

Somerset Art Weeks Festival Micro-commissions 2024

Artist Brief

Somerset Art Weeks Festival returns for 2024 (21 September - 6 October) with venues across Somerset hosting group exhibitions, curated shows and events from SAW Members and invited artists, it's also a showcase for SAW-supported projects, special commissions and new work from bursary artists.

We are seeking proposals from artists in Somerset to make new work that responds to the Festival theme "Landscape – Flux and Flow". In light of the inescapable ever growing urgency of the climate crisis, changes to our local landscapes, and a developing intimacy with nature and our local environments. As we move through this time of transition, we ask you to curiously examine your relationship with the land, sea, environment and landscape.

SAW trustee Damon Bridge rspb conservation manager believes *'this theme is central to people's lives and will become increasingly so. Interpretation and communication of the complex social and cultural issues that arise due to the impacts of climate change can be best delivered and understood via art (rather than science – which is often ignored, and at worst flat-out denied)'*.

We look to commission a number of artists/artist collectives in Somerset to engage communities and spark conversations about the climate crisis in a new and engaging way. Looking to root artist practices in socially constructive dialogue with communities and the climate crisis. Also can we engage with scientists and nature conservationists to use their expertise and experience to help artists make work to grasp the climate issues?

Appointed artists will contribute to Somerset Reacquainted, a platform for research and critical dialogues for Somerset artists. It was created during the pandemic as part of our artist development programme. Its current activities seek to connect Somerset artists through the action of care and repair:

<https://somerstartworks.org.uk/somerstreacquainted/>

The brief

The proposed work can take any form, including participatory events, collaborative art, sound, moving image, installation, performance, photography, painting, drawing, sculpture, print, live art and more. This opportunity supports artists to consider how they connect with audiences and their communities, find new approaches and challenges, explore the boundaries of their own talent and to contribute to their artistic development.

We would like to receive proposals that are site-specific or have a clear idea of the context in which it would be presented and have specific audiences in mind. We will be particularly interested in proposals that involve a specific community or group of people associated with the proposed commission subject or site. We are open-minded as to how the participatory element is conceived. It could be that local individuals/community groups are involved in collaborative creative research or

co-creating elements of the artwork in some way. This participatory approach can help reach and attract new audiences.

We welcome applications from collaborations, especially partnerships between established and emerging artists.

We are eager to develop a collaborative approach between us and the artist, and we expect close communication throughout to ensure work is presented and delivered in its highest quality and integrity in relation to the artist's own practice, as well as our organisational aims.

We want to be a beacon for good practice in sustainable arts activity. This includes the way in which our commitment to the environment is embedded in all that we do. Therefore, please consider this in your proposal. Somerset Art Works has become one of a growing number of arts organisations and individuals who have declared a climate and ecological emergency via the Culture Declares movement.

FEE

Commission Budget £500 - £2000/per commission*

**We encourage artists to carefully consider the costs associated with the production and delivery, i.e. materials, production cost, transport, installation, materials and fee for yourself to carry out the work. We can suggest adjustments to the amount to make sure the costs are realistic.*

We understand that you may wish to use this opportunity to develop ambitious work and if you find that the commission fee is not sufficient to cover costs, we would encourage you to seek other funding sources. If you would like advice on this, please contact Zoe Li, Programme Associate: zoe.li@somersetartworks.org.uk

Who can apply?

Artists living or working in Somerset and BANES (Bath and North East Somerset not including Bristol).

We welcome those who are currently underrepresented, particularly those from less privileged backgrounds, including those who identify as D/deaf, disabled, neurodivergent, those from lower socio-economic backgrounds or living or working in areas of socio-economic deprivation, sole carer for elderly parents and children, and those who experience racism.

How do we make our selection?

We will make our selection based on the following factors:

- Does the idea address the focus of the commission?
- Does the proposal have audiences in mind? How likely is it that we can reach and engage the identified audiences together?
- Has the application considered diversity, environmental sustainability and innovation?
- How well does the proposal support the artistic development of the artist and wider artistic community?

To apply

[Please fill in the online application here.](#)

**We are not looking for a detailed proposal at this stage. We will ask you to develop the full project plan with us if you are selected.*

If you require assistance with your application please contact Zoe Li:
zoe.li@somersetartworks.org.uk

Deadline for applications (extended deadline): Monday 8 April, 2024 (5pm)
Shortlisted candidates notified by 12 April, 2024 Interviews: 22 - 26 April, 2022 (post Easter).