APPLYING FOR OPEN CALLS: HOW TO MAKE YOUR APPLICATION STAND OUT

We commission artists that make exciting, challenging and often genre defying work.

We also provide unique opportunities for artists and local residents to meet in innovative participatory projects, which often bring direct social, educational, community cohesion and self-respect benefits - many of these projects have taken place off campus in surprising locations, widening our audiences and questioning what contemporary art is and who it is for.

We support projects in our unique venues, including the Nuffield, our large and flexible theatre space… a space that artists love! We like to develop relationships with artists over time, often over a number of years and through a range of projects which upscale each time. For example, artists will often present in our public programme first, undertake a small project with us and then go onto to develop a larger, more significant commission. We also offer open call commissions in order to bring ‘new blood’ into the organisation open our doors (and our eyes) to a broader spectrum of artists.

We receive a great deal of applications for our open submission commissions and we shortlist the ones that have the best match with the work we do at Lancaster Arts. The strong ones that really jump out at us tend to have similar things in common:

* First of all, good applications have ALL THE INFORMATION WE ARE ASKING FOR. You’d be amazed how many applicants don’t read the guidelines fully or forget to include required information.
* Good applications address the aims of Lancaster Arts, and the applicant understands what we do and why. They look at the kinds of projects we do at Lancaster Arts on our website, and/or come and see us and the work we do.
* We love it when artists really tailor their application to us and the particular opportunity we are offering – it is so obvious when applicants are ‘doing the rounds’ with an idea.
* The proposal itself should be clear and precise. No jargon or ‘arts speak’ please. See if you can find words, short phrases or statistics that ‘say a lot’. One telling phrase may be much more effective than reams of information.
* Make your idea sound exciting. Help us to visualise it. What will we see and experience? Paint a picture in your mind’s eye and describe it (Sometimes it helps to talk first… speak your ideas out loud before committing them to text).
* Describe the making process – what will you do?
* Who is it for? Who will participate? Who will come?
* Why is it distinctive and why does it feel important NOW?
* What is the outcome of your proposal – what will we get?
* Who are you? Let us know what excites you and what you are passionate about.
* What do you think you will learn through doing this residency or commission?
* Submit good images if you have them, and video clips of your work can help us get a feel for your practice.
* Edit, edit again and check through your application at the end. Get someone else to read it and check it too! Are they won over by your proposal?

GOOD LUCK! Even if you are not successful, please stay in touch and try again!