



CALL FOR ARTISTS' PROPOSALS

Deadline for submissions: Friday 30th November 2012, 12 noon GMT

Bedford Creative Arts, a leading arts organisation focusing on socially engaged practices, is seeking proposals from artists or artists groups for their first major commission of 2013.

THEME

Bedford Creative Arts' artistic theme for 2013 is OURS – what we have in common and what makes something our own?

Bedford Creative Arts' [artistic policy](#) prioritises common places, common cultures and (un)common people.

We believe that things are done better together. In these uncertain times people and communities are coming together as active citizens, reclaiming control of spaces, things and ideas.

How much of this control is an illusion, and how much represents truly empowered citizenship? Who is responsible for our common places and common cultures? Is it really the (un)common people?

DELIVERY MODEL

Bedford Creative Arts has devised and piloted a model of 'commissioning *with* communities'. We commission artists who have a track record of delivering collaborative, adventurous and engaging art, and whose ideas align with our artistic policy.

We start by delivering public events and activities as opportunities to get involved with the work of these specialist, experienced artists. In addition to the advertised events programme, we invite local community and charity groups to take part in bespoke workshops, and create opportunities for the artist to work with some of the core groups we support on a regular basis from our home in Bedford's Midland Road.

Participants from these 'open' and 'closed' sessions are then all able to come together to become active collaborators in the artist's practice, during a sustained period of creative exchange and art production.

Together we make adventurous and exciting art, which we share with a wider audience through public presentations, installations and performances.

LOCATION

The Central Bedfordshire town of Dunstable and its surrounding area has been chosen as the location for this commission. As well as the artistic themes identified above, proposals

should respond to the specific identity of this location and the people who live, work and visit there.

Starting points for proposals could include:

- The [Dunstable Downs](#), part of the Chilterns, are a 20 minute walk from the town centre. Much of the downs are registered common land, and are currently looked after by the [National Trust](#). What are today's Dunstable communities' relationships to this common land? And what is the role of the National Trust?
- Dunstable is home to a renowned yearly [Kite Festival](#) in July, and is the home of the [London Gliding Club](#). Recent international debate about 'who owns the sky' has discussed the principles of the Commons in relation to the air around us and the earth's atmosphere. What does this mean at a grass roots level for people who work, live and visit Dunstable?
- Dunstable is a destination for walking, rambling and outdoor pursuits for people across Bedfordshire and beyond. How could active citizenship and engagement with the Commons movement support and improve these activities?
- Until the late 1960s the downs were home to the Easter Monday tradition of 'orange rolling'. As local traditions and rituals such as this die out, does our connection to our environment and sense of community also wane? To what extent does nostalgia play into current ideas of community togetherness?
- There is a strong agricultural and industrial tradition in Dunstable and the surrounding area. As industries change, so too does the environment and by extension the communities who live there. What traces remain, and how can we use them? As just one example, wild damsons, a remnant of the dye industry that supported nearby Luton's hat making, can be found in the rural areas all around Dunstable.
- [Central Bedfordshire Council](#) has [significant regeneration plans for Dunstable](#). How might an artist and community inspired by the themes identified in this brief engage with these plans?

COMMISSION DETAILS

A commission fee of **£10,000** is available for the chosen artist or artists group. Additional budgets for travel expenses, materials, resources and the delivery of specific events and activities will be negotiated before the artist is contracted in early 2013. Partners, roles and responsibilities of all parties, and payment schedules will be agreed at this point.

We expect participative events and activities for local communities and identified target groups to begin in April 2013.

These activities should be integral to the commission and lead to sustained collaborative relationships with participants throughout summer 2013.

This shared artistic process will result in the creation of a new artwork to be revealed in a high profile public presentation in September 2013.

HOW TO APPLY

To apply please send:

- Your proposal, on no more than 2 sides of A4.
- An outline budget detailing the costs associated with your proposed idea.
- Your CV and examples of previous relevant work, including evidence of your experience both in delivering participative or collaborative activities and in the production of high quality artistic outcomes.

Your proposal should include:

- Your interpretation of the theme and what specifically interests you in relation to the Dunstable location.
- An indication of who you would like to collaborate with and how you intend to engage them.
- An outline of what you expect to do during the commission – what activities will be delivered and how will they lead to the creation of a new high profile artwork?

We are happy to receive proposals in other formats, e.g. video or audio files, or web-based applications, as long as the criteria above is covered in full.

For further information or an informal discussion before submitting your proposal please contact Curator Producer Jennie Stoddart on +44(0)1234 818670, jennies@bedfordcreativearts.org.uk.

Proposals should be submitted by email to the above address by **Friday 30th November 2012, 12 noon GMT**. We expect to discuss proposals with shortlisted artists in early December, and to have selected the successful candidate by the end of the year.

ABOUT BEDFORD CREATIVE ARTS

Bedford Creative Arts is a contemporary visual arts organisation that has worked within the town for over 25 years. It is committed to commissioning quality art working with local communities.

Bedford Creative Arts seeks to question and explore genuine artistic collaboration and what it means to commission with communities. We work with specialist, experienced artists who are exploring new possibilities of collaborative arts practice. Commissions are realised through collaboration with community partners; making art in everyday places, exploring the links between art and social, economic or cultural issues.

Recent commissions have included *Lace in Place*, a public art installation in Bedford's town centre by Arabel Rosillo de Blas inspired by the towns rich lace making heritage, and Johnny Parry's *Concerto Magnificent: An Anthology of All Things*, a new collaboratively written choral composition performed by a community choir.

www.bedfordcreativearts.org.uk

Bedford Creative Arts aims to be an equal opportunity employer, and works with people solely on merit irrespective of ethnic origin, gender, marital status, age or disability.