Molecular Architecture
Artistic Expressions of Interest

Call for Proposals

Application Deadline: 9am on the 12th May 2023

Following on from Phase 1 and Phase 2 of a collaborative Arts Science Project, Molecular Architectures, we are continuing the collaboration with molecular chemist, Dr. Amanda Jarvis at the University of Edinburgh and a freelance artist, facilitated by ASCUS Art & Science. We are offering an exciting opportunity to work with the research lab of Dr Jarvis in the development and creation phase of a collaborative project, leading to potential exhibition opportunities in a later delivery phase.

This is an open call for proposals from artists who can identify with specific themes of molecular chemistry at work in the Jarvis lab, such as unnatural reactions, ethics, sustainability and the circular economy. You will produce work that will be visually engaging and that will help change the perception and understanding of chemistry.

The ambition of the project is to encourage engagement with the wider public through the creation of an inclusive artwork with the possibility of the creation of outreach materials and an exhibition for this work. This project will take place between June and September 2023.

The opportunity is open to Scotland-based artists, or artists with day travel radius to Edinburgh,

who will be able to explore Dr Jarvis' work onsite at the University of Edinburgh, Kings Buildings.

Applicants should be able to demonstrate a strong commitment to their artistic practice, evidence of a body of work and strong track record.

Introduction

ASCUS Art & Science is a non-profit organisation dedicated to bringing together art, science and beyond in the name of play, curiosity and experimentation. Providing collaborations across disciplines through project management, facilitating public engagement events and providing a space for curious minds in the UK's first publicly accessible lab.

Project Background

Molecular Architectures: towards cross-disciplinary design in Chemistry is a programme of art-science interactive creative exchange events co-developed by ASCUS Art & Science, which aimed to provide time and space for chemists, artists and designers to share the approaches, concepts and language used during the design process and to learn from other disciplines.

Design methods are an inherent part of scientific research in catalysis and as part of our material and cultural world. Embedded in both disciplines are the concepts of circular economy as scientific, design and creative communities focus their practices on finding sustainable solutions to meet the demands of modern day life and to embed ethical and sustainable approaches to creative production.

The Jarvis group (www.amandajarvis.co.uk) works on introducing artificial active sites into existing biological architecture to enable biology to conduct new reactions. This work combines chemistry and synthetic biology to provide tools for improving the sustainability of chemical synthesis and allow exciting developments in the properties of biomaterials.

This collaboration will provide a new platform for dialogue between the arts and sciences to develop ways in which the relationship between chemistry and the world is changing and how that can be communicated. Through interdisciplinary innovation this project can imagine, develop and maintain a sustainable future combining original research and the imagination to envision possible futures.

Project Aims

Dr Jarvis is looking to work with an artist (this could involve a wide range of practices including, but not limited to sculptural, photographic, visual arts, crafting, design or fine art) to explore the methods and processes around creation and design using her chemistry research as a starting point. She is intrigued to see what the lab can learn from artistic methods and to examine how art and crafts can engage with concepts from molecular chemistry and bring these ideas to new audiences. The key aims are therefore:

- to work closely with Dr Jarvis to explore the process and methodology of her work and therefore the artwork needs to have recognisable chemical concepts in the process/end piece
- to engage a two way exchange across disciplines, and to create time and space for high level interaction between artist and chemist.

Ideally, Dr Jarvis is looking to work with a creative practitioner who would be interested in developing a longer term collaboration including the development of public outreach programmes leading on from this work, pending further funding.For example public exhibitions of artistic work, or joint creative/scientific workshops. The artist will also provide:

- a defined way to work with the Dr Jarvis that enables opportunity for the scientific process to links to the creative process, whilst developing their creative skills

- art at an appropriate level for engagement - possibility of reaching people who would not normally engage with science/chemistry - start a conversation with them

Artist Characteristics
Essential to the collaboration is regular interaction with Dr Jarvis which will include on-site visits to ASCUS in Edinburgh. The artist should therefore:

- have an interest in science based techniques to enhance their creative practice
- have the imagination and enthusiasm to engage with the brief
- have experience in working within multidisciplinary art/science projects
- have experience in managing different levels of communication needs
- have the ability to work to a set theme
- have the skills in a range of art and craft activities
- be led by the ASCUS Creative Producer and Dr Jarvis, with guidance from additional ASCUS staff
- adhere to health and safety and environmental restrictions as advised by ASCUS and Dr Jarvis
- complete a short summary of the project to contribute to any final documentation as required
- provide evidence of liability insurance
- conduct themselves professionally at all times

Budget
Up to £4,000 in funding covering time may be claimed during the project.This is inclusive of VAT and any expenses that exceed the materials budget below. The successful applicant will be engaged on a self-employed basis and there is flexibility as to the hours worked.
The artist will provide the materials for the creative activities from the budget provided but inline with ongoing discussions with all the stakeholders.

The project is funded by the EPSRC through the award of a UKRI FLF to Dr Amanda Jarvis (MR/S017402/1).

Useful Resources
www.ascus.org.uk/projects/design-for-function-molecular-architecture
www.ascus.org.uk
www.amandajarvis.co.uk

Timeline
The artist will begin the project in June 2023 and be completed by Sept/October 2023 although the timeline can be extended where it is necessary to ensure work commitments of all stakeholders.
The project may be pursued intensively over a number of weeks or over a longer period.
Dates and times TBC.
Application deadline: 12 May 2023

Application process
To apply for this opportunity please send the following information to Goldsbrough@ascus.org.uk no later than 9am on 12th May 2023.

Brief outline of proposal: A written statement detailing your current practice and your artwork proposal. Please reference how your proposal would explore chemistry/science and create an inspiring artform based on Dr Amanda Jarvis' work and engage and develop new methods of communicating her work. If possible outline the budget requested for the proposal, along with the timeline and end date. (1 side of A4 max).

Please provide links to example of previous work where possible (this could be, for example, a craft sample, or a link to a website, or some images of relevant work in progress - Jpegs no larger than 1MB each)

Contact

If you have any questions please e-mail:

Goldsbrough@ascus.org.uk