

# 'FUTURE THINKING'

## Artist/Creative Design Brief

### 'Future Thinking': Biodiversity, Climate Resilience, Urban Environment

We are commissioning an artist to research and develop interactive work responding to one or more of the above themes. The artist will work in collaboration with selected academic researchers at the University of Reading who work in different disciplines (including in sciences, social sciences and humanities), related to these themes.

The art work will serve as a starting point for a series of five multi-disciplinary 'Challenge Days' (workshops) with school pupils in KS3 and KS4 (11-16 year olds), and SEN students, during a two-week installation at the Museum of English Rural Life between 17-30 June 2019.

### Premise

We envisage that the Challenge Days will use arts and creative design to imagine or use artefacts, models or prototypes that will help us to survive challenges of the future. The work should be interactive and multi-sensory.

During the challenge days, the pupils will collaborate with the artist to build on the work – whether that's creating a new part of it, applying the idea to a different technology/material/problem, or exploring further applications of it. They will be required to access the expertise of academics in different disciplines who will take part in the workshop and provide contextual information from their research area, to enable the students to complete the 'challenge'.

### Context

The project is funded through the University of Reading's Access Fund, which builds opportunities for children and young people with a lower than average chance of accessing higher education to have experiences at Higher Education Institutions and raise aspirations to access higher education.

The project is co-delivered by Miranda Laurence, Arts Development Officer and Katie Cooper, Impact Officer (lead for the Environment Theme), with support from Student Recruitment and Outreach, and the Museum of English Rural Life.

As a legacy of this project, we are interested in developing expertise and ideas for public engagement for researchers in the sciences and other discipline areas; building greater relationships with schools in Reading; and demonstrating the value of using an arts project to build internal and external links and create enthusiasm for public engagement.

## **Artist Brief**

We are looking for artists to bring original ideas in art and/or design work which respond to one or more of the themes of biodiversity, urban environment, or climate resilience. This can be existing work which needs further testing and development, or an opportunity to create new work based on an existing or a new idea. The work itself can be researched and created in the lead-up to the challenge days and need not be a finished product by the time of the installation/workshops; however there should be a substantial body of work created by late June which workshop participants can interact with, and/or collaborate on building further.

In addition to working with local school groups, we are intending to build on existing projects between the Art Department at Reading University, and the Museum of English Rural Life and Reading Museum, which provide opportunities for students and young people with learning disabilities to engage with collections. For this reason, we would invite responses to the brief which propose multi-sensory work. We would like to see touch as a key sense to be activated through the work, but it could also include sound and smell.

In addition to developing this art work, the artist will be an integral part of the design, and delivery, of the Challenge Days for school children in KS3 and KS4, and an SEN group. The format of the Challenge Days is open; however, there should be plenty of practical learning; a clear direction to the work of the young people to solve a problem or create something by the end of the day; and clear opportunities for them to learn about how different disciplines can contribute to solving the same problem. We envisage that the participants are invited to develop a collaborative rather than a competitive approach during the day.

We will expect the artist to work with a small number of selected academic researchers to draw on related research in the development of the artwork and the design of the challenge days. Academics will have self-selected to be part of the project and will have an existing interest in public engagement, though not necessarily any knowledge of art.

Support for the project will be available from colleagues within the University (Arts Development Officer, Impact Officer, and Outreach Officer), and we will also have the possibility of bringing additional external support where necessary, depending on the artist's areas of expertise. This would be specifically around science engagement, and SEN education. We also intend to involve student ambassadors in the Challenge Days, to provide support, whilst gaining professional experience.

Depending on the artwork and its requirements, the installation could be open to public visitors or other visiting groups to the museum at certain times during the two week period at MERL, between Challenge Days.

## **Key Requirements for artists**

- Strong track record of creating high quality art work in interaction or in reference to the sciences, and/or other academic research settings
- Strong track record of creating innovate engagement opportunities with arts and/or sciences for children and young people
- Excellent project management skills and ability to lead own project
- Strong interest in collaborating with professionals and researchers from different disciplines, and integrating this collaboration in the making of work
- Some experience of working in SEN settings
- Public Liability Insurance cover for up to £5 million

## **Desirable experience:**

- proven interest in or knowledge of one or more of the themes of biodiversity, climate resilience, and urban environment.
- Strong track record of working in SEN settings
- Experience of working within University settings

We welcome applications from individual artists or artist collectives.

## **Budget**

There is a fee of £3,400 available for this work, with additional budget of up to £3000 for materials and equipment (this includes any printed materials for the Challenge Days).

The fee must cover all costs for the artist's time and associated costs for the project, including:

- Research and development of new or existing artwork
- Creation of artwork
- Installation for two weeks at Museum of English Rural Life, including logistical planning and costs associated with installing the artwork (transport, security, invigilation, etc)
- Design of Challenge Days
- Delivery of five Challenge Days
- Contribution to the evaluation of the project
- Regular progress meetings/updates
- Travel

## **Timeline**

- Beginning March 2019: Artist contracted
- End March 2019: initial meetings with researchers
- April-May 2019: development of work and design of challenge days
- Mid-May 2019: final plans for Challenge Day
- Beginning of June 2019: Artwork ready, installation plans finalised
- 16 June 2019 (tbc): artwork installed in MERL learning Studio
- 17-30 June 2019: five Challenge Days (dates tbc); further interaction with public visitors tbc
- 1 July 2019 (tbc): artwork de-installed
- July 2019 (date tbc): Evaluation day

## Project Objectives

Learning Outcomes for pupils:

- gain understanding of particular future challenges and the research behind these
- learn new approaches to art and design
- gain knowledge of different discipline areas available to study at university
- gain understanding of the interaction between 'arts' and 'sciences' in the real world

Outcomes for academic researchers:

- develop new approaches to public engagement within their discipline areas
- develop a short interactive workshop or creative task related to discipline area that could be used in other public engagement contexts
- develop confidence in interacting with pupils

## How to apply

Please submit a proposal of no more than two pages, detailing

- Your approach to the brief
- Your proposed timeline (please take into account the timeline given above)
- An outline budget
- Your relevant previous experience
- Details of two referees (name, title, organisation, phone number, email address)
- Up to five additional pages for photos, drawings or other visual material to support your application

Please ensure all documents are combined into a single pdf, name the file with your full name, and email to Miranda Laurence (Arts Development Officer, University of Reading) on [m.c.laurence@reading.ac.uk](mailto:m.c.laurence@reading.ac.uk).

Deadline for receiving applications is **9am, 25 February 2019**.

Please contact Miranda if you have any questions on the brief.