

# contains

## CONTAINS ART COMMISSIONS 2019

### Introduction

During 2019 Contains Art will be preparing for its capital re-development and intends to deliver its artistic programme across the town of Watchet, Somerset, and surroundings locally. It wishes to invite proposals from artists for three separate commissions, May to October.

### Background

Contains Art is a small innovative arts organisation based in three refurbished shipping containers on the quayside in Watchet. For the last four years, our primary container has operated as a gallery, showing a wide range of exhibitions and installations to a public audience. As part of major re-development plans, the container gallery will close in November 2018 and we shall then be developing our programme across the town and online, in a variety of sites and buildings.

### Programme Aims and Themes

As we prepare for the construction and opening of our new building, we are keen for our 2019 programme to:

- Prepare and develop audiences for the proposed re-development of East Quay
- Engage the community by working in new contexts, reaching those who have not been involved before
- Provide new experiences for artists
- Raise our profile, regionally and nationally, offering a sense of an intriguing and interesting future
- Recognise the value and impact of spectacle from time to time

### The Brief

We are now inviting artists to submit proposals for three separate commissions. These will need to respond to one or more of our on-going programme themes of Community, Identity, Place and Nature. We are particularly interested to receive proposals that will encourage the devising of different types of work in three areas- digital, performance or the involvement of young people. A proposal might be based on more than one of these, (for example digital and performance), but we want you to say which type of work best describes your submission.

Therefore, in devising your proposal, we ask artists to take into consideration the following:

- our overall programme aims (see above),
- how your proposal relates to one or more of our programme themes
- if the commission you are submitting fits with one of three areas – digital, performance or working with young people
- how your proposal is relevant to our overall commissioning context, including its ability to engage with our audiences and communities, (see further information on Contains Art and Watchet at the end of these details).

- What type of site you wish to research or occupy – sites across the town may be used, see Further Information on Watchet below.

If you would like more information on the commission(s) or the town please contact Jon Barratt, Gallery Manager, [jon@containsart.co.uk](mailto:jon@containsart.co.uk)

#### Commission Budgets

Contains Art CIC is offering the following fees (inclusive of any VAT) to cover artists fee(s), materials, equipment, expenses and travel:

Digital – Up to £4,000

Performance - £3,000

Engaging Young People - £3,000

This amount will be paid as follows:

- £1,500 for each commission by transfer on invoice from the Artist(s) after signature of contract
- £1,000 for the digital commission in recognition of the likely need to purchase or hire equipment, to be agreed
- £1,500 for each commission by transfer on invoice from the Artist(s) on the opening of the exhibition.

These commissions are part funded by Arts Council England.

#### Selection Criteria and Process

Proposals will be considered by Contains Art in relation to the following criteria:

1. The quality, originality and ambition of the creative idea at the heart of the proposal and its relevance to the commissioning context
2. Ability to engage with our audiences and communities
3. Previous track record and/or potential
4. Capacity and approach to deliver the project on time and within budget

Contains Art will shortlist from applications received and then invite a small number of artists to Watchet for interview. Expenses (2<sup>nd</sup> class rail travel) will be covered by the programme budget. Following this Contains Art will make a final selection for the three commissions. We also reserve the right not to award the commission(s).

#### Application Process

To apply please download the Application Form here, complete and submit online by **Monday 6th August at 10am**. Late submissions will not be accepted.

Please ensure you save your application form and images\* as pdf files, with the file name as the name of artist(s) and which commission you are submitting for (digital, performance or Young People). If you decide to submit for more than one of the commissions, please complete the form, and in the required sections please give details of your separate proposals.

\*Please include 3 - 4 images saved as a pdf document, no larger 10MB in size. Please also include titles against each work, illustrating size, medium, or relevant information related to the composition of the work/image.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

### Contains Art

Our roots as an organisation are in the community, reflecting a firm view that place matters. As a consequence, people and communities are central to our approach and to how we develop our artistic programme and any commissioning. Our focus has always been on building relationships with people and connecting directly with our communities.

Contains Art has a dual role—to meet the needs of our community and to pursue artistic ambition. To do this we deliver a diverse and exciting programme of exhibitions and events that bring extraordinary practice to this part of the country. In the past four years, we have made a real impact—changing perceptions about who can engage with what. Our programming reflects a core focus on work that is accessible and experiential. Recently, for example, we brought Matisse’s cut-outs to our shipping container (from the Hayward Touring). It was visited by hundreds of local primary school children. Likewise, an immersive digital installation by Richard Broomhall brought in an unexpected, new, teenage audience, and we commissioned one of the liveliest emerging performance artists in the UK, Jennifer Taylor, who worked organically with students from the local sixth form to produce a show-stopping spectacle. The students became actors in an other-worldly performance which pushed the boundaries of live art. The work has since inspired change in her practice and she has recently developed these themes into a larger performance on the portico of The British School at Rome, an incredible reimagining of the ancient Roman Lupercalia. In this way, our support gives artists the opportunity and freedom to explore and develop their practice, fostering exciting new directions.

On top of our exhibition/commissioning programme, we run regular events and workshops that are free to attend, and many community projects. For example, last year, over 100 volunteers have together delivered a heritage-arts cross-over project that explored the social legacy of the closure of the town’s main industry, a paper mill. This is the kind of work at which we excel—it builds connections, brings people together and harnesses social energy in a creative way, often across generations.

We reach audiences of over 15,000 annually (the town comprises 3,900) and these have grown each year. But for us our impact is most keenly witnessed in the everyday responses of visitors, especially young people. Its unusual, industrial, non-intimidating nature, and location in a working boatyard, means people who would often be put-off from visiting more traditional art institutions, will find their way in and leave with a different perspective. We see, every day, the power of such arts experiences and our goal is to widen and deepen these opportunities.

Contains Art was established as a social enterprise in 2012. West Somerset has the lowest social mobility in the whole of England, and Watchet, where we are based, is the most deprived ward in the district. We firmly believe art has a vital role in changing that.

Contains Art is now the lead cultural tenant in a wider and very significant community-led regeneration project in Watchet on the East Quay. In 2019, our gallery will be scaled-up and expanded, in size and ambition, aiming to become a significant regional, cultural player bringing the highest-quality artwork to a local audience who would otherwise never get such a chance.

### Watchet, Somerset

Watchet is a harbour town at the mouth of the Washford River on Bridgwater Bay, part of the Bristol Channel, and on the edge of Exmoor National Park. Watchet has been a harbour town for over 1000 years. It is sheltered by the Quantock Hills and has views across the channel to Wales and down the coast to Minehead and Exmoor. The Somerset coast, from Lilstock to Blue Anchor is nationally

protected as a Site of Special Scientific Interest, for its Jurassic and Triassic rock strata. Further information about the town, its history, industry, geography and social context can be found widely online, and Watchet Visitor Centre website provides a useful local introduction:  
<http://www.lovetwatchet.co.uk/>

For these commissions Watchet offers a wealth of possible sites and partners. These might include vacant shops/buildings, the town's community cinema, playing fields, skate park, the Memorial Ground, the Mineral Line, Splash Point, beaches, harbour, a range of clubs (football, bowling, youth etc.), holiday parks and further sites to be identified.

Watchet also hosts a wide range of organisations who could be approached as collaborators on one or more commissions, e.g. Primary School, Sea Scouts, Minehead Eye, Boxing Club, Poetry Club, Geckoella (special interest in geology), etc.

For further information

[http://www.lovetwatchet.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/WTW\\_MobilePages.pdf](http://www.lovetwatchet.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/WTW_MobilePages.pdf)