

ArtVaults: Live 2018

Artists Commission: Performance and Participatory



Open Call - Emerging Artists Commissioning Offer

2018 Brief and Guidance

Introduction

ArtVaults was launched in 2004 by 'a space' arts, with an exciting mix of contemporary art over four successful summer seasons. It grew to become one of the largest and most popular arts and heritage events in the South of England, attracting over 20,000 visitors annually. Each season presented a rich and exciting programme of contemporary art exhibitions and events in Southampton's medieval vaults and related Old Town structures.

Artists were commissioned to respond to these unique locations with site-specific artworks. Exhibitions were free and informed by the rich history and architecture of Southampton's Old Town. ArtVaults left an enduring legacy, defined as a project that embraced the local arts ecology whilst reanimating the city's out-of-ordinary and curious heritage spaces.



Chole Copper,
Rules & Regs,
ArtVaults 2008

Context

This year, 'a space' arts will revive ArtVaults, with the launch of ArtVaults: Live.

Throughout September 2018, ArtVaults: Live will provide a unique opportunity to experience a program of live art within one of Southampton's hidden medieval structures, known as Canute's Palace. The name was given to the building by Henry Englefield in 1805 who suggested that due to Canute being crowned King of Saxon England in Southampton in 1016, it may have once been the Palace of the legendary King.

Although this cannot be proven, there is evidence that it is the ruins of a Norman merchant's long house, which dates from the late twelfth century.

ArtVaults: Live will reanimate this ancient historical building, which will be transformed by a temporary public art installation, providing a setting, or stage, for a series of free live performances, activities and events for audiences in Southampton and beyond.



Canute's Palace

2018 Theme: Rara Avis

The 2018 ArtVaults: Live theme is 'Rara Avis', which the Collins online dictionary describes as 'an unusual, or exceptional person or thing'. This theme relates to the mythical tale of King Canute, and his attempt to hold back the tides of the sea. Though some versions of this story celebrate Canute's wisdom and Christian piety, others condemn the king for his omnipotent belief in his own supernatural power to manipulate water.

Whether depicted as superhero or villain, what is interesting about the tale of King Canute is this notion of 'superhuman power'. Visual narratives featuring characters endowed with moral and physical powers provide inspiration for artists to embrace empowerment. They often have to undertake superhuman sensibility to conceive their ideas and share them within a public realm.

The aim of the project is to support emerging, visionary artists, who create extraordinary installations or live experiences, which reflect on the ever-changing, diversifying society in which we live.

Live Art Commission

Artists in the postcode area of SO, PO and BH (or close to these areas), with a performative, participatory or socially engaged practice, are invited to submit a proposal for this live art commission. The work should be site specific and the artist should take into consideration the ArtVaults: Live theme 'Rara Avis', the buildings architecture, history and heritage.

This commission provides an opportunity for five selected artists to present an artwork, or a series of works, throughout September 2018 as part of the ArtVaults: Live programme.

The following factors should be taken into consideration when applying for this commission:

- The work should reference the theme of 2018: Rara Avis.
- New or existing work aligned with the theme, will be accepted.
- We would be particularly interested in a proposal which encourages interaction and audience participation.
- Canute's Palace is exposed to the elements.
- The main space inside measures 19.7m x 5.8m.
- We will site an installation (tbc) in the space to create a setting, or stage, for the commissioned performances, activities and events.
- As the building is grade two listed it would not be possible to screw into the walls, however the floor would be fine to affix to.
- One performance will take place, roughly, each weekend in September.
- The performance schedule is flexible to accommodate all artists, however once agreed the date must be adhered to.

Timeline

- Monday 11th June > Deadline to receive proposals.
- Friday 15th June > Appointed artists selected and notified.
- Friday 15th June > Monday 30th August > Artistic production period.
- Date tbc > Site visit and informal meet and greet. All five artists to attend.
- Wednesday 30th August (approx. 1 week) > On-site access to prepare work for presentation.
- September – Public Performance, or participatory event.

Budget

The selected artists will receive:

- £400 Performance and Production Fee

General Terms & Conditions

- The deadline for receiving submissions is Monday 11th June 2018.
- The successful artists will be notified by Friday 15th June 2018.
- 'a space' arts will provide public liability and artist's insurance for the duration of a performance, activity and event.
- The artist will retain ownership of the work.

Selectors

Tony Spencer, Exhibitions Programme Manager

Daniel Crow, Director

External Selector, will be announced in due course

Submissions Procedure

Please send the following information and documents via email:

- Artist's written proposal of their live performative, participatory or socially engaged work.
(maximum 100 words)
- An up-to-date CV
- Link to current work on artist website or social media platform

Please email proposals to: **tony@spacearts.org.uk**

Please title the email: **ArtVaults: Live Performance and Participation**

Link to location of Canute's Palace: <https://www.google.co.uk/maps/place/Canute's+Palace>

For further information, an informal chat to discuss your proposal or to arrange a site visit, contact:

Tony Spencer

Exhibitions Programme Manager

'a space' arts

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