

Centre for Alternative Technology (CAT) Artist-in-residence programme: Funded by Arts Council of Wales and CAT

Voices from a disused quarry: A history of the Centre for Alternative Technology

Two artists working in the visual arts sought

We are looking for two visual artists to work collaboratively or alongside each other as part of an ongoing archive project investigating, commemorating and celebrating the heritage of the Centre for Alternative Technology (CAT).

Start date: January 2014 to end of March 2014 (*We will also need the artists to be available for two days between the 9th and 13th December – exact dates to be agreed at interview*).

Information for applicants

Each artist will receive a fee of £6,000 for three months

More about CAT and the residency

“In the early 1970s I took a sabbatical and went to America. I talked to senior business and professional people and came to the conclusion that a lot of people realised there was a major problem, but were locked into what they were doing. I came back thinking what was needed was a project to show the nature of the problem and to indicate ways of going forward”.

Gerard Morgan-Grenville CAT, Founder of CAT

CAT is based in a disused quarry in Mid-Wales, UK. It started as an experimental community with a handful of environmental pioneers in the winter of 1974 and has grown into a globally known educational institution. We want our Artists in Residence to work alongside staff to create work of lasting value that will inspire visitors, scholars and staff during and beyond the residency, based around the theme *Voices from a Disused Quarry – a history of the Centre for Alternative Technology*.

We imagine that these three month residencies will be an immersive experience as our resident artists explore themes of memory, sense of place, community, environmental quest and technical endeavor, embedded in an organisation

undergoing significant change, using messages from the past to explore visions for the future.

There will be flexibility for the artists to agree a timetable that suits their practice and responds to the project expectation, following the induction period, and in conjunction with the host.

We have deliberately placed the residencies in a time period 40 years to the day when the first 'settlers' arrived at the disused quarry, to allow our artists to sit within an appropriate historical 'timescape', which to our minds means landscape of the past. Signs of the old quarry are very much visible and we would like our artists to make full use of the atmosphere of the place to conceptualise and construct their work. We hope to make available two old quarry workers and community cottages as workshop spaces, to enable this process more fully.

We would also like our artists to meet and engage with staff and visitors to explore the themes of memory and heritage and the communication of environmental ideas. To help in this process the resident artists will work alongside Residency Facilitator Ariana Jordao, Author and Oral History Curator Allan Shepherd and Archive Curator and coiner of the term Alternative Technology Peter Harper. Both Allan and Peter have worked at the Centre for over two decades and will be a valuable resource for connecting with staff and enabling the artists to access the material (in all senses of the word) they need to enrich this process.

The archive and beyond

The archive includes:

- Over 80 oral history interviews and pre-selected clips providing a narrative story of the Centre (all recorded digitally in WAV format).
- Hundreds of individual pieces of artwork, including original signs, posters, leaflets and publications from the forty-year period.
- Videos.
- Over 1,000 digital, slide and print images.
- A large collection of written material, including books, magazines, original diaries, leaflets, posters and so on.
- Maps, images, film and documentation available from the archives of the National Library of Wales.
- Access to the 'ITV Wales' archive held at the National Library of Wales.

This represents a significant resource of raw material for any artist interested in working in the field of memory, heritage, ecological philosophy, environmental technology, social history or ecological iconography.

But beyond this the unique quarry site can also provide plenty of inspiration and material for any work, as we hope will interactions with current staff members, students and other visitors. CAT has a large family of associated networks and a broad membership body and we imagine whatever work emerges from the residency will also be able to draw on and link up with these interactions.

We would also like the artists to consider CAT's sense of place in the Dyfi Valley, and the rich cultural and historical landscape that surrounds it. CAT's unique place in the history of Wales, as well as the old quarry's place in the industrial heritage of Wales are all strong themes we imagine our artists would want to explore.

We also have established links with the National Library of Wales, Trinity St David's University, The People's Collection of Wales and the University of Aberystwyth.

The practice

We are looking for two artists working in the field of visual arts and we remain open to approaches within that broad field, for example performance, oral sculpture, video and so on. Our principle stipulation is that the archive is the primary but not exclusive resource.

The artists

CAT has a long history of exploring collaborative work practices. In the spirit of this it would be interesting to us to see how this collaborative history can be extended to work in these residencies. In selecting we could look at joint applications from artists who are known to each other, or who wish to work with each other and individual applications that we may then match to create collaborative opportunities. The residencies could focus on social engagement and collaborative practice but it is not a stipulation.

Outcomes

We would like the artists to create work that has a life beyond the residencies. This could be a legacy in terms of experience and connection with staff, students and visitors, for example through performance or an exchange around notions of communication of ideas, or it could be a physical object or audio or video piece that can continue to be accessed by visitors both at CAT or beyond after the residencies are over. As these residencies focuses on exploring historiography we welcome the idea that the piece(s) becomes part of the historical narrative of CAT. CAT's Visitor Centre provides an excellent space for work to be displayed and kept, offering as it does both indoor and outdoor spaces. We also hope that the work will be made available to the public in at least one venue outside of CAT and the National Library of Wales – the exact venue to be decided in conjunction with the artists.

Timings

The first 'pioneers' arrived at CAT on February 2nd 1974. We hope to launch the archive at the National Library on that date (February 2nd 2014), and also hold an event, perhaps a re-enactment, on-site. We would like the artists to participate in this process. The Artist Residencies starts in earnest in January 2014 but we would like our artists to come to CAT in mid-December for a few days to familiarise themselves with the physical, historical and social landscape of CAT, to meet the Archive team and to explore the potentialities within the residencies. We then hope to engage with a period of reflection until the project starts in January so that the group can reconvene having already begun to formulate ideas. The residency will finish on March 31st 2014.

Accommodation

Unfortunately we are not able to offer accommodation on site. The team at CAT will be able to assist the artists in finding accommodation locally.

Application Details

The aims of this residency are to:

- Enable the selected artist to draw upon CAT's work to carry out research, learn new skills and create new work.
- Inspire public interest and staff in creative practice.
- To present outputs both at CAT and at the National Library of Wales as well as another agreed venue if possible.
- Undertake an imaginative project to engage the public and staff (this could include open studios, talks, participatory events, seminars etc).
- Raise the profile of contemporary art practice and create links between the CAT 40th anniversary project and contemporary art practice.

Selection Criteria

Proposals should be dynamic, ambitious and inspiring – pushing forward the boundaries of perception about contemporary creative practice and sustainable futures. We are looking for applicants who can adopt a range of different roles and who are keen to draw upon the resources of CAT and act as the catalyst for public dialogue.

Candidates must demonstrate:

1. Creative originality and professionalism in their work.
2. An understanding and desire to work with the public as part of their creative practice.
3. Ideas for innovative ways to respond to opportunities to work within CAT.
4. Dynamic and inspiring ideas about how they would use this opportunity to develop their practice and how they intend to meet the aims.

Payment

Each artist will be paid £6,000. This fee is inclusive of travel costs, living expenses, and studio equipment and materials.

Studio

The Residency Studio is on the main site of CAT, Machynlleth. The National Library of Wales has also offered occasional space for the residencies when working there.

To apply

Applicants should apply by submitting a current CV, attaching 8 low resolution images of your work – and links to any video/audio footage of your work – with your application and send to vacancy@cat.org.uk by 9.00am 19th November 2013.

(Note about format and max size of images)

1. Name of image
2. Title
3. Materials used
4. Dimensions
5. Year made
6. Description

Selection process

- A panel of representatives from CAT, the Arts Council of Wales and external experts will carry out the selection.
- Shortlisted candidates will be expected to present their ideas and vision for what the residency will deliver.
- Applicants will be short-listed from the images and supporting information and those selected will be invited for interview.
- Deadline for the receipt of applications, 19th November 2013 9.00 am.
- Interviews will take place at CAT on 4th and 5th December 2013.
- Candidates must be available for interview on this date.
- We will also need the artists to be available for two days between the 9th and 13th December (exact dates to be agreed at interview).
- If you have any queries regarding the recruitment process, you can email CAT via allan.shepherd@cat.org.uk

CAT, the host, will provide:

- A Residency Co-ordinator/Manager.
- Dedicated studio space.
- Access to relevant people and equipment on site (to be agreed with the residency manager).
- Appropriate space on site for engaging CAT visitors / schools, use of WISE (to be agreed with Residency Manager).
- Link to CAT website for ongoing progress with work and presentation of final work.
- Assistance in locating accommodation.

Legacy

CAT hopes this residency experience is only the beginning of a longer relationship and will bear fruit for years to come through influencing subsequent works.

Annex 1: Expectation of the residency

We would like to achieve a balance of benefits for the artist, the public and CAT.

The artist will be expected to:

1. Engage in developing and delivering public-facing activities.
2. Present work in progress in their studio or on site.
3. Run an event at the National Library of Wales.
4. Undertake a programme of activities with the public, and online.
5. Contribute to the process of dissemination on the CAT & the Arts Council of Wales website.
6. Provide feedback for the purposes of evaluation.