

CATALYST

Creative residencies in Cumbria

UK Open Call

3 x 10 month creative residencies in Cumbria

Open to any art form | £25,000

art-gene.co.uk/catalyst

We invite artists nationally from any discipline to apply for one of three residencies based anywhere in Cumbria. This is an exciting career-enhancing opportunity for early or mid-career artists who can show a strong and authentic commitment to Cumbria to spend time developing their practice and to create a substantial new piece of work or artistic event.



Catalyst: Creative Residencies in Cumbria - Open Call to Artists

A creative consortium is seeking three artists working in any artistic discipline, to take up residencies and create new artwork in Cumbria.

The brief

Catalyst: Creative Residencies in Cumbria provides a unique opportunity for a handful of artists to create striking new work in Cumbria that will fire people's imaginations, inspire contemporaries and attract future artists to live here.

We invite artists nationally from any discipline - arts, music, writing, theatre, film and digital media - to apply for one of three residencies based anywhere in Cumbria. This is an exciting career-enhancing opportunity for early- or mid-career artists who can show a strong and authentic commitment to Cumbria to spend time developing their practice and to create a substantial new piece of work or artistic event. We invite submissions from artists to be in Cumbria physically, and, as well as making and presenting their own dynamic new work, to contribute in a tangible way to the thriving artistic community that exists in this extraordinary place.

The brief for the artwork is wide open: we ask only that it responds to modern-day Cumbria, its industries, landscapes, issues or communities, and succeeds in raising the visibility and profile of Cumbria as a unique, innovative and creative place to live, work, visit and develop a creative career. We welcome art that celebrates or promotes Cumbria *as a place* and that interprets and explores what is uniquely different and distinctive about it. We welcome ideas that disrupt and inspire, make people sit up and take notice of Cumbria, or that catalyze and unlock new opportunities. We invite artists to create work that has a lasting quality, that can remain on display in the landscape, or in venues, or be performed repeatedly, so that it can be experienced by as many people as possible across our wide geographical area.

Cumbria is a place of contrasts and complexity. Renowned for its Lakeland fells and rural landscapes, it is necessarily at the forefront of debates about the visitor economy, sustainable tourism, biodiversity loss and farming and food production. Its unique coastline, with internationally important habitats and wildlife, is also home to heavy industry, notoriously, a plutonium storage facility and a shipyard specializing in nuclear submarines, each sustained by a highly skilled engineering workforce. The working age population of Cumbria, generally, however, is in decline and the county has a 'super-aging' demographic; in 2020 over a quarter of the Cumbrian population were aged over 65. The expansion of the University of Cumbria and recent 'Levelling Up' investment from central government, should combine to offer more opportunities to young people. Nurturing and retaining young talent is certainly the focus of the Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership and the local creative community.

Cumbria has stimulated and inspired artists for generations. Catalyst: Creative Residencies in Cumbria will continue this legacy; our residencies position Cumbria as a place of contemporary inspiration, a place where we attract and retain talent and nurture artists. In delivering this project, collectively, we will put Cumbria on the UK's cultural map, underlining the importance of creativity and culture in place-making and in shaping the future of thriving towns and villages.

Opportunities for collaboration

In creating their work, artists will ideally engage with local people through focussed workshops, events or public-facing research and development. Whilst the primary audience for the work will be people living in

and visiting Cumbria, we welcome proposals from artists with the potential to reach a wider audience across the UK.

The three artists will be supported by, and have the opportunity to collaborate with, a network of cultural organisations that are embedded and thrive in Cumbria. As well as collaborating with one another, each artist will be assigned a lead contact and an artist mentor as sources of additional advice and support.

We hope to create and celebrate narratives of success throughout the project, telling the human-interest stories of the selected artists and the development of their work, for example through partners' newsletters, social media and in the press.

In terms of professional development, during 2024, as a minimum, all three artists will be expected to share their work and the thinking behind it, at a Cumbria Arts and Culture Network meeting, either online or in person, as required. The artists will be expected to produce a written statement to support the thinking behind the artworks for use by the project team in promoting the initiative. The artists, too, will need to respond to surveys about their work and take part in an academic evaluation of Catalyst: Creative Residencies in Cumbria, led by a team at the University of Cumbria.

The work will need to be available for the public to experience before the end of February 2025.

The project team

Catalyst: Creative Residencies in Cumbria is funded by Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership (CLEP) and led by three members of the CLEP Cultural Panel – the University of Cumbria, Cumbria Arts and Culture Network (CACN) and Art Gene.

Art Gene is leading the commissioning process with CACN leading the mentoring programme and communications. Art Gene and the University can offer studio space in Barrow or Carlisle, respectively, and CACN staff can link artists to a range of organisations in the network.

Budget and payment schedule

A fee of £25k is available for each selected artist. This is to include all costs incurred during the residency, including living and travel costs (calculated at £250 a day), any materials and making costs, as applicable, and fees relating to shows or performances.

Payment will be made in three instalments against invoices according to agreed milestones at the contracting stage. £10k will be paid up front on signing a contract; £10K will be paid based on demonstrable progress, around the halfway stage, and the remaining £5k will be paid on the delivery of all agreed outputs. (Specific dates will be agreed by all parties at the contracting stage).

Timescale

The Catalyst residencies will take place between May 2024 and February 2025. Work will need to be complete and available to the public by February 2025.

How to apply

Applications should be sent to jo.reilly@art-gene.co.uk by 5pm on 3 March 2024. Late or incomplete submissions will not be put forward for assessment.

We encourage applications from people under-represented in the arts in the UK, including disabled artists, artists from minority ethnic backgrounds and LGBTQ+ people.

To apply, please send the following:

- A CV of maximum four pages outlining your qualifications and experience to meet the brief (note the Assessment of applications section below). Please include your contact details and the contact details for two referees, people who know your work but are not related to you.
- An expression of interest setting out your vision and a proposal for how you would approach the residency. This can either be in written form (up to 500 words) or a video or audio file of no more than 3 minutes. Please focus on your motivation for applying and initial ideas; the recruitment panel understands that your ideas will develop during the residency.
- 10 examples of your previous work (digital please: images, sound or film), with brief notes on how the work relates to the brief. Do not send original artworks, photographs or publications. Include a website link if applicable.
- Your access rider, if applicable (optional).

Our equal opportunities monitoring form.

If you would like any assistance with the application or interview process, please email a specific request to Jo at least a week before the deadline.

Shortlisted artists will be notified by 18 March for an online interview in the w/c 25 March 2024.

Thank you in advance for your interest in working with us.

Assessment of applications

Applications will be assessed by a panel drawn from the project team on the following criteria, which you are advised to evidence in your application:

- Artistic quality and ambition
- A demonstrable strong and authentic commitment to Cumbria
- Experience of applying creative practice within a socially engaged setting
- Strong communication skills and the ability to work with a wide range of people
- Commitment to residing in Cumbria and actively contributing to its creative community

Commitment to sustainability and helping to ensure a Zero Carbon Cumbria by 2037.

We hope to:

- shortlist 9 - 12 artists for interview;
 - have a minimum of two artistic disciplines represented in the final selection of three artists;
- achieve some geographical spread (across Cumbria) in the final selection of proposed work, based on where artists will be resident or where work could be shown.

About Art Gene

Art Gene is an artist-led research and production charity based in Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria. Our focus is regenerating the social, natural and built environment through visual arts practice, working collaboratively with communities, artists, architects, and other professionals.

www.art-gene.co.uk

About Cumbria Arts and Culture Network

Cumbria Arts and Culture Network exists to connect, champion and develop the culture sector in Cumbria. We work to create a joined-up, inclusive cultural ecology, enabling organisations and individual creatives to collaborate effectively. We build skills through a programme of training, development and mentoring opportunities. We advocate for and promote creative and cultural activity across the county.

www.cacn.co.uk

About University of Cumbria

The University of Cumbria is powered by our three greatest assets - people, place, and partnership. Established in Cumbria to increase higher education participation in our county, to address higher-level skills and sector needs and most importantly to positively impact on the lives and livelihoods of individuals across our communities. Campuses in Carlisle, Ambleside, Barrow (from 2024-25), Lancaster and London, and a presence on the West Coast of Cumbria, provides us with the physical environment, digital infrastructure and geographical reach to deliver our strategic aims.

As a modern university based in the real world, we aim to prepare our graduates for work and life. Central to this aim is the promotion of an environment that encourages our students to use their skills, talent and intellect in delivering social, cultural and economic and social benefit.

The university is investing and being invested in. With £66 million investment from the Borderlands Growth Deal Initiative, Carlisle Town Deal and Barrow Town Deal, we will transform our presence, visibility and impact in Carlisle and Barrow.

<https://www.cumbria.ac.uk/study/academic-departments/institute-of-education-arts-and-society/>