



Frequently Asked Questions – last updated, 20 February 2024

Q: Why three big, national commissions and not more, smaller commissions that might involve more local artists?

A: We chose to create three larger commissions to allow artists a concentrated period of time to really develop their practice. Catalyst is designed to have a meaningful impact: in terms of professional development for the individual artists, presenting significant pieces of work for the public to experience and raising the profile of the arts in Cumbria.

Q: Is there anyone I could reach out to with my ideas because I've never applied for something like this before and already have a good idea?

A: We suggest you contact maddi.nicholson@art-gene.co.uk in writing in the first instance. She will direct you to another colleague if necessary.

Q: Will the fee received be used to publicise the piece and work? And to put on an exhibition, if appropriate, or pay for the installation space? Or will that aspect be covered by the collaboration?

A: Cumbria Arts and Culture Network, and project partners, will drive the promotional and marketing activity around the residencies and final works created. The residency fee does need to cover materials and costs involved in showing the work. The partners will assist in negotiating space where possible.

Q. Will you be able to help negotiate a location for the residency?

A: Yes, the partnership can help to do this.

Q: Do I need to have secured a venue/venues for it to be displayed in or could this be done in consultation with the panel once the commission was agreed? On a similar note do I need to have secured the relationships with organisations to work with as part of a residency?

A: There is no expectation that artists will have secured a relationship with a host organisation or a venue to show work in advance of an application, though you might want to include some ideas especially if you want to be based in a particular part of the county. As

you say, the partners on the project are happy to try to broker relationships if required, or potentially host the work.

Q: Can part of the fee be used for professional development training if the project you plan involves aspects of the craft that you need to upskill in e.g for myself, an advanced glass painting course?

A: The fee can be used to cover professional development activity within reason; there needs to be an appropriate balance between public benefit and private gain. The aim of Catalyst is to fund substantial finished pieces of work, so the available budget needs to be carefully managed.

Q: Should artists think about the commercial benefits of engaging with business benefactors, supporters, and sponsors?

A: There is no expectation of commercial business links in Catalyst but artists are welcome to propose and develop partnerships as seems appropriate.

Q: If the project required match funding in order to be fully realised, would that be an acceptable application?

A: The timescales on Catalyst are tight - work needs to be shared by February 2025 - so the opportunities for match funding might be limited. We suggest a project that can only be realised with match funding would need to present concrete and realistic ideas about where that funding would come from.

Q. What is the expectation of the hours the artist would spend on the project? Full time?

A: The selected artists can fit the project around other commitments such as work and family. The brief provides an industry-standard suggested daily rate but the split between materials, other costs and fee will be different in every project.

Q: Do we need to reside there for 10 months or we could propose something in our timeline that we'd be spending a large amount of time there to create/ engage /collaborate for the residency while also working part-time as a freelance?

A: We understand that artists have other commitments and will want to propose spending a varying amount of time researching, making and showing the work. Your proposal to spend a large amount of time in Cumbria would be acceptable – your proposal would likely be strengthened by specifying this and how you would make it work.

Q: Are you proposing the artists should be there for the whole of the period May 24 to Feb 25? Or a section of that period? Or can we come up and down - make several shorter residency periods?

A: It would be flexible to an extent, but for a significant amount of the time you will need to be in Cumbria.

Q. What is a strong and authentic commitment to Cumbria?

A: It's up to the artist to demonstrate what this looks and feels like. It could be that you have lived, worked or studied here, have a family connection, were born here, have moved away and would like to come back.

Qs: The information invites national artists to apply and asks for a demonstrable strong and authentic commitment to Cumbria - how would one demonstrate their authenticity? Also, applying requires a CV that takes ambition into account. But a CV often shows what an artist has been previously 'selected' for, rather than what they actually want/ed to do (i.e. their ambition).

A: On the link to Cumbria, we think it is for the artist to demonstrate this in whichever way they think appropriate. We suggest artists will probably need a personal knowledge of Cumbria and its issues and communities in order to respond to the brief. Artists will need to be based in Cumbria during the residency. We suggest you set out your ambition in the Expression of Interest requested and demonstrate your track record with the CV.

Q. Does it matter if my previous work hasn't been themed around Cumbria?

A: No, we're just looking to get a sense of your work from your portfolio, and to understand how the residency will develop your practice and career.

Q: Are the residencies open to collectives of artists or only individuals?

A: Potentially, a collective could apply, but the fee would need to be split among the creatives. There is one fee per residency. The roles of individuals in creating the work should be clear.

Q: We are an artists collective. Can 4-5 artists apply together as a single entrant?

Yes, but artists need to be clear how the fee will be split and the work produced.

Q. I collaborate with another artist who doesn't live in Cumbria; is this ok?

A: Yes, that's fine as long as someone within the application can demonstrate a strong and authentic commitment to Cumbria.

Q: Do you need a CV for everyone in the collective?

A: We need a CV for anyone who is proposed to be paid.

Q: Will individual artists be allocated a mentor or able to choose their own?

A: This will be open for discussion with selected artists. If an artist selected has someone they really want to be mentored by, we would do our best to support that.

Q: Works made as part of the residency, eg, paintings, who do they belong to at the end? Can they be sold by the artist? Do they have to be exhibited?

A: It is an important part of Catalyst that works produced as part of the residency are shared as widely as possible. The works will belong to the artist.

Q: I would like to clarify what is considered early/mid-career artists?

A: We're clear that this term doesn't relate to age; more, it's about where an artist feels they are in their own artistic career - it will be different for each person. If you feel the residency could help you develop your career further, we encourage you to apply.

Q: What if I don't have 10 pieces of work to submit with my proposal?

A: We recognise that artists will be at different points in their career and development and that this may be challenging depending on your art form. Please submit as many pieces as you can that demonstrate the nature and development of your practice.

Q: Who will be on the panel to decide who is successful?

A: The panel will be made up of established artists and representatives of the project partners. Conflict of interest protocols will be in place.

Q: Are there plans to reward and safeguard shortlisted artists who are not awarded a commission?

A: Catalyst is a competition and we invite artists to apply if they have the capacity to do so and if they consider it the right opportunity for them. We do not have plans to reward shortlisted artists who are not awarded a commission. We will aim to support them, however, through existing channels offered by Cumbria Arts and Culture Network (artist meet-ups, free training, in-person gatherings, mentoring, regularly weekly Zoom calls etc - see www.cacn.co.uk for sign up).

Q: As this is a UK-wide call, how will you take account of the fact that artists based in rural Cumbria are unlikely to have benefited from the same level of connection and opportunity as those who have moved away?

Artists who work in rural or small scale contexts are not disadvantaged by Catalyst. When assessing applications we will work to the criteria in the brief, and Cumbria based/rural artists have the potential to score well. They are not in any way disadvantaged by the criteria relating to the quality of artistic vision and there is nothing in the criteria that advantages work on larger scales. The panel will seek to find the strengths in the work of all applicants.

Q: Will all artists receive individualised feedback on their applications?

We regret that the consortia do not have the resources to make this possible.

Q: A four-page CV is twice the maximum length normally expected. What is the reasoning behind this? Will it be read in detail?

We ask for a CV of no more than four pages. It doesn't have to be four pages. Panellists will read all submitted material that is eligible within the brief.

Q: Will panel members look at websites and social media supplied as part of the application?

Panellists will look at all material submitted by artists if it is eligible within the brief.

Q: Are you looking for artists with experience managing budgets of a similar size?

Not necessarily. The opportunity is aimed at early-and mid-career artists and we expect people of varying experience to apply.