

Real Estate: Long Term Socially Engaged Artist Residency

Artist Brief

We are seeking applications from artists who work in a socially responsive way who would be interested in relocating to Blackpool or Fleetwood for a long term live/work artist residency on two local housing estates.



Fleakefleet Avenue, Fleetwood

Background

LeftCoast have been working in Blackpool and Wyre for the last four years. We have delivered a diverse programme from co-commissioning with different communities to presenting show-stopping spectacle performances. As a Creative People and Places project, we are interested in talking to people who don't normally engage with arts and culture in their everyday lives.

The two live/work residency opportunities have been informed and shaped by experiences working across Blackpool and Wyre over the last four years and will be one of our longest interventions to date. They are a direct response to opportunities that have presented themselves, a wide range of partnerships and the potential to become pioneers for change in the area. They are a response to the question we often get asked when a project finishes 'what happens next?' They are also an experiment into what happens when artists become part of a community rather than visiting a place.

We know we have disparate communities across Blackpool and Wyre, with residents of housing estates not coming into town centres or crossing over into different communities. The two residencies we intend to commission will be located in Haweside, Blackpool and Flakefleet, Fleetwood. To successfully work with these communities we have learnt to bring opportunities into the places and spaces that they are familiar with, use tools which are comfortable, and work in ways that can explore the essence of a place and respond to it in subtle but radical ways.

We know, and statistics tell us, that we have more than our fair share of social problems across the area. However, we also know through our past work that this area is unique, vibrant and full of character. Blackpool has a high percentage of transient communities which means people are bringing in a wealth of life experiences, heritage and stories. Fleetwood on the other hand has a rich local heritage based in the fishing industry, with generations of the same families living on the same estates. In both residency estates low aspiration and isolation are key issues, but we see these opportunities as a chance to take a holistic approach and see all facets of the community.

Over the past two months we have been piloting programmes of work on the two estates through hands on making and sharing sessions that have been popping up in unusual spaces. Through this process we have been meeting people in the communities, talking about what's important on their estate and generally getting a feel for the personalities of the locations. Through this process we are establishing welcome committees for the artists in residence to help them settle in.

Partners and Locations

LeftCoast works in partnership with two of the area's largest local housing associations who have worked with us on past projects and are very interested in exploring the potential of artists residing on their estates.

One artist residency will be located in Haweside, a social housing estate in Blackpool managed by Blackpool Coastal Housing. Located not far from the lights and thrills of the Golden Mile, this estate shows a different side of Blackpool, where real people and their families make their homes. Not an easy place to make inroads, there are very few community assets such as libraries or children's centres, however once you get to know the people there is a wealth of stories, hopes and ideas to work with.



Powell Avenue, Haweside, Blackpool

One artist residency will be located in Flakefleet, a social housing estate in Fleetwood managed by Regenda. Fleetwood is 9 miles down the coast from Blackpool, a town with a strong heritage within the fishing industry that has seen a decline in recent years. The Flakefleet estate has more community assets than Haweside such as a school and a parade of shops. Again, it's an area with a rich history and families with a long connection to place.



Heathfield Road, Flakefleet, Fleetwood

Who we are looking for

The successful artists will have a socially engaged practice with experience of and confidence in working in different environments and being responsive to change. We see the resident artists as metaphorical wardens for the estates that they will be living in, and want them to become part of that estate, from children attending the local school to using the local shop. We know that the two estates chosen for this project don't have traditional community spaces such as community centres, libraries or pubs. The artists will need to engage with the place in a different way, finding alternative networks and spaces.

The definition of socially engaged practice we use is:

“Socially engaged practice, also referred to as social practice or socially engaged art, can include any artform which involves people and communities in debate, collaboration or social interaction.

The participatory element of socially engaged practice, is key, with the artworks created often holding equal or less importance to the collaborative act of creating them.”

A fuller definition can be found at <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/s/socially-engaged-practice>

The artists will be supported by the LeftCoast team, local artists and the other residency artist, however the communities hosting the residencies have been selected for their reticence to engage, so a willingness to intervene in a place's daily life will be necessary.

What do we want to happen?

We would like this residency to encourage a change in the community they reside.

We are not being prescriptive about form or method, and see the residency as an organic process that will be supported by all the partners. Rather than imposing an idea at the start of the residence we have some budget and capacity to support ideas as they are developed.

Work developed through the residency should respond to the place and the people, for example by getting people talking to each other, reframing the relationship the community have with a place, space, story or service or by bringing attention to a facet of the place which has been overlooked. Ultimately we want to challenge, explore, and unpick an idea that makes people think differently about the place that they live.

Themes

The two residency areas have similar social profiles, but there are different themes that have emerged that might help shape an approach.

Blackpool: Haweside

Use of the natural landscape: Haweside is located very close to the beach and yet many of the residents feel that they have no connection with it or ever use it. As an estate there are little green spaces to use, so the beach is a free space which could be used for activity. More than just physically not using the beach, people don't feel any connection to the beach or the sea, which is interesting in a community so close to it, in a town which has developed because of its location on the coast.

Lack of identity: Haweside is historically a bigger area than the estate we are looking at for this residency. There are other social housing estates in Blackpool that have really strong identities, both positive and negative, however many residents of Haweside don't know that this is what the area is called. There is a suggestion that lack of pride in the place they live could be linked to the lack of a strong identity. There may be research that could be done into history of this community which might refresh a connection to place.

Fleetwood: Flakefleet

Lack of community space: Flakefleet is a well-known area of Fleetwood, however it has a lack of shared space. When running the pilot programme in Flakefleet we found it difficult to find a community space that was accessible and without barriers to all members of the community. There is a view that a neighbouring estate have all the input and resource invested in them, and that nothing happens on Flakefleet.

Debt: A key issue for Regenda is the number of their tenants that use door step lending providers. This obviously has a root in worklessness, debt and basic household structure. It's an important theme to be aware of to get a full understanding of the area

Key points to consider

- The chosen artists will be required to relocate to Blackpool/ Fleetwood for the year of the residency
- We are open to interest from family groups or artists that work in collaboration
- Artists will be offered accommodation, artist fee and production budget
- Artists will be commissioned by LeftCoast but will need to work in partnership with our partner organizations

Structure

The initial residency is for one year. We have submitted further funding bids which would extend the residencies for up to three years, but we won't hear back from these until after the residencies have started.

The initial 12 month residency will have 3 monthly reviews built into the structure to ensure both the artist and commissioners are happy with the process.

Accommodation of up to a three bedroom flat/ house will be provided to enable two artists who work in collaboration to apply, or a small family group.

We see the artists as making their home in the community. This means they are free to also work on other projects as long as they don't take them out of the area or take up a disproportionate amount of time.

Budget

Accommodation will be provided for each residency (this will not include utility bills), the value of this is £4,800

Artist Fee: £18,000 for the year

Startup materials budget: £2,000

Access to materials and production budget



Haweside, Blackpool

How to apply

To apply please submit a proposal that outlines:

- Which residency you would be interested in (you can put down no preference)
- Why you are interested in the residency
- A background to your practice and why you feel it to be relevant
- Three examples of past work/ projects that you think demonstrate how your practice fits this brief
- Your methodology – ideas on where you might start, how you would get to know an area (drawing on how you have done this in the past)
- CV

Please send your proposal as one document, ideally a PDF, no more than 1,500 words.

Process

We will invite shortlisted artists for an interview. This will be an in-depth day interview with site visits.

Deadline: Please email applications to Laura Jamieson laura.jamieson@leftcoast.org.uk by 5pm on Tue 20th Feb.

Interview day: 7th March 2018

Further information about our work can be found at:

LeftCoast www.leftcoast.org.uk

Blackpool Coastal Housing - www.bch.co.uk

Regenda Homes - www.regenda.org.uk