



Commissions

Guidance for applicants

Art Fund_

Melanie Manchot, *Dance (All Night, London)*, 2017. Commissioned by Art Night, acquired for the Arts Council Collection. Photo © Rachel Cherry

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Welcome

This guidance will help you consider whether this funding programme suits your needs, and provides further information regarding eligibility and how to submit a strong application.

If you require this document in an alternative format, please contact our team via programmes@artfund.org or 0207 225 4822.

Key contacts

From your initial enquiry right through to getting support promoting a new exhibition, there are a number of key contacts across the organisation who will be able to assist you at different points.

General enquiries
020 7225 4865
programmes@artfund.org

Contacts in the programmes team for Commissions

Robert Dingle Programme Manager 020 7225 4871 rdingle@artfund.org	Ying Tan Senior Programme Manager 020 7225 4866 ytan@artfund.org
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Planning press announcements, managing communications and providing images

Communications team

Lucy Hawes Head of Press 020 7225 4840 lhawes@artfund.org	Images images@artfund.org
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Acknowledging your grant, promoting your organisation and being part of our network

Museum Marketing team

Charlotte Wood
Senior Marketing Manager
020 7225 4854 cwood@artfund.org

Case Study – *Dance (All Night, London)*, 2017



Dance (All Night, London) is a collective dance performance which debuted at Art Night, a free contemporary arts festival in London. Melanie Manchot worked in collaboration with 10 dance schools from around the east of the city, each representing a different style of movement, from Cuban Rueda to Chinese Dance and Argentine Tango. Beginning in the early evening, dancers paraded through the streets, coming together in Exchange Square, Broadgate. From 10pm to 1am the square was illuminated and transformed into a temporary stage and taken over by teachers from each school offering dance lessons to the public.

The work was commissioned in 2017 by Art Night, whose ambition was to ensure that a legacy for the work remained in public collections. A partnership was agreed with the Arts Council Collection, who had a connection with the artist through existing works in their collection, to acquire the work and show it nationally. The work can be shown as a public performance, a single-screen moving-image work, as well as a set of wall-mounted text-based instructions.

Melanie Manchot, *Dance (All Night, London)*, 2017. Commissioned by Art Night, acquired for the Arts Council Collection. Photo © Rachel Cherry

1. Before you apply

Programme eligibility

What we'll support

Commissioned work often has a singular ability to respond and reveal new aspects to collections or places in direct, timely ways, and commissioning an artist/s to create a new work of art for a museum collection can help to forge closer relationships with artists and audiences.

Applications for commissions are considered as a part of our Acquisitions programme. As such, we would expect any commissions to be of international, national or regional significance. We recognise, however, that there are distinct opportunities and fundraising challenges in realising a commission, and that the acquisition of a commission can be conceptualised and carried out in many different ways; for example, as a unique permanent artwork that can be accessioned into a public collection, or as a temporary, ephemeral or performance piece that may only have a permanent legacy in the form of archival material. For your application to be successful you will also need to make a strong case in the following three areas:

Benefit to the Artist

It's important in your application to include information about the ways in which the artist will benefit from being involved in the commission.

We are keen to support artists working across a range of media, including those working with performance and ephemeral practices. It's important to include information about the artist that either demonstrates a strong track record of commissioning or can evidence a commitment to (or ambition for) working with institutions and agencies in this way, and to explain how the commission will support the development of the artist's practice.

We believe artists should be paid fairly for their time involved in a commission and we ask applicants to refer to specific guidance from sector organisations, such as [a-n The Artists Information Company](#), when calculating artist fees. We want applicants to clearly define the fee for the artist(s) that is separate from the production budget. You can also refer to our [guidance on accessibly and inclusive practice](#) when it comes to thinking about how to use our grant.

Benefit to the organisation

We are interested to know more about how the commission will benefit your organisation and the reasons why you are choosing to commission new work from a specific artist (instead of acquiring existing work). What will the commission enable you to achieve that you wouldn't otherwise be able to do? You can also use this section to include any relevant experience of commissioning that you or your organisation might have.

Benefit to audiences

We are keen to know how audiences will benefit from the commission, in the short, medium and long term. This part of the application might also detail the ways in which the legacy of the commission might extend to audiences. Through our support for commissions we hope you will be able to connect with audiences and be supported to engage with them in new ways.

Applications towards support for commissions need to meet **all three** areas above.

Types of commissioning models we support:

- commissions that result in an acquisition or gift of work that becomes part of a museum's permanent collection
- commissions that result in a work that is situated in a place that is accessible to the public for a minimum period of 3 years
- temporary commissions or commissions with artists working in ephemeral practices, which create a permanent legacy within an archive or collection that remains publicly accessible

Who we'll support

Public museums, galleries, historic houses, libraries and archives based in the UK or Channel Islands.

Given the focus on acquisitions we anticipate most lead applicants to have collections, which may include fine and applied art and design, archaeology and/or social history. If the lead applicant has a collection, our criteria is as follows:

- Applicants must be open for at least half the week for at least six months of the year
- Applicants must be fully or provisionally Accredited through the Arts Council Accreditation scheme or other national equivalents

Beyond supporting museums to commission, we encourage partnerships between commissioning agencies and museums, or other institutions who want to commission work that will have a permanent legacy to artists, cultural organisations as well as audiences. You can apply as a single institution, in a partnership, or with a collective. We will ask you to identify a lead applicant if two or more organisations are applying together.

On occasion the lead applicant will not have a collection, in which case these are our criteria:

- organisations without collections need to be committed to delivering activity that increases public access to the visual arts more generally. These activities must provide public benefit and align with Art Fund's charitable objectives.
- operate to standards of best practice and/or have a strong track record in delivering high quality public activity. You could demonstrate this through accreditation schemes (such as those managed by Arts Council England), endorsement by partners, successful past projects, or awards you have received.
- have a public presence (eg a building open to the public) or a public outcome (eg a festival or public art programme)

All grant recipients will be asked to sign our terms and conditions (see below for further information).

We do not offer funding under this programme in the following instances:

- where the commission does not result in the permanent acquisition of a work, or of an archive or collection of material relating to a temporary or ephemeral work, or is not intended to realise work to be situated in a place that is accessible to the public for a minimum period of 3 years
- to organisations that exist to make profit, including: Private Limited Companies, Public Limited Companies, Unlimited Companies, or Sole Traders
- to General Partnerships, Limited Partnerships, or Limited Liability Partnerships.
- to organisations with a focus on music, drama, dance and art forms outside the visual arts
- to individuals or unincorporated bodies directly (unless an application is submitted by or with the formal written agreement of an eligible organisation (as described above))
- to hospitals and places of worship
- to schools or higher education institutions

Funding and decision times

Our acquisitions programme has two levels of funding available:

Main grants

A grant falls under main grants if the grant awarded would be above £7,500 and/or where the total cost of the work is £15,000 or above. The total cost of the work is deemed to be the overall costs associated with the fabrication and production of the work, plus the artist fee and acquisition cost.

Main grants are considered at one of five Trustee meetings which take place across the year. Please contact us for the upcoming application deadlines.

A meeting normally takes place one month after the application deadline.

Small grants

A grant falls under small grants if the grant awarded would be £7,500 or less and where the total cost of the work is £15,000 or less. The total cost of the work is deemed to be the overall costs associated with the fabrication and production of the work, plus the artist fee and acquisition cost.

Small grants are considered on a rolling basis. You can apply at any time and we aim to get you a decision within eight weeks, subject to volume of business and receipt of all required information.

Viewable material

In addition to submitting your application (along with the supporting documents outlined in Section 2), you will need to supply any viewable material that is illustrative of the commissioned work. This is not an exhaustive list, but could include preparatory drawings and sketches, images, maquettes, sample materials etc.

As the work will not yet have been realised Trustees will base their decision on the quality and cogency of this material. We therefore advise that any supporting material submitted is of high quality and does justice to the project and anticipated final output.

Pre-application advice

The Programmes team are happy to talk to you about your proposals at any stage and will give informal advice as you are developing your plans.

All applicants should contact Robert Dingle (Programme Manager) to discuss a potential application in the first instance. He can be contacted on 020 7225 4871 or rdingle@artfund.org. If he is unavailable, please contact the team on 020 7225 4865. We will be able to give advice on eligibility, timescales, deadlines for applications and your level of grant request to Art Fund.

When you contact us about a possible grant application we will log your contact information and details about the nature of your enquiry to support our grants administration processes and ensure that we can remain in contact with you as your plans progress.

Information about how we hold your data and our privacy notice can be accessed on our website: www.artfund.org/pages/privacy-and-cookies

How much to apply for

Our funding ranges from a few thousand pounds to tens of thousands of pounds. We normally fund only part of the cost of a commission.

Like many grant giving organisations we have limited funds available and strong interest and competition for our funding. There is no fixed percentage for which you can apply, however we expect you to explore the possibility of applying to all appropriate funding sources for which you might be eligible.

As part of any initial discussions we can advise you on the appropriate level of grant request before you submit your application. Our Trustees may sometimes make reduced grant offers. They will consider the pressure on available funds, your other funding sources, and strength of application.

How often to apply

We do not limit the number of times that an organisation can apply for funding towards an acquisition or commission in any time period; however, we like to see evidence of a strategic and considered approach.

Where you would like to submit multiple applications in a short time period, please contact us to discuss how these applications can be managed. If there is no time-sensitivity, it is our advice that applications should be staggered. In all instances we would need to be convinced that each application you make is a priority for your organisation.

Terms and conditions

Please ensure that the person with relevant authority in your organisation has read and understood our terms and conditions before submitting an application. At the time of submission, we will ask you to confirm that these have been read and understood. At the time of claiming a grant, you will need to sign an agreement saying that you accept our terms and conditions. If applying in partnership with other organisations for a shared commission, all partners will have to sign our terms and conditions. For works in the public realm, copyright and long term care of the commissioned work will need to be considered.

Our full terms and conditions can be accessed on our website:

<https://www.artfund.org/assets/supporting-museums/apply-for-an-acquisition-grant/grant-conditions.pdf>

If your organisation has already received a commission or acquisition grant from us, you will already be in our partner museum network.

For new applicants, if you are successfully awarded a grant and accept our terms and conditions, you will join our network. Section 4 explains in greater detail the opportunities for us to work together to promote your organisation, to thank our members and enable them and the wider public to see works of art that they have helped acquire.

To help facilitate this, our terms and conditions ask you to:

- give free admission to your permanent collections for visitors with a National Art Pass
- give free or half-price entry to your temporary exhibitions for visitors with a National Art Pass
- make a permanent acknowledgement of our help
- We expect to be fully acknowledged in all credit lines and associated material relating to the commission, including when on loan or tour to other organisations.
- collaborate with us on publicity and promotional work
- notify us of any long-term loan of the commission or proposed sale or transfer of the object in future

Case study – *Along the Way, Come What May, Somewhere Somehow*, 2014



This commission for Gallery of Modern Art (GoMA) creates the only publicly-sited artwork by Lawrence Weiner in Scotland and represents the first public artwork commissioned by Glasgow Museums for GoMA since it opened in 1996. The texts 'SOMEWHERE / SOMEHOW' and 'ALONG THE WAY / COME WHAT MAY' are embedded into paving stones on Royal Exchange Square, Glasgow. ALONG THE WAY / COME WHAT MAY seems like an invitation to the public to think about where they are going, whereas, SOMEWHERE / SOMEHOW talks about the space between idea and creation and of what possibility lies there. The text also talks about the use of a public art gallery and the potential for the public to respond.

Lawrence Weiner, *Along the Way, Come What May, Somewhere Somehow*, 2014. Commissioned and acquired by Gallery of Modern Art, Glasgow. Photo © Robin Friend 2015

2. How to apply

Accessing the online application forms

You can apply for a grant using our online application system. To access the application form you will need to register for a 'My Art Fund' account as a professional user.

If you do not have an account, please register using the following link:

www.artfund.org/my-art-fund/professional-registration

If you have a My Art Fund account, but cannot see the online form, please contact the Programmes team on programmes@artfund.org and we will update your account to have professional user status. This will mean you can access our grant applications and other services available to those working or volunteering in the sector.

When you log in, the link to applications is on the toolbar on the right-hand side.

If you require the application form in an alternative format, please get in touch.

If applying for a commission, please discuss with the team first. If we decide to progress an application, you will be able to submit your online application form through your 'My Art Fund' account.

Privacy notice and data protection

Information requested is for the purposes of administering, monitoring and evaluating grants. Our privacy notice is available online at the following link:

www.artfund.org/pages/privacy-and-cookies

Please ensure you have any relevant consent from third parties to share any personal data with us.

Supporting documents

The following supporting documents must be provided as part of your application. If these are not available at the time of a given submission deadline, please contact us so that we can consider the timescales for receiving the documents ahead of a decision being made.

- a copy of the project brief/artist(s) brief and commission plan
- copies of the artist proposals and any illustrative material available
- images of similar works realised by the artist
- a budget that includes a full cost breakdown of the commission. This should include separate headings for 'Artist fees', 'Production' and 'Display/Installation'.
- If you are working with an artist that has commercial representation, we would ask for you to define the role of the commercial gallery and their involvement in the commission.
- evidence that the project is realistically costed. This could include an independent valuation, evidence of tender and procurement processes, a list of recent prices previously achieved for works by the artist, a budget for the production of new works by the artist of a similar scope, or other independent advice you may have received.
- timeline for commission

Submitting your application

Once you have reviewed your application and uploaded all the supporting information, press the 'submit' button on the online form. Once you submit you will no longer be able to edit the form. When you log in to your account you will see that your form status has moved from 'Draft' to 'Submitted'.

You will receive an automated email which confirms that the form has been submitted. Upon receipt of your application we will assign an Art Fund caseworker to your application. They will be in touch to introduce themselves and will let you know if there are any queries about your application. If you do not hear from us within fourteen days, please contact us to check we have received your application safely.

If there are queries about your application, your caseworker may contact you to say that they will be returning your application to you for editing. When you log back into your account the previously submitted form will now be available for you to edit with the status indicated as 'Further information required'. Once you have made the edits you can resubmit in the same way as before.

Please note, if you do not send in all the information we ask for, including all supporting material, we will not be able to process your application and your application may be delayed or rejected.

All applications are assessed in the first instance by an Art Fund programme manager. They will provide initial feedback and discuss with you if the application needs further development before it can be progressed.

Case study – *The institute for the magical effect of actually giving a shit (note to our future selves)*, 2021



Studio Voltaire is a non-profit gallery and artist studios based in Clapham, South London. As part of Studio Voltaire's capital development, the organisation commissioned Joanne Tatham & Tom O'Sullivan to produce a permanent work of art within the context of a public toilet. The commission was developed after the duo first exhibited work with Studio Voltaire in 2003 as part of a group show; the artists' first-ever permanent commission includes bespoke, hand-glazed ceramic tiles which draw from Tatham and O'Sullivan's key motifs, in particular staring, cartoon-like faces. The bold design details and vivid hues rethink the possibilities inherent in a purely functional space, and the artists' vibrantly coloured installation employs humour and the absurdity of the unexpected as a strategy for both disruption and generosity.

Joanne Tatham & Tom O'Sullivan, *The institute for the magical effect of actually giving a shit (note to our future selves)*, 2021. Commissioned and acquired by Studio Voltaire. Image courtesy of the artists and The Modern Institute, Toby Webster Ltd, Glasgow. Photo: Francis Ware.

3. What happens next?

How do our Trustees make their decision?

All applications are assessed by our Board of Trustees, with input from a wide range of independent expert advisors.

Assessment of your application will be made based on the artistic merit and quality of the proposed artwork, plus the three areas outlined above and how well you meet them.

The Board is also responsible for deciding the level of the grant, and so will also take into account your proposed budget and funding package and whether they believe these are fair and reasonable.

The decision made by the Trustees and communicated to applicants is final. We will endeavour to give clear, constructive feedback if your application is unsuccessful. Please be aware, however, that our resources are very much in demand, and sometimes, although deserving, your case may not be as high a priority as others we consider.

In almost all instances, once turned down, we will not reconsider your application. There are very rare occasions where we may review the case.

Main grants

Following receipt of an application, we will be in touch with you to make arrangements, if required, for any viewable material relating to the commission to be brought to the meeting of our Trustees at our offices in central London. If you have any questions about this process, please get in touch.

Applicants will normally be notified verbally within three days after the meeting. If we can't reach you by phone we will send an email to you.

Small grants

Following receipt of all required information we aim to get you a decision within eight weeks.

Confirmation of grant offer

If your application is successful, we will issue our offer paperwork to you.

The offer paperwork includes:

- offer letter
- commission agreement (a tailored contract based on each commission)
- grant claim form and evaluation
- key information and contacts

Your application status in your My Art Fund account will be updated to indicate that you have been successful. Past and current applications will be archived in your account. The status of a grant will be updated to notify you when subsequent information is due, so that you can claim your grant and submit evaluation information. We suggest that you retain a copy of your application form and all supporting documents for your own files.

How to claim your grant

Successful applicants should not claim their grant until they have completed their fundraising and are in a position to pay the vendor. We will work with you to devise a payment schedule that will be acknowledged in the commission agreement.

Once you have completed your fundraising and are in a position to claim your grant, please:

- sign and return ONE copy of the commission agreement (keep the other for your own records). The contract should be signed and returned to us electronically. If you have misplaced the contract and need a copy reissued, please contact programmes@artfund.org
- sign and return ONE copy of the grant claim form
- raise and submit an invoice to Art Fund for the grant amount, marked for the attention of the Programmes office
- If we have not paid your organisation a grant recently we may ask that you complete a 'new vendor form', which verifies your bank account details so that we can pay you the grant.

Please ensure that any grant claims are submitted in good time to allow for internal approvals to release the funds to you. We will not expedite payments unless urgent.

Grants will be paid by BACS and will be reserved for a period of six months from the date of the offer letter. Please let us know as soon as possible if you do not expect to claim the grant within this timeframe.

Announcements and press

We want to help promote and celebrate all new commissions made with our support. We are happy to work with you to co-ordinate announcements and press releases as well as promote the news through our communications channels including our magazine *Art Quarterly* and on social media.

Images

You will need to supply us with at least one high-resolution digital image of the work which we will use to promote the commission through our digital channels and media in print. Please send images to images@artfund.org within 30 days of the commission being completed.

When arranging photography, please ensure that the resolution is of sufficient quality to be reproduced in a high quality, fine art publication (minimum 18MB but preferably 25MB file size).

Press release and announcements

In planning press announcements please liaise with our Communications team regarding timings and publicity materials. We can, where appropriate, provide quotes for press releases, and can also offer support and advice on maximising publicity. Please contact Lucy Hawes, Head of Press, at lhawes@artfund.org to find out more.

Acknowledgement and marketing

To find out more about acknowledging your grant and working with us to promote your organisation to our membership and the wider public, please see Section 4.

Evaluation

Evaluating our programme helps us to ensure that our grant-giving is effective and to identify new ways to develop our funding and support for the sector. It also helps us to monitor whether our charitable aims are being met through our grant-giving. All grant recipients are asked to help us with this process, and evaluation is the final stage of a grant award.

When you claim your grant we will supply you with a copy of the evaluation form. You will be asked to fill this in one year after the grant payment has been made. The form is designed to be light-touch and is an opportunity for you to tell us about the impact that the commission has had on your collection and the visiting public.

You will be asked to report against information you provided in your original application. If there are new or unexpected outcomes stemming from the commission, we would love to hear about them. If you have any images of the work in situ or associated activity relating to the commission, we would really value receiving these along with any quotes about the impact of the commission. We understand that things may have changed since you first applied, so please do not worry and provide an honest reflection on your experiences.

We do not currently ask for any quantitative evidence, however if you are recording this as part of your own evaluation or reporting for other funders, please provide us with this information.

You might be contacted following the submission of the evaluation form for further information to be considered as a case study or to help develop our programme; however, for the majority of grants, once we have received your evaluation form the grant file will be officially closed.

If the work is likely to be featured in significant activity, such as an exhibition or tour, please let us know as we may be able to highlight this through our channels.

Case study – *Lumen*, 2021



Sutapa Biswas, *Lumen*, 2021. Co-commissioned by Film and Video Umbrella, Bristol Museum & Art Gallery, Kettle's Yard, University of Cambridge and BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, acquired by Bristol Museum & Art Gallery

Combining archive material and newly filmed footage around a central monologue, *Lumen* is a moving-image work by Sutapa Biswas, co-commissioned by Film and Video Umbrella, Bristol Museum & Art Gallery, Kettle's Yard, University of Cambridge and BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, and acquired by Bristol Museum & Art Gallery. The film begins with the story of a birth and ends on a departure across uncharted waters. Inspired by the artist's family's own forced departure from India, the work is in part a lament for the sights and sounds left behind on their protracted sea voyage to England, while reproaching centuries of colonial rule and its implacable incursions on domestic life. The commission was screened as part of a major touring solo exhibition by the same name, showcasing the artist's work over the span of her wide-ranging career.

4. Being part of our network

Museum Marketing team

All organisations who have been awarded a commission grant automatically join our network of partner museums. If you have been awarded a grant for the first time, a member of our Museum Marketing team will be in touch to welcome you and explain the full range of opportunities available to you.

The team are also the key contacts who you should notify about any changes to information such as your opening hours, admission policy or forthcoming exhibitions.

Staying in touch

There are a number of ways you can stay in touch with us.

Museum Bulletin

Sign up to our Museum Bulletin to find out about funding application deadlines, training opportunities, print deadlines, key events and industry news:

artfund.org/professional-newsletter-signup

Contacting us directly

The Key Contacts page at the top of this document details who you should contact about different things. We are always excited to hear what you've got going on, so do let us know about your latest plans and news.

Contact the Museum Marketing team to let us know about your exhibitions, key anniversaries and major events and we can help promote these to several thousand art lovers each month.

Keep us informed about your refurbishment projects, any changes to opening times and admission policy etc so we can make sure your listing on our website is up to date.

Curators' Art Pass – become a member

If you work for one of our partner organisations, whether you are a curator, fundraiser, work in marketing or are part of the visitor services or learning teams, you can get 70% off the standard National Art Pass rates.

Support our work and enjoy free and discounted entry to museums and galleries across the UK for just £20.

Your personal membership will keep you in the loop with your contemporaries and includes a full subscription to our award-winning magazine Art Quarterly, brings discounts in hundreds of museum shops and cafes, and, should you need it, also offers free or reduced-price entry to over 320 cultural venues plus 50% off major exhibitions.

To order your Curators' Art Pass, log in to your My Art Fund account at artfund.org

Acknowledging your grant

Acknowledging our support for your organisation is a key part of our terms and conditions. We don't receive any government funding and so everyone who buys a National Art Pass directly supports the work that we do. By helping us raise awareness of Art Fund and the National Art Pass you will be helping us to provide continued funding and opportunities for organisations across the UK.

Grant acknowledgement

We ask that you acknowledge our support for all acquisitions we have helped fund. Further guidance on how to credit us on your gallery's labels, in print and digital materials, and the use of our logo can be found in our brand guidelines.

This document can be downloaded along with our logos here:

artfund.org/supporting-museums/guidelines-and-resources

Please contact the Museum Marketing team for sign-off on all materials, and allow at least 3 working days for us to respond.

Raising awareness of our work and the National Art Pass

Clearly displaying the admission price on your website and at other ticket sales points helps visitors with a National Art Pass to immediately recognise their ticket options. We want to work with you to offer the best customer service to our membership.

Showing our supporters the difference they make

If your grant offer exceeds £50,000, we ask that your organisation grants us the opportunity to organise an event on the museum's premises. We will meet the additional costs arising from such an event (i.e. warding, catering, production, etc) but must not be charged the hire fee.

Through such events we aim to help promote the strengths of your collections to our supporters and other sector stakeholders.

The exact nature of the activities, position and timings would be mutually agreed between the two parties in advance.

A member of our events team will be in touch if an opportunity for a potential event is identified.

