

FINDING MAINDEE COMMISSION - ARTIST'S BRIEF

Ideas:People:Places Project, Maindee Library, Newport



Budget: £13,000, inclusive of VAT

Project Duration: August – November 2018

Deadline for Applications: Midnight 25 July 2018

Interviews scheduled for: 07 August 2018

Maindee Unlimited are inviting applications from Sound Artists to produce a new art installation for the newly refurbished Maindee Library building, a volunteer-run community space in Maindee on the eastern side of Newport city centre. The commissioned work will be situated and made in response to aspects of the social and cultural ecology of Maindee and will form part of the wider *Finding Maindee: Mappa Maindee* programme. The commission will culminate in a launch event at Maindee Library in November 2018. This will mark the end of the *Ideas: People: Places* project in Maindee but will also signal the start of a programme of arts & cultural events and activities that Maindee Unlimited plan to continue to host in the newly refurbished library, known as *Maindee Library +*.

This commission is part of *Finding Maindee* – a three-year project supported by the Arts Council of Wales' [Ideas: People: Places](#) strategic programme, which aims to test new models of regeneration and collaboration through the arts. The project is part-funded by the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation, Garfield Weston Charitable Trust, the Landfill Tax Credit Scheme through Newport City Council and others.

More information about *Finding Maindee: Mappa Maindee* is available [here](#).

The commission is being co-curated by Jo Sutton ([Maindee Unlimited](#)) and Sarah Pace ([Addo](#)).

1. Context

Maindee is a large inner-city commercial and residential area on the central eastern side of Newport in south Wales. The library is at the western end of Chepstow Road: a collection of bakers, bookies, butchers and backstreet boozers that used to typify British urban life until the 1980s. Multiple retailers have recently left Chepstow Road (such as the Co-Op and Greggs) but there is vibrancy from smaller shops and a Wetherspoon and Boots. The library building has been at the centre of community life in the area, since a reading room was established in the former Edwardian fire station building when it was vacated by the fire service after WWII. Until 2015 Newport City Council ran the ground floor of the building as a library. Following local authority funding cuts and closure, the library has been reopened and run on a voluntary basis as both a library and community space since October 2015 and has been at the heart of the *Finding Maindee* project. The library building is currently undergoing refurbishment as part of the *Finding Maindee* Project and has been renamed *Maindee Library +* as its function and use have moved beyond that of a conventional library.

Finding Maindee is part of the Arts Council of Wales' *Ideas: People: Places* initiative (2013 – 2018), which “aims to embed the arts in a genuine and meaningful way, in a small number of imaginative, ambitious and innovative regeneration projects” (<http://www.arts.wales/arts-in-wales/ideas-people-places>). Therefore, the project seeks “to use the arts and creative community practice to develop a range of projects and commissions that help redefine the identity of Maindee and support a new sense of viability and sustainability” (<http://www.maindee.org/finding-maindee>). There are three strands to *Finding Maindee*:

1. [Street Media](#) – an initiative designed to help young residents (under 25s) of Maindee to use media and film by offering peer-based mentoring and support and training and resources for those interested in exploring film and media as a career route.
2. *Mappa Maindee* – a programme of work focusing on community engagement through literal and metaphorical mapping activities that uses data, research methods, artist-led activity and signposting processes to create a series of multi-layered maps of the area.
3. [New Paths](#) – a fund scheme offering up to £2,500 for creative projects that would help ‘find Maindee’ and are in keeping with *Finding Maindee*'s socially-engaged and inclusive approach to regeneration that holds the Maindee community at its heart.

Rather than simply awarding funds, New Paths moved towards a collaborative model, based on a monthly gathering, in which artists were encouraged to work with each other to develop projects that make links to other creative projects in the locality, fostered an artist support network and offered mentoring and/or training opportunities where necessary.

A range of projects developed by local individuals, organisations, artists and creative practitioners was funded through *New Paths*. Notable projects have included:

- [Mr and Mrs Clark - Invite the Neighbours around to Paint](#). This week of activity took place on the land across the road from the library and started to explore the

relationships between people, space and place that we would like to develop through the library. Reflections on this experience are detailed on our [blog](#) and some of Gareth Clark's own reflections on the week can be found [here](#).

- **Marion Cheung – [Maindee Stories: The Fabric of our Lives](#).** The aim of 'Maindee Stories' was to get people from diverse backgrounds together, to share ideas and stories about Maindee whilst exchanging textile skills. From it, a large textile piece was produced, which embeds ideas about place through story telling and exploring historical aspects of the area. Marion was also the Project Coordinator for, A Thousand Voices, a Heritage Lottery Funded project working with the community to collect and archive the stories and histories of Community House, a community space in Maindee.
- **Rohan Bishop – [Sounds Alive](#).** Rohan ran weekly music workshops at the library in which participants developed a unique recording process and explored various sound creation and manipulation techniques.
- **Stuart Farnsworth - [Maindee Nonsense](#).** Local artist Stuart Farnsworth used Maindee as a geographical canvas to meet people, to challenge the conventional methods used in state-sponsored Census and explore how we manage to find meaning within the data collected. Audio recordings were taken of hundreds of interviews with residents of Maindee and a publication was produced from the transcriptions. Stuart has teamed up with another local organisation, Operasonic, to produce the [Nonsense Opera](#): an operatic reading of the interview transcripts.
- **Robert Smith - [Sounds of Maindee](#).** Robert received funding to produce a sonic topographic interpretation of Maindee that recorded and mapped sounds that give a glimpse into the lives of Maindee and Chepstow Road. The project also looked at ways to archive existing work and to make it available to the community.
- **Community House Eton Road – Community Mural.** This was the final award from the New Paths Fund. Community House Eton Road will be running a project to create a mural, representing the diverse cultures, both past and present, from the Maindee area. The project idea was devised by Brian Selby and taps into stories uncovered by the [A Thousand Voices project](#) - a Heritage Lottery funded project run by Community House in Maindee which sought to capture the history of the building and the stories of people connected to it.

Through the activities outlined above, the *Finding Maindee* project has questioned received ideas of 'urban regeneration' that largely focused on capital developments. It has instead sought to find new ways of working and connecting people through creativity and engagement with the arts and to draw on the experience, skills and ambitions of volunteers and local individuals, groups and businesses to develop Maindee and its library as a space run by and for local people. The *Finding Maindee* [project blog](#) articulates this approach and details the recent refurbishment of the library and other project activities.

Finding Maindee is now in its third year and so a great deal of work has been undertaken to date, including: an on going programme of cultural activities and artist interventions; a series of surveys, feasibility studies leading to the redevelopment of the Maindee Library building; and the establishment of a broad and committed network of volunteers, community groups and individuals passionate about the future of Maindee Library. The projects commissioned so far have been designed to tactically engage the widest possible cross section of the local community in activity that begins to address local social, economic and environmental decline. Working in consultation with the curators and other key stakeholders as relevant, it is expected that the appointed Artist will build on these foundations, drawing on and connecting with the research, knowledge, networks, outcomes and information garnered and produced to date to inform their approach.

2. Project Governance and Consultation/Collaboration with Community Members and Key Stakeholders

The project commissioner is Maindee Unlimited (MU), with support from the Arts Council of Wales (ACW). Maindee Unlimited is a charity set up in 2014 with the aim of transforming Maindee into a sustainable community with a strong local identity, strong local economy and a reputation as an attractive, safe, culturally vibrant and cohesive place to live, work and relax. The organisation is built on an annual arts festival that started in 1997 and has undertaken a number of activities as part of the wider *Finding Maindee* project.

A Steering Group has been established for the commission, made up of the curators, representation from ACW and Maindee Unlimited and Library Volunteers. The Artist will need to consult with the Steering Group at key stages in the development of the commission and participate in wider communications as appropriate. The main point of contact for the Artist will be Sarah Pace, Co-Director of Addo, who, working in collaboration with Jo Sutton (Maindee Unlimited) has been designated as project manager for the commission. Jo Sutton and Sarah Pace will co-curate the commission.

The Artist is also encouraged to liaise with local individuals and groups, and previous and current *Finding Maindee* Artists/Creative Practitioners, as appropriate for the form and content of their proposed work. The curators and steering group will be able to support this.

3. Expectations of the Commission

This opportunity is open to UK-based Sound Artists. We also welcome applications from partnerships/groups/studio practices. Applicants must demonstrate:

- Creative originality, artistic quality and professionalism in their work;
- The ability and desire to work openly and collaboratively as part of their creative practice;
- A self-motivated, energetic and pro-active work ethic;
- A willingness to immerse themselves in the life and culture of the area;
- A critical awareness of the roles that artists and cultural activity may/may not play in the regeneration of communities;
- An awareness of and willingness to abide by the laws for working with children and vulnerable adults, should they undertake such work as part of the project;
- Proven ability to deliver high quality art works on time and within budget.

The appointed Artist will also undertake the following:

- Produce a proposal for their art work following an initial Research & Development (R&D) period;
- Attend and make presentations of their work and proposal as required/appropriate and in keeping with the *Finding Maindee* project's community consultation and engagement programme;
- Provide detailed costings for their art work proposals and manage these in consultation with the project manager;
- Provide information as required for communications purposes and agree for the work to be documented for promotional, evaluation and archival purposes;
- Engage with the *Finding Maindee* programme and work with the curators towards the commission launch event in Maindee Library+ in November 2018;
- Hold and provide evidence of relevant public and products liability insurance and professional indemnity insurance, and take responsibility for any third party contractors engaged in the implementation of their proposals;
- Ensure the production of the agreed artwork within the project timeframe and its delivery to site, in conjunction with the client;
- Take responsibility for and oversee the artwork installation procedures and costs to be determined;
- Observe CDM regulations where appropriate.

In collaboration with the Curators and Steering Group, give detailed consideration to the following in the development of their designs:

- Issues of Health and Safety both in the design proposal and realization;
- Methodology;
- Material and structural integrity;
- Long-term upkeep and use.
- Provide maintenance instructions on completion of installation with clear guidelines as to the best method of maintaining artworks and any specialist treatment/knowledge that is necessary. The Artist should also indicate the anticipated life span of the work and any decommissioning procedures that should be applied.

4. Constraints

Currently there are no identified constraints, beyond those of the capacity of the library space, which the Artist will need to consider in developing their proposals. However, the Artist will need to address any constraints that arise during the R&D period in consultation with the Curators and Steering Group (for example, that the proposals are eligible within the funding provided by the Arts Council of Wales and deliverable and sustainable in terms of revenue costs, risk, robustness and available timescales and budgets). Works must be produced with due care to the Equalities Act (2010) and health and safety issues.

The idea of a Sound artwork in a library may seem incongruous but the Maindee Library + building is a multifunctional space that accommodates a range of activities, including AV presentations. For example, weekly [Sounds Alive sessions](#) held at the Library have explored both the practicalities of music workshops in the space and the sonic capacity of the building. The use of the space will need to be considered by the Artist in consultation with the Curators and wider Stakeholders when deciding how the artwork should be

presented, for example, considering the use of headphones, online apps, directional speakers, sensors, etc. or a combination of these.

5. Project Schedule

This is a deliberately open brief within a two-stage commissioning process that will allow for a research and development phase (Phase 1 – R & D) prior to agreeing the proposal for production and implementation (Phase 2 - Implementation) within the available timescale.

Artist Appointment

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| Midnight 25 July 2018 | Deadline for applications |
| 30 July 2018 | Panel shortlist artists for interview |
| 30 July 2018 | Invitations for interview issued to shortlisted artists |
| 07 August 2018 | Artist Interviews |
| 10 August 2018 | Selected Artist Appointed |
| 10 August 2018 | Artist's Induction Day (including, site visit and introduction to key stakeholders, opportunities and information) |

***** Artists must be available for interview on 07 August 2018 and for the Artist's Induction Day on 10 August 2018 *****

Phase 1 – R & D

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| 13 August – 14 Sept 2018 | It is expected that a proportion of this time will be spent in Newport, consulting with the Curators and Steering Group and undertaking research, community consultation and participation activities as appropriate and specified in the brief. |
| w/c 17 September 2018 | Consultation with and approval of the commission proposal and budget by the Maindee Library Working Group |

Phase 2 – Implementation & Installation

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| 24 Sept – 14 Nov 2018 | Production and installation of artwork. |
| November 2018 | Artwork Launch Event (exact date t.b.c.) |
| End of November 2018 | Project must be completed by 30 November 2018, in line with the <i>Finding Maindee</i> programme and funding streams. |

6. Fees and budget

The total project budget is £13,000 (inclusive of VAT), which is allocated as follows:

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|------------|---|
| £2,500.00 | Artist's Fee for R&D Phase |
| £10,500.00 | Project Delivery Budget, including Artist's Fee and any sub-contractor fees, materials and equipment needed to deliver the commission. The breakdown of this budget will be proposed and developed by the Artist in consultation with the project curators and will be subject to approval by the Steering Group. |

Artist's Fees are based on a day rate of £250 (inclusive of VAT, travel and disbursements).

There is a separate budget of £1,500 (inclusive of VAT) allocated towards the publicity, hosting and documentation of the launch event, which will be managed by the project Curators in consultation with the Steering Group.

7. How to Apply:

The recruitment process is being managed by curatorial agency [Addo](#). To apply, please submit the following information to commissions@addocreative.com by Midnight 25 July 2018:

- Up to 10 digital sound bites/images and if desired, a 10-minute (max) show-reel. All work should be numbered and include, title, date, dimensions/scope, media, details of the project that they relate to and the relevance to your application;
- Up-to-date CV(s);
- A brief letter of application that outlines why you are interested in this opportunity and how it is relevant to your practice;
- Two referees that can testify to your suitability to undertake the commission.

We will select based on the quality and relevance of past work to the brief. **Please note:**

- that we do not require proposals at this stage because it is expected that the appointed artist will develop these through a period of research and interaction with the building and key stakeholders;
- when sending large files (over 4MB), please provide hyperlinks to online files or send via DropBox / WeTransfer. Any applications received by email containing files over 4MB will not be considered.

8. Selection Process

Addo, the Curators and the Steering Group will shortlist up to 5 candidates for interview from the applications received. Interviews will take place at Maindee Library+, 79 Chepstow Rd, Newport NP19 8BY

Candidates must be available for interview on the date – **07 August 2018**.

Invitations to interview will be sent out on **30 July 2018**. Those interviewed may reclaim up to £100 reasonable travel and subsistence expenses incurred by attending an interview.

At interview, interviewees will be expected to speak in more detail about their past work and working processes and the approach that they envisage taking towards the commission. They will be asked to present examples of their past work and will be assessed following the interview based on their past work and initial responses (**not** proposals) to the brief.

The interviews will involve a half-day commitment and will include a tour of the building, a 20-minute presentation by the artist, followed by 20 minutes of questions and discussion. The interview panel will consist of representatives of Maindee Unlimited, the library volunteers and Arts Council of Wales. The interview schedule and information of panel members will be distributed prior to interview.

Maindee Unlimited is committed to equal opportunities and all applications will be judged according to the criteria set out above, purely on merit and without prejudice.

If you have any queries regarding this opportunity, please email:
commissions@addocreative.com.