should put work into letting our audience know what they are getting into; making sure we list acts and artists to the best of our abilities because at the heart of it - this event is about them.

Target Audience

While not a traditional survey, during the process I reached out to local followers of my blog, who proceeded to share it among the wider welsh community within the site itself as I ran under the assumption that Sam created a standard survey so I wanted to reach out to a wider audience. While many expressed excitement, but being unable to actively attend the event the initial post simply poking for interest gained 156 Notes (86 of which were reblogs/shares and 70 likes). Some comments below:



trash-capable-of-sentence ↻ daianotherday

...

Feb 27

#currently living near swansea and this sounds sick!!

#cannot be involved but any south welshie mutuals please please
please i beg



srinyx ↻ garthcelyn

...

Mar 12

#i dont have the time to set up for a table myself

#but ive passed these details on to a friend who helps run the startup
stiwidio in cardiff

#so hopefully some folks there will be interested!



offworld-lamb ↻ tinknevertalks

Mar 12

#OH DAMN #this sounds great

#way better than my end of year thing in 4th year

(Screenshots taken from my blog; GarthCelyn.Tumblr.com)

Among those who reblogged, many responded positively if they left a comment, with many more silently sharing the initial post. Later add-ons gained traction with musicians and artists who wanted to take part, who I then sent over to Sam to hash out the details since he was the one actively sorting out the venues, while I went ahead and worked on logo designs and spreading the word in the early stages. One person even went so far as to recommend us to Startup Stiwdio; a business in Cardiff that helps start ups, though nothing came from it besides a follow on instagram - though it might be a good thing to chase up in future if we choose to continue the event in future.

The audience, in my understanding, is primarily those in the Swansea region initially, fans of music and those with an interest in the arts, to which there is no age restriction. However, with my blog post reaching as wide within the community as it did, those from further areas of Wales have gained interest - whether or not they'll show up is another thing entirely, though our name has well and truly spread.

Planning the Event

I was brought on by Sam from the beginning in order to do the marketing, which started as pitching different logo designs based on his specifications (which will be shown and discussed further later on), then went on to spread the word the best I could while also finding local talent to join the showcase.

Through my personal blog I had managed to gather three different artists (one who showed interest and then proceeded to not respond), a Swansea based musician who could not make the event, and an artist who I'm unsure if she made the event or not, though she did show great interest.

During the set up time, we discussed what would be at the event. I offered to bring on the authors that I know if we needed to fill out space, which we did not need in the end, while Sam offered me a table to show off my resin crafts and dice, which I turned down due to it being a hobby rather than something I'm interested in pursuing. It was brought up on whether or not we should offer 'goodie bags' from the artists, an idea that I vetoed due to pricing and hassling the artists.

Social Media

While Sam set up the events, I set up social media accounts. Due to the interest through my personal writing blog, I then created a blog on the same website in order to keep any and all posts on the event in one neat place, however due to issues with the site it did not keep up the hype as the original posts made. It still currently sits under the domain *swanseaartsshowcase.tumblr.com* (Tumblr being used as it is very simple and straight forward to start a new blog and design it to specifications), but Sam and I are considering paying for a .com domain if we are to do this again in future - although making it a true website rather than a blog and on a different website.

The blog proved less successful than the initial post, but gained a few followers and worked better to direct people to, rather than my own. It contains the various posters made, along with redirects to the Instagram and reposts from my regular blog. However, one large downside to the website is that there is no algorithm as there is with other websites and relies on posting at specific times of the day for posts to be seen (which as schedules change day to day, it's near impossible to predict), and with the user base being hostile to advertisements, using the "boost" feature (being able to pay £10 to show the post to a certain amount of users at random) isn't the best option. Without my pre-existing Welsh audience, I would not have chosen Tumblr as the official blog of Swansea Arts Showcase due to the obvious; it is barely a functioning website.

The next being Instagram (handle: *swanseaartsshowcase*), which became more of a hub for Sam to be able to contact the artists and acts with more ease than emails. This is the most popular of our accounts, likely due to it being far easier to post, keep track, message and find artists; being able to vet them faster than following a link from an email, instead their account is already there. While I set up the account, it is Sam who is the one actively using it to contact artists and post photos, while I use it to follow artists and businesses in Wales; quietly gathering an audience while Sam does the talking. This was undiscussed between us, though with how Sam uses it it worked out better that he has more of the control as it has proven easier to contact the acts and artists.

The most recent account is the Facebook page (again, Swansea Arts Showcase), which has far less followers than the Instagram, since it was made far closer to the event, and I have experienced some technical difficulties with the website that postponed posting. After finally getting reacquainted with how Facebook pages are run, I set up an official Facebook event for the Bunkhouse gig (that no one interacted with - likely due to it being from a brand new web page) in order to spread word of the tickets. By connecting Instagram and Facebook, it did, however, open up new options for the Instagram - namely that we can now view insights easier, see how many people and accounts we have reached and we can now work the instagram through the Facebook page manager.

The Posts

With me running marketing, I was asked to create posters for the event along with various cropped images that could be used on Instagram. I will showcase a few below, as proof of creation, as I have no updates on my end on whether or not they were used at all.



The 200 followers was funnily enough meant to be a *100* followers post, however by the time I tweaked it enough to my liking we had shot up another hundred within the week, and another by the time I sent it over to Sam for approval.

The poster was created to be a physical poster (without thinking of the printer ink), and isn't the final design - that one being intended to house the names of various acts and artists that would be at the event, however by then other artists had started to create varied posters for us, which I believe is closer to the heart of the event - showcasing multiple people's talents - rather than one person creating everything from one vision (especially since I'm incredibly out of touch with my graphic design skills).

While I believe that they are eye catching, I also believe that they are busy as designs

Branding

As I was brought into the festival project for marketing, I was given a design brief in order to create the logo. The overall guidance I was given was "groovy", with the intent that my branding would be temporary or guidance for an illustrator later down the line in order to improve upon it.

That did not end up happening.

Design 1



This might look familiar, as it became the official branding for the festival. I took inspiration from the colours used in Gwyl Tawe (though hopefully not ripping them off), and played around with using different shapes and textures.

If I had known that this would become the official logo, I would have cleaned up certain places where the textures “bleed” over each other, however I do like how it turned out.

Not intended for printing mass scale, but stands out digitally, and has proven to work well in different scalings across social media as it is the only one that’s made it outside of my conversations with Sam (until now).



Design 2

For this one Sam asked if I could lean more into the groovy, vaporwave style. Far plainer than the first, I tried to make it more “neon” however I don’t think it worked out. It feels needlessly complicated and the colours feel like they blend in together too much for my liking, with the blue backdrop to the lettering feeling too sharp.



Design 3

Here I went rogue, and went for a plain, straight forward logo, but wanted to keep some level of “funky”ness so mirrored a fingerprint-type print into the centre. Needless to say, this is my least favourite design; while it is simple and would perhaps work, I don’t believe it fits the brief, especially when compared to the other designs.



Design 4

For this one, I tried incorporating the fact that this is an *arts* showcase, keeping the same colour scheme as the one we ended up using. The circle background is intended to be a record to highlight the music aspect, with the art supplies for the different mediums of art.

I wanted to keep it within the “groovy”, “retro” theme that two of the other designs had, keeping the colours warm and slightly faded. I did like the date being incorporated into this design, though I do believe that it looks closer to a t-shirt print rather than a professional logo.

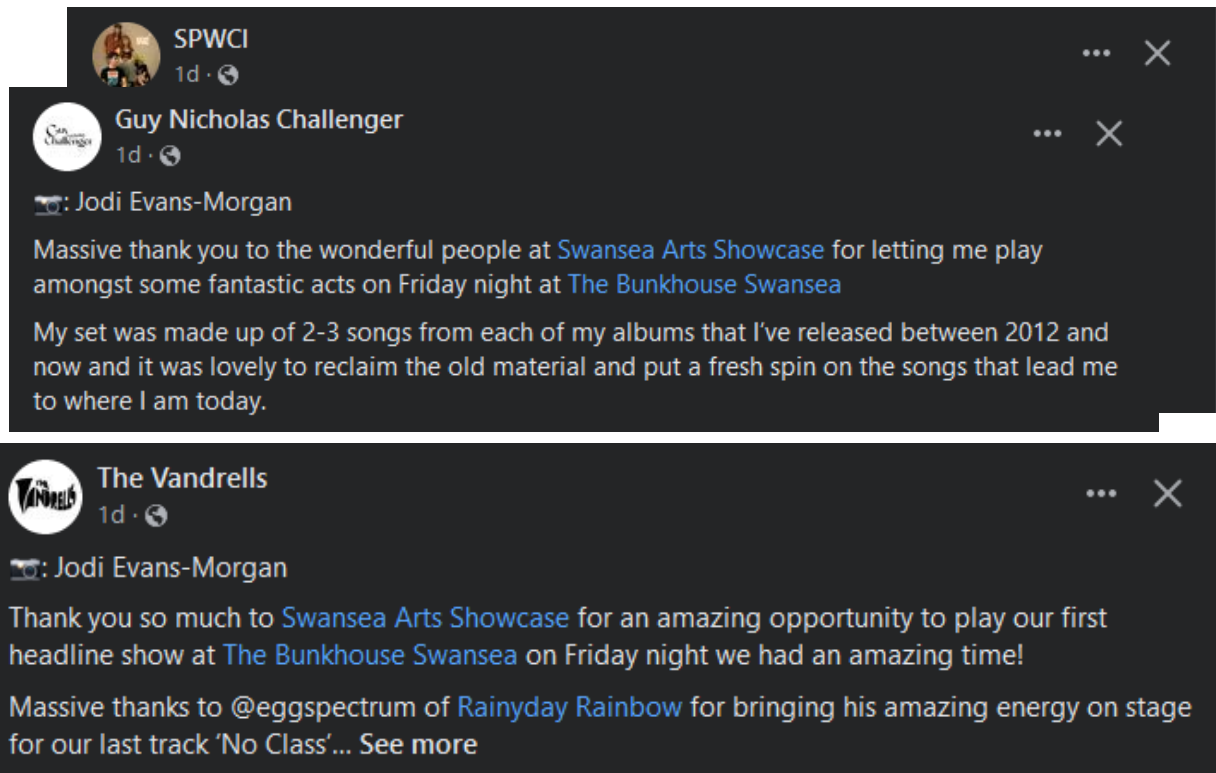
The Creatives and Acts

With Sam looking for acts and artists however he did, I continued online. From my efforts, three people were interested in joining the event, but as far as I’m aware only one followed through to be at the event, with one never getting back to me after initially messaging, and another being unable to make the dates but wished us well.

In the event that we did not get the numbers that Sam wanted, I offered to reach out to a band I had met while at a gig who expressed interest in working alongside the course, along with several friends who’ve either had their books published in the past or are publishing close to the event date, however it did not come to that as the showcase proved incredibly popular, already filling out the floorspace we had.

The Event

Unfortunately due to personal reasons that I will not disclose, I was unable to attend the events themselves (the first half being a gig in the Bunkhouse on April 19th, and the second being the arts showcase on April 20th in Volcano), however from others who’d attended I have been told that it was a success, and that it was both packed and went ahead smoothly. From what I could see from the bands tagging the Facebook page, they enjoyed and only have good things to say - at least publicly!



(Screenshots taken from Facebook)

At the very least the bands had fun and enjoyed - some coming to the second half of the event (the arts showcase itself) to play a smaller gig there during the day.

A documentary has been made on the event and published on Youtube, highlighting that this meant far more to people than originally anticipated - with one person bringing up that while she was initially here on accident, that she was interested in the event because it was a way to show that Swansea was more than simply creatives, that there's a wide selection of cultures here, and that it is something important to keep in mind. The fact a documentary about this event even exists is a testament to how necessary it was to have one umbrella to knit these creatives together, especially in this new age of digital solitude. I've also been made aware that a local magazine has taken interest in the event, and had interviewed Sam

Now that the event is over, the Instagram (currently run by Sam) continues to interact with local artists, musicians and events, sharing their works onto "reels" to spread word and work alongside quietly. I continue to share posts from the bands that attended as we're tagged even weeks after the event has taken place and ended, and events that are taking place in Swansea for the far smaller audience there, while the blog sits abandoned due to the lack of activity from fellow bloggers (again, lack of algorithm and no guarantee of anyone seeing the posts without reposts makes the site unusable in this sense without payment). Instagram does seem to be the way

ahead for now, however I do not wish to give up on the Facebook page just yet since it is useful for setting official dates for the events through the Events page, and gaining traction that way.

I've discussed the future of the event with Sam, and while nothing is concrete we've both expressed interest in continuing the event going ahead, and are actively planning the next instalment, to which I am already creating marketing materials.

While I was unable to take part more this year, I have enjoyed the experience and would like to challenge myself to perhaps take on more of a speaking role for the next time, since I have enjoyed the little verbal marketing I've done for the event (talking to people waiting in line for gigs to start when I have been able to). Though I wish to take on a larger role, I do also believe that we need to add more members to this team of two, so that we aren't at risk of being spread as thin and to have more of a discussion when it comes down to ideas and decisions.

Evaluation

I think one drawback on my side was that I initially remained too quiet - while I did veto ideas and agree with others as one is to do on a team, I had no part in the organisation of the event - not the talking to venues or the like, largely due to being preoccupied at the time with recovering from my own health issues and dealing with personal problems at home. In future I should try harder, regardless, so that I can take on more of a role and shoulder more of the burden. Another thing to work on is timing and communication, which I believe goes to all of us - while it worked out in the end, our scheduling (for me at least) felt rather erratic, and set meetings weren't always upheld, but life has a habit of throwing wrenches.

However, despite my lack of physical involvement the showcase was a success, with more planned for the future, and perhaps even a larger team next time so the event can take off more than it has already. As of writing this, the instagram sits at 380 followers, and for the first of a newcomer event, gathered in a short amount of time is rather spectacular in my opinion.

Now, in future for marketing, I think it would be a better idea to scrap the blog and instead simply redirect to the instagram until we set up a website that can work as the main hub of information, and I think I'll discuss with Sam on getting a new logo - while the current one works I am also fully aware that my graphic design skills are very rusty, so maybe getting an actual digital artist in would be best going forward if we're all truly intent on making this event a recurring thing.

I am, however, excited for the possibility of doing this again, and especially if I can take part in a larger role than the facebook marketer or graphic designer. As someone who enjoys gigs and interacting with the bands, I think that might be the way ahead for me - not the gig going, but

rather the promotion towards bands (if they are interested, of course, I have no interest in badgering). With future events being discussed and planned, it gives me a second chance to do better with what I have learned during this process, and pitch my ideas of change (namely, the idea of getting a website rather than a blog) and be more involved with the start up.

While Sam and I are discussing the next step (which will likely be a pride event), I will ask about changing my role to something more involved, especially with the pride season being so close at hand we'll need all hands on deck to get it ready for then.

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Tumblr-Adjacent

Garthcelyn (2024) *Any welsh creators interested in working with a student lead art showcase based in Swansea? authors, artists, Game Makers,...* – @garthcelyn on Tumblr, Tumblr. Available at: <https://www.tumblr.com/garthcelyn/742699350609870848/any-welsh-creators-interested-in-working-with-a>.