

Outside the Box: Open Air Performance as a Pandemic Response

We are looking for four artists (or artistic teams) to produce original outdoor theatre/ performance/ live art works, to be open to members of the public in Exeter in July/ August 2021.

The selected works will be created as artistic contributions to a research project, funding by the Arts and Humanities Research Council 'Outside the Box: Open-Air Performance as a Pandemic Response'. The project asks in what ways artistic innovation might respond to outdoor, Covid-safe contexts to 'Build Back Better' in terms of sustainability and rethinking consumption in relation to leisure. We have observed artistic use of non-theatre spaces, thresholds and outdoor venues during the pandemic, and the parallel ways in which members of the public have found renewed interest and pleasure in outdoor spaces. Can these developments be brought together in a more sustained way? We are interested in Kate Soper's proposal of an 'alternative hedonism' that emphasises the possibilities of flourishing within environmentally sustainable lifestyles, rather than constraints (2020). We are also working with local authorities, Exeter Culture and Devon Wildlife Trust to ensure that legal requirements are met, and spaces used with permission and care.

The commissions comprise up to £6,000 artist fee. This figure is based on a range of union rates for established artists, corresponding with 20 days of work. There is an additional up to £4,000 available for production costs.

What we mean by established artists:

We are looking for artistic collaborators who already have a practice that is relevant to the project. Your contribution to the research would be to develop a piece to a performance festival. Bring what you know and develop it through this research.

It is essential that you have:

- a critical practice with experience of working in outdoor or non-theatre spaces
- a long-term commitment to practice that engages with questions of environment, climate and sustainability
- experience of making work for audiences in configurations that do not presume a seated assembly
- a practice that creatively bridges a 'sense of place' *and* 'sense of planet' (Ursula Heise, 2008)
- have the ability to create work that is accessible for a wide range of audiences
- have a proven track record of delivering and managing outdoor events to the essential criteria (this will include your own Public Liability Insurance, an event management plan, risk assessment and Covid risk assessments)

It would be ideal if you also have experience of practice-research.

We especially welcome proposals from artists of the global majority, whose work has been underrepresented in Exeter.

The work, including agreed documentation, will be subject to a contract agreed with the University of Exeter. It is intended that the terms of this agreement will confirm copyright in

the work will remain with the artist/co-creators, who will be responsible for securing any required third party permissions, whilst allowing the project team to use agreed elements, such as images and content for non-commercial purposes, with attribution. It will not allow us to change the artwork, or use it uncredited or for commercial purposes without further permission. We will ask you to acknowledge the project and funding in any future iterations of the work.

What we're asking for a proposal:

An outline of the concept (Max 750 words)

This should give us a sense of the *form* the work will take and what kind of *space* would be used. It is not essential that you identify a specific site, though you may do so if you have one in mind. At this stage we cannot guarantee site access. You should give us a sense of audience numbers and distribution (in time or space) and how they will access the work. We would find it useful to know whether you are likely to employ others to contribute to the work though please note that the budget has been agreed with our funders and cannot be extended.

Although we expect the proposal to be informed by your previous experience, we are looking for work that is bespoke to this project and context, not an iteration or tour of an existing piece, unless substantially reinvented for the project.

Approximate timetable of work (Event dates July/ August 2021):

A rough work plan with key periods of research and creation mapped out. It would be useful to know when you are likely to be working in Exeter, in case we are able to have in person meetings during this time. The artists and project team will need to meet at least three times ahead of the performances.

Breakdown of main costs:

We appreciate you might not yet be able to offer detailed costings, but it would be helpful to know the broad categories of expense that you anticipate. You do not need to budget for marketing. You do need to budget for accommodation costs, any space hire costs (if relevant), production costs and any further employment of freelance contributors.

While we may not be able to enter into lengthy discussion of the ideas in advance, we would be happy to respond to a brief synopsis of the concept prior to a fuller proposal

The deadline for submissions is **4 May 2021**

Please email proposals to Cathy Turner C.Turner@exeter.ac.uk and Evelyn O'Malley E.OMalley@exeter.ac.uk.



Arts and
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