**Notes from Launch Pad feedback session with Matthew Pendergast, 23rd June 2015**

There are three main things that selectors are looking for in a Launch Pad proposal:
How it will add to the development of the artist’s practice
How it will engage with an audience
Whether the artist’s practice demonstrates a dialogue with contemporary art discourse

Castlefield Gallery is very focussed on artists’ talent development, and as a curator/selector Matthew likes to see artists working outside their comfort zone; Castlefield is especially interested in proposals that use the gallery as a testing or project space. Timeliness is also a factor; for example Darren Nixon’s Launch Pad is a good example as he was at the point of breaking into a new part of his practice, incorporating sculpture and performance into his painting, and this was one of the deciding factors in his selection.

In terms of the written proposal, the selectors want to know about the work and what the artist is proposing, not about art theory, so cut to the chase as quickly and clearly as possible. State early on how many artists will be in the show, how many events there will be and what they are. Also provide links to the artists’ websites. Lucy Harvey’s Launch Pad proposal is a good example of this, and was also very timely as it allowed her to continue developing some new themes in her work.

Submit your proposal in a pdf including images with captions.

Prioritise clarity!

It’s really worth finding out about the gallery and the space – come down to the gallery, have a look, talk to Matthew. Sometimes proposals come in from artists who clearly don’t know anything about the gallery or the space, and this counts against them. Floor plans of the gallery and an equipment list are available from associates@castlefieldgallery.co.uk. Again, it was clear that Darren Nixon Launch Pad would make good use of the particular and quite unusual gallery space that Castlefield offers.

Another factor is whether or not the Launch Pad is necessary – will the project happen anyway, even if it isn’t selected for Launch Pad? Projects which have already been shown elsewhere or already have a lot of momentum behind them are less likely to be selected.

Even if you’re not selected, it’s worth putting in proposals in order to get your work seen; if a selector likes your work they will make a note of it for future reference. Writing the proposal can also help you formulate and develop your ideas. And always take the opportunity to get feedback if you’re not selected – this is very useful, and very unusual. Most Launch Pad artists had submitted at least one unsuccessful proposal before being selected.