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**Heritage
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**The New
Art Gallery
Walsall**



**Bumblebee
Conservation
Trust**

Open call for artist: Studio residency and Legacy artwork commission with The New Art Gallery Walsall and The Bumblebee Conservation Trust supported by the National Heritage Lottery Fund.



Daniella Turbin, *SP010986* 23 June – 18 September 2021, Artists' Studio, The New Art Gallery Walsall. Photo Mark Hinton.

The New Art Gallery Walsall is delighted to collaborate with The Bumblebee Conservation Trust to offer one West Midlands-based artist the opportunity of studio space to support the creation of a legacy artwork, which is being commissioned by the Trust as part of *Bee Inspired*, a 2-year project taking place across the Black Country and Greater Birmingham. This initiative will connect diverse audiences and deliver lasting change within communities by empowering local people to care about bumblebees and initiate positive actions to help grow native populations in urban habitats.

ABOUT THE BUMBLEBEE CONSERVATION TRUST

The Bumblebee Conservation Trust (BBCT) was established in 2006 to address the decline in the UK's bumblebee populations. The Trust's aim is to prevent the extinction of the nation's rarest bumblebees and to create a long-term sustainable future for all bumblebee species. It is the only organisation in the UK solely dedicated to reversing the decline of native bumblebees.

The BBCT is a membership-based organisation and provides opportunities for individuals to volunteer and support the cause. It currently has 10,000 members and 1,000 registered volunteers and is delivering twelve regionally focused projects across the UK. These projects inspire and educate local people to understand about the importance of bumblebees and give them the knowledge, skills and confidence to make a difference in their local community for pollinators. In the West Midlands, the Trust is engaged in a Bee Inspired project, with specific activities and training taking place in Walsall.

ABOUT THE NEW ART GALLERY WALSALL

The New Art Gallery Walsall is an award-winning gallery in the heart of the West Midlands that presents, collects and interprets historic, modern and contemporary art through a dynamic exhibitions, learning and engagement programme. The Gallery houses a purpose-built Artists' Studio, which provides a base for its long-standing and respected residency programme. This programme exists primarily to support early career artists based in the region to test ideas and develop new work within a public-facing studio context. Curatorial guidance and critical conversation, often with external studio visitors, is a vital part of this work. The programme currently offers a mix of onsite and remote/virtual residency opportunities intended to support a broad cross section of

practices and artists, some of whom may face additional barriers to working in the mainstream.

The Gallery is currently engaged in a long-term programme of residencies that will see artists exploring environmental themes in a variety of ways, through individual studio work and socially engaged art practice. This work will involve local audiences, providing a focus for dialogue and an impetus for positive, artist-led community actions.

ABOUT THE RESIDENCY

The selected artist will occupy the Artists' Studio at The New Art Gallery Walsall from 11 July – 24 September 2023, for a minimum of 2 days each week. They will:

- Generate and develop ideas for their Legacy commission (see below)
- Produce designs for sign off by the BBCT, with artistic support from the Gallery
- Research potential sites and permissions for placement of the commission, with the BBCT and relevant local stakeholders
- Participate in a 'Bee Safari' bumblebee identification walk in Walsall, hosted by the BBCT and involving local people
- Commence work on the commission
- Host one open studio event, with support from the BBCT and the Gallery, to share progress on the commission with local people and spark interest in the importance of bumblebees

ABOUT THE COMMISSION

Bumblebees are familiar and much-loved insects that pollinate our crops and wildflowers, but in the last 80 years the UK's bumblebee populations have crashed: two species have become nationally extinct, while several others have declined dramatically. The BBCT is seeking an experienced artist/maker to research, design, produce and install a Legacy artwork in Walsall that will spark interest in the importance of bumblebees and support ongoing work by the BBCT to preserve and grow populations of 'our wild friends the bumblebees' in urban habitats.

The commission brief:

- To design, make and install an outdoor artwork in Walsall that will spark interest in the importance of bumblebees and support ongoing work by the BBCT to preserve bumblebees.
- Artists are invited to propose ideas for either:

- A singular artwork or group of artworks that function as nesting spaces
- a singular artwork or group of artworks that can be used to host bumblebee-friendly plants in Walsall
- A sculpture that communicates the importance of bumblebees to a wide audience
- To work with the Trust to secure relevant permissions for the proposed artwork site(s)
- To enable audience access and generate excitement about the work through the delivery of one public event during the residency period

In their approach to the brief, working practices and material choices artists should consider the BBCT's aims, as follows:

The aims of the Trust:

1. *Enhance the understanding of bumblebee ecology and conservation.*
2. *Increase the quality and quantity of bumblebee habitat.*
3. *Inspire and enable to diverse range of people to take action for bumblebees.*
4. *Be an effective and sustainable organisation.*

The selected artist will report to:

- Gurinder Atwal, Volunteering and Outreach Manager, The Bumblebee Conservation Trust (Commission)
- Zoë Lippett, Exhibitions and Artists' Projects Curator, The New Art Gallery Walsall (Residency).

The successful artist will receive:

- Use of a fully-equipped artist studio in The New Art Gallery Walsall for the duration of the residency period, for research and making
- Curatorial support while in residence
- Support with access costs, if appropriate
- Access to technical advice during the residency
- A £4000 fee
- £ 5,300 materials budget (this includes any weatherproofing, maintenance and install costs)
- Online exposure via TNAGW and BBCT platforms

Who is eligible to apply?

To apply for this opportunity, you must be:

- An artist/maker based in the West Midlands, preferably with a sculptural/socially-engaged practice and/or experience of producing public artworks
- Actively engaged in developing your practice, with a demonstrable body of existing work
- Available to give a minimum of 2 days a week time commitment each week to the residency and work on the commission (NB. the studio is available to artists 7 days a week but hours of access are limited, no evening access)
- Available to join the BBCT, volunteers, and members of the public on a Bee Safari on Wednesday 2 August 2023.
- A good communicator, who is comfortable sharing work with diverse audiences during pre-planned public events across the commission timeline, and digitally, as appropriate.
- Independent, resilient and resourceful
- Genuinely interested in the aims and values of the BBCT and in using art as a tool for positive social and environmental change

How to apply:

Applications are by email only. To apply, please send a proposal to gurinder.atwal@bumblebeeconservation.org including all of the following:

An email detailing:

- Your name, contact details, social media handles & website details (if you have one)

Saved together as one PDF:

- An artist statement (no more than 200 words), introducing your practice
- A short statement (no more than 500 words) that describes:
 1. How you will respond to the commission opportunity (how you will approach the brief and use the residency)
 2. An outline of your idea for the commission (what you propose to make, use of materials, how you plan to achieve the idea within the timescales indicated – see **Key Dates**)
- An up-to-date CV
- An outline budget showing how you will use the commission budget. This should include indicative costs for materials, fabrication/weatherproofing, installation etc.

Visuals:

- A maximum of 6 images, evidencing your current art practice and recent work produced within the last 3 years.

Key Dates

Submissions open week commencing: 29 May 2023

Submissions close: 26 June 2023, 9am

Shortlisting week commencing: 26 June 2023

Selected artist advised: 30 June 2023

Unsuccessful applicants advised: 30 June 2023

Announcement of selected artist: 3 July 2023

Please note: for capacity reasons, we are unable to engage in feedback to unsuccessful applicants.

Residency: 11 July – 24 September 2023

Deadline for final commission design: 11 August 2023

Bee Safari: 2 August 2023

Open studio event: 19 August 2023

Installation and launch of Legacy artwork commission: Spring 2024 TBC