

Shifting Somerset ‘practice stretching’ Exhibition Programme

Exhibitions Submission Criteria and Guidelines

With support from ACE we are delighted to invite proposals for work to be exhibited as part of Contains Art’s ‘Shifting Somerset’ exhibitions programme. Two slots are available, for exhibitions lasting four week, within these approximate dates.

2016: 15 August 2016 – 11 September 2016

2017: 15 May 2017 – 11 June 2017

To be considered for one of the exhibition slots, please complete the short attached application form, giving details of the exhibitor/s, and the work proposed. Applications are open to individual artists, collaborations between artists, groups of artists or curators working with artists. Applicants must live or work in Somerset, or have a strong local connection to be considered. (Opportunities for non-Somerset-based artists will be advertised separately).

Purpose of the programme

Building on from our successful Voyages exhibitions in 2013-14, and evaluation of our programme over the last two years, this programme recognises that providing opportunities for individuals or groups of practitioners from within the county of Somerset, to explore their creativity, discover new approaches to their practice or seek out new audiences and markets for their products was viewed as crucial to the appeal of Contains Art. It therefore forms the central tenet of this programme. This year we have expanded our call out to include curators as well as artists as initiators of exhibitions.

As proved successful in our first year, the exhibition series will run in tandem with, and effectively as a critical element of, a professional development programme open to professional creative practitioners from across the area and across disciplines. We learnt however that there is a fine line between support and burden in CPD for practicing artists and that our support both for the exhibition artists themselves and the wider artistic community who interact with the shows and artists needs to become more tailored and more integrated with the work artists are already doing, rather than be ‘another thing to think about’.

Consequently we are investing in our curatorial team – bringing in outside expertise and growing our own in-house capacity – to better support artists with whom we work, and we are seeking to integrate learning capture and opportunities for creative interaction and inspiration together in a more coherent operation. In this way we feel we will be able to maximize the value of our work for practitioners, artists, and wider audiences alike.

Our offer to artists/curators

Following feedback we have sought to enhance the way that the programme will be administered to offer as much support as we are able within limited means.

In practical and financial terms the benefits to participants are:

* free gallery use;
* promotion delivered through Contains Art;
* funded Private View;
* admin support;
* invigilation cover (artists will be asked to invigilate just one day a week);
* curatorial and advisory support;
* expenses/materials allowance.

In return exhibitors/curators will be expected to take part in a container conversation (interview-style discussion with small audience); engage with our curatorial team; contribute to our digital capture programme (in practice, be filmed discussing processes and preparing exhibits) and agree to commission rate of 20% (plus 2.75% for card sales).

What we are we looking for

Exhibition proposals should address the central aim of the programme which is that participants should explore their creativity in unfamiliar territory, perhaps discovering new approaches to their practice or seeking out new audiences.

In all else we not wish to be overly prescriptive. Contains Art wishes to build a profile as a centre for excellence in contemporary creative practice whilst remaining true to our prime purpose of supporting and nurturing creativity in West Somerset. We also wish to offer diversity in terms of practice discipline and medium. All proposals will therefore be considered with regard to these aims and achieving a balance in the content of the overall programme.

That said, we are interested to receive proposals that do one or more of the following:

* Respond directly to the space – the container gallery and/or the courtyard.
* Foster accessibility and audience/community engagement.
* Explore participatory, socially collaborative or socially cooperative work.

Artists/curators must explain clearly how you and your practice will benefit from the opportunity.

Please note that although we are happy to consider proposals for installation work, there is likely to be only one or two days available for installation. We have a separate programme to commission site-specific installations, that is tailored to the particular circumstances of such work. Details will be forthcoming and published on our website and Arts Jobs/News by May 2016.

The selection process

All proposals will be considered on merit by a specially convened panel. The panel will be asked to recommend two-four exhibitions to the Board of Contains Art. At this stage the panel/Board may wish to invite some applicants to discuss their ideas in person, if they deem it useful/necessary. Decisions on acceptance and the dates offered will be taken by a sub-committee of the board of Contains Art. The panel will include representatives from Contains Art’s Board, our curatorial team and representatives from the wider Somerset/South West art world.

submission form

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| Please complete all sections of this form, wherever possible |
| Name of main applicant |       |
| Email address |       |
| Postal Address, incl. postcode |       |
| Phone number |       |
| Website |       |
| If you do not live or work in Somerset, please explain your connection. |       |
| Is this a collaborative proposal? | Yes/no |
| Please list other collaborators and their contact details, as above. |       |
| Exhibition working title |       |
| Summary (25 words) |       |
| Proposal (700 words max):Please explain what you want to do, and how your idea responds to our brief. You may attach a separate document if you prefer. |       |
| Developing your practice – please explain how this exhibition will help to develop your own practice. |       |
| Space utilised: Please indicate if your work will be confined to the Gallery only or if you wish to also use the courtyard/outside space. Please note there is no requirement to utilise outside space at all.  |       |
| Please briefly describe your artistic/creative background – or attach a CV and/or artist’s statement if that is easier. |       |
| Examples of your work:Please attach electronic files/send a DVD, or links to where we may see any relevant samples of your work. Please do not send any original work with your application. Please list what you are including here, including dates. |       |
| Funding – Please describe any funding considerations, for example, if you will need to secure funding for materials, etc. Please note that there is a limited expenses budget available. |       |
| Timing – Please confirm which of the two slots you wish to be considered for or if either would suit you. |       |
| Practicalities – Please describe any practical considerations you foresee, for example installation challenges (note you are likely to have only one-two days to install your show in the gallery). |       |
| Developmental needs – Please identify any needs or skills that you might benefit from support with – note, this will not form part of the evaluation criteria, but is helpful in steering our related professional development workshops and schemes. |       |

You may submit as many proposals as you wish – either individually or in collaborations, but we will be mindful of practical considerations and realistic timeframes in awarding exhibitions.

Please send your submission / proposal to:

Jessica Prendergrast, Contains Art

By email to jess@containsart.co.uk

The deadline for submissions is 29th February 2016 at 5pm.

We would encourage you to contact us if you wish to discuss the exhibition programme informally before submission. You can contact Jessica by email or phone (07799260854) in the first instance and she will arrange for a Board member to discuss it with you if she is unable to help.

