Community Open Week 2024

Freelance artist call for proposals: ‘Networks' participatory artwork

About Kew Gardens

RBG Kew is a world leading organisation in plant science and conservation, as well as a popular visitor attraction. Our mission is to understand and protect plants and fungi for the well-being of people and the future of all life on Earth. Kew Gardens delivers a comprehensive learning programme, including a vibrant community and access offer. This is a key part of our Manifesto for Change, to achieve priorities to ‘extend our reach’ and ‘inspire people to protect the natural world’.

About Community Open Week

Kew Gardens will host our fifth Community Open Week from 22 to 26 May 2024. This is a free event, for groups and individuals who may face barriers to visiting the Gardens to connect with the wonder of our collections, science, horticulture and heritage. It will involve workshops, talks, games and other interactive activities for all ages. The event will build on the success of the previous Community Open Week, which was held in May 2023 and engaged over 5000 people.

Artist Opportunity

For Community Open Week 2024, we are looking for an experienced visual artist to lead the planning and delivery of an ambitious participatory artwork. Visitors will participate in the creation of this artwork, which will develop over the five days. The theme for the event is “networks”, which should be interpreted in relation to our focus on plants, conservation, and community. We invite proposals that empower participants to get creative, engage in dialogue about the environment and share in the joy of creating a stunning, celebratory artwork.

The artist will ensure that the activity is engaging, accessible and inclusive for a large number of diverse participants. Trained event assistants and / or volunteers will be available to support the delivery. The Community Open Week Coordinator and the Community and Access Learning Manager will be responsible for liaising with wider teams at Kew.

Requirements of the role

- A demonstrable artistic practice that focuses on participatory and socially engaged projects.
- Experience of working with diverse community audiences and leading activities with a proactive, enthusiastic approach.
- Experience of working in a heritage, cultural or similar environment (i.e. a Botanic Garden, Museum or Art Gallery).
- Excellent oral communication skills and interpersonal skills.
- Knowledge and experience of Safeguarding and Health and Safety policies and procedures.
- An enthusiasm for nature, conservation, and plant science.
- This role is subject to an Enhanced DBS check.
Time commitment

The freelancer will need to be available to start work on the project planning from early February 2024 and maintain engagement until early June 2024. They will need to have some general availability on Tuesdays or Wednesdays for planning purposes and then have full availability from 22 to 26 May 2024. They may be required to support the get-in on 21 May and the get-out on 27 May, depending on the nature of the artwork / activity.

Budget

The maximum amount available for this work is £4000, including artist fee, materials and any other associated costs.

Location and space

During Community Open Week the activity and artwork will be in a large stretch. The tent will be 21 x 12 metres and we anticipate that the activity will take up most or all of this space. Though under cover, this space is still considered ‘outdoors’ and the artist is encouraged to consider the effects of different weather conditions in their proposal. At this stage we are unsure if the artwork will be able to be exhibited at Kew Gardens after Community Open Week but we are open to any ideas outlining the potential legacy of the project.

Key deliverables

- Development and delivery of a participatory artwork to be held during Community Open Week 2024, ensuring high quality, accessible opportunities for diverse audiences.
- Sourcing and purchase of all project materials.
- Consistent and clear communication with the Community Open Week Coordinator to ensure adequate support is provided.
- Provide copy to the Community Open Week Coordinator for promotional materials.
- Participate in a post-event evaluation debrief with the Community Open Week Coordinator.

How to apply

To apply for this freelance position, please send:

- your CV (no more than two pages)
- a cover letter outlining your interest in the role (no more than one page)
- a project proposal including a budget (no more than 500 words),

Applications should be made to the Community Open Week Coordinator at communityvacancy@kew.org stating ‘Community Open Week Artist Application’ in the subject line.

The deadline for applications is Tuesday 22 January 2024.