

# **Live Art**

## **Frequently Asked Questions, Top Tips, and Useful Lists**

The staff of Artsadmin, the Live Art Development Agency and New Work Network have compiled this information and advice resource. It is intended to be a starting point for artists who work in Live Art and who are at the start of their career.

Just as the practice of every artist is different, so are their professional developments needs. We therefore encourage each artist to treat the information provided here as a springboard for their own self-directed research.

### **What is Live Art?**

Live Art is an umbrella term encompassing a range of performance, performative and time-based practices that are unrestricted by artform boundaries.

There are many useful summary texts about Live Art available online, including:

Joshua Sofaer's *What is Live Art?*

[www.joshuasofaer.com/texts/exhibit\\_wila.html](http://www.joshuasofaer.com/texts/exhibit_wila.html)

*What is Live Art?* on the Live Art Development Agency website

[www.thisisliveart.co.uk/about\\_us/what\\_is\\_live\\_art.html](http://www.thisisliveart.co.uk/about_us/what_is_live_art.html)

### **Where can I go to find out more about Live Art?**

The Live Art Development Agency has a Study Room, which is a free, open access research facility for anyone interested in Live Art. The Study Room houses an extensive library of Live Art related publications, dvds, videos, cd-roms, magazines, journals, artists' materials, and other information.

[www.thisisliveart.co.uk/resources/index.html](http://www.thisisliveart.co.uk/resources/index.html)

Unbound is an online shop for Live Art books and dvds. It is a one-stop shop for everything Live. Unbound specialises in publications, dvds and artefacts related to contemporary art practices: from experimental theatre to body art, from the history of performance art to performance theory, from digital performance to art activism.

[www.thisisunbound.co.uk/](http://www.thisisunbound.co.uk/)

The best way to find out more about Live Art is to go and see as much work as possible. Get connected and find out what's on by subscribing to e-lists (see below).

*Guerilla Performance and Multimedia* by Leslie Hill and Helen Paris (ISBN 0-8264-5330-9) is an excellent resource written for artists by artists. It's full of advice about how to go about your practice and career. If you want to buy a copy it's a hard book to find but there is a reference copy at the Live Art Development Agency Study Room.

### **What are Artsadmin, the Live Art Development Agency and New Work Network and how do they assist artists?**

#### **Artsadmin**

Artsadmin makes art happen - from the first seeds of an artist's idea to its full and final realisation. Working across the spectrum of theatre, visual arts, dance, live art and performance, it provides a unique resource for contemporary artists. Artsadmin produces, supports and promotes arts projects locally, nationally and internationally,

developing long-term relationships with artists, often working in partnership with other producers, promoters and festivals.

Artsadmin also provides free advice and information to artists at all stages of their career working in live art and performance, and time-based media. We can advise you about your work and direction, opportunities, funding, programmers and curators, and networks as well as signpost you to other supportive organisations.

For advice or to make an appointment contact one of our advisors, Manick Govinda or Nikki Tomlinson at: [advisoryservice@artsadmin.co.uk](mailto:advisoryservice@artsadmin.co.uk) or +44(0)20 7247 5102.

[www.artsadmin.co.uk](http://www.artsadmin.co.uk)

[www.artsadmin.co.uk/opportunities/resources.php?category=10017](http://www.artsadmin.co.uk/opportunities/resources.php?category=10017)

### **Live Art Development Agency**

The Live Art Development Agency is the leading development organisation for Live Art in the UK. The Agency offers a portfolio of Resources, Professional Development Schemes, and Projects and Initiatives for the support and development of Live Art practices and critical discourses. The Agency works strategically, in partnership, and in consultation with artists and organisations in the cultural sector.

[www.thisisLiveArt.co.uk](http://www.thisisLiveArt.co.uk)

### **New Work Network**

New Work Network (NWN) supports the development of the new work sector which includes, but is not limited to: new performance, live and interdisciplinary arts practice.

As an artist-led membership organisation, with widespread UK regional involvement and international representation, NWN focuses on facilitating engagement and collaboration between arts practitioners. It does this by providing access to new ideas and opportunities and through developing networking opportunities and meeting points as spaces for dialogue, collective action and collaboration.

NWN is also an advocacy and lobbying organisation that represents the need of the sector and the people within it. Via the website and live events, it signposts, shares models best practice, maps and archives the new work scene.

[www.newworknetwork.org.uk](http://www.newworknetwork.org.uk)

## **Are there any other organisations that support artists working in Live Art?**

Many organisations support artists working in Live Art either through providing information and advice or providing opportunities to present work.

- Independent Theatre Council [www.itc-arts.org](http://www.itc-arts.org)
- Birmingham Artists [www.birminghamartists.com](http://www.birminghamartists.com)
- Midpoint- West Midlands artist network [www.midwest.org.uk](http://www.midwest.org.uk)
- Total Theatre [www.totaltheatre.org.uk](http://www.totaltheatre.org.uk)
- PANDA (Performance Art Development Agency), North West [www.panda-arts.org.uk](http://www.panda-arts.org.uk)
- Performance Initiative Network [www.perform.tv](http://www.perform.tv)

- Theatre Advisor at Oval House (for London based artists) [www.ovalhouse.com/advisor/index.php](http://www.ovalhouse.com/advisor/index.php)
- Theatre Bristol [www.theatrebristol.net](http://www.theatrebristol.net)
- Independent Theatre Council (ITC) [www.itc-arts.org](http://www.itc-arts.org)
- Live Art UK. A good link to 'key' Live Art organisations in the UK [www.liveartuk.org](http://www.liveartuk.org)
- A-N. The Artists' Information Company. In particular seek out information about NAN (networking), Interface (critical writing on-line) and AIR
- [www.a-n.co.uk](http://www.a-n.co.uk)
- Artquest [www.artquest.org.uk](http://www.artquest.org.uk)
- Black Arts Alliance [www.blackartists.org.uk](http://www.blackartists.org.uk)

## **What about presenting work? Where should I start?**

Often the best opportunity for artists to present their work early on in their career is at 'platform' events. These events often show the work of many artists in a short space of time and to a supportive audience. They are excellent opportunities to try out work in front of an audience and to network with other artists at a similar point in their career.

The best place to find about these opportunities is through the e-lists and discussions groups (see the next section) but opportunities include the following events and organizations:

- Arts Depot- managed Depot Untapped, a festival of new and experimental performance work [www.artsdepot.co.uk](http://www.artsdepot.co.uk)
- SPILL festival- includes a national platform for emergent artists [www.spillfestival.com](http://www.spillfestival.com)
- Performance Initiative Network (run by Brunel University) – run Scene Pool [www.perform.tv](http://www.perform.tv)
- Camden People's Theatre - Sprint festival and Tonic (London) [www.cpttheatre.co.uk](http://www.cpttheatre.co.uk)
- East End Collaborations – Live Art Development Agency and Queen Mary, University of London
- Battersea Arts Centre- scratch nights and The Graduates [www.bac.org.uk](http://www.bac.org.uk)
- Nottedance festival, Nottingham- managed by Dance4 [www.dance4.co.uk](http://www.dance4.co.uk)
- New Work Yorkshire - Artist-led network for Yorkshire based practitioners based, incl. the Perambulator platform. Contact Sarah Spanton: [sarahspanton@googlemail.com](mailto:sarahspanton@googlemail.com)
- Rules and Regs (national) [www.rulesandregs.org](http://www.rulesandregs.org)
- Rational Rec (London) [www.rationalrec.org.uk](http://www.rationalrec.org.uk)
- Platform North East [www.platformnortheast.org](http://www.platformnortheast.org)

- PILOT- West Midlands, run by Kindle Theatre and supported by China Plate
- [www.chinaplatetheatre.com](http://www.chinaplatetheatre.com)
- Nuff Said, Nuffield Theatre, Lancaster [www.nuffieldtheatre.com](http://www.nuffieldtheatre.com) Contact Alice Booth, Projects and Artist Support Officer – [alice@nuffieldtheatre.com](mailto:alice@nuffieldtheatre.com)
- hAb and Digital Summer (Tamsin Drury) [www.digitalsummer.org/dsanim.html](http://www.digitalsummer.org/dsanim.html)
- The Green Room, Manchester – Emergency Platform [www.greenroomarts.org](http://www.greenroomarts.org)
- The Basement, Arts Production South East [www.thebasement.uk.com](http://www.thebasement.uk.com)
- Fierce! (West Midlands) [www.fiercetv.co.uk](http://www.fiercetv.co.uk)
- Mayfest in Bristol – across different venues
- Warwick Art Centre- Bite-size festival [www.warwickartscentre.co.uk](http://www.warwickartscentre.co.uk)
- Wunderbar festival (North West) [wunderbarfestival.co.uk](http://wunderbarfestival.co.uk)
- Matrix Arts Projects- based in Carlisle, run platform events focusing on international exchange [www.matrixartprojects.org](http://www.matrixartprojects.org)
- Arnolfini- 'I Am Your Worst Nightmare' platforms and Live Art Weekenders
- Forest Fringe, Scotland [www.forestfringe.blogspot.com](http://www.forestfringe.blogspot.com)

## **Where can I find up-to-date information about Live Art activities and opportunities?**

We recommend that all artists keep well connected through subscribing to one or more of the Live Art e-lists and discussions groups.

### **New Work Network**

New Work Network Membership notifications:

A membership network for those involved in new work. Join online and build a website profile. Members receive email notifications to keep in touch with recent activities covering: online forum debate, upcoming events, artists' projects and opportunities.

Join online at: [www.newworknetwork.org.uk/register.php](http://www.newworknetwork.org.uk/register.php)

### **ArtsAdmin E-digest**

A comprehensive e-mail digest from ArtsAdmin that covers information about opportunities, employment, training, conferences, calls for artists, professional development, networking, ....

To subscribe to the ArtsAdmin e-digest list go to:

<http://www.artsadmin.co.uk/opportunities/e-digest.php?id=31>

### **Live Art Discussion List**

A comprehensive and active discussion list with information and debate relating to Live Art, performance art and new performance. Often includes calls for artists, artists' opportunities, 'what's on', funding and commissions info.

Subscribe to the list by visiting:

Website: [www.jiscmail.ac.uk/lists/liveart.html](http://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/lists/liveart.html)

### **criticalnetwork**

criticalnetwork is a website and e-bulletin, covering art events of the week ahead, with

relevant information about artists, organisations, publications and opportunities, all recommended by criticalnetwork. A collective of UK-based practicing artists maintains the content of criticalnetwork. There is a specific focus on activity in the UK and Ireland, concentrating on critical and contextual art, events and discussion.

Subscribe to the list by visiting:

Website: [www.criticalnetwork.co.uk/](http://www.criticalnetwork.co.uk/)

### **Other useful e-groups**

Artvehicle

Runriot

Artrabbit

E-Flux

Kultureflash

Flavorpill

Artartart (Matt Roberts Arts)

Etcetera (Disability Cultural Projects)

Southwark Arts Forum

Creative Capital

CIDA

### **Where should I look to find funding for my work?**

We recommend that when it comes to funding you should make sure you fully research your options, be realistic in your planning, read the available information, and talk to any available funding advisors.

When starting in your career the best sources of funding are often those close at hand – support from a regional initiative or local authority. Many artists also balance a paying ‘day-job’ with their professional practice. If however your project requires more funding then here are some places to start looking:

Arts Council England - Grants for the Arts  
[www.artscouncil.org.uk/funding/index.php](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/funding/index.php)

Awards For All  
[www.awardsforall.org.uk](http://www.awardsforall.org.uk)

Tower Hamlets Arts Forum. A good local authority funding guide  
[www.lbthartsandevents.info/](http://www.lbthartsandevents.info/)

DCMS (Department of Culture Media and Sport) Guide on arts funding  
[www.culture.gov.uk/reference\\_library/publications/3597.aspx](http://www.culture.gov.uk/reference_library/publications/3597.aspx)

### **What is the best way to represent my work?**

There will be many times in your career when you need to represent your practice to others – a one on one artist advice session, a submission for a commission, a funding application, etc. When the time comes think carefully about how you can best present / represent yourself, and at the same time think about what the person / people you are presenting to want to know about you and what you do. Remember, that there is unlikely to be ‘one’ package that you have but rather a selection of ‘components’ you can package together.

We would suggest that there are three key areas that you must always address:

Content what its about (and why)

Form what it looks like / how it works

Context – how it relates to the sector and its history; how it relates to what the venue / funder / commissioner is doing / interested in; and how it relates to what

other artists are doing

If you are preparing a package of information to give someone or to submit with an application then ask yourself some of the following questions. The answers to these questions can often be found by applying common sense and / or the person you are preparing the information for can provide them.

- Should I provide documentation of my work (maybe a dvd of a full performance) or a promotional package (like a showreel with edited highlights)?
- How much material should I provide?
- What form should my documentation / package take – dvd, images, text?
- Should I include a cv (a list of what I've done) or a biog (a more discursive approach)?
- Should I include press clippings, reviews or testimonials? If I don't have any available can I arrange for someone who has seen my work – eg university tutor – to write something for me?

If you are writing a proposal you should ask yourself:

Have I covered all the bases – ie have I made sure all the 'required' information (such as addressing guidelines of an application procedure) is included?

What should the tone of my writing be – hard-sell or background information?

Do I want a reaction / response? If yes, have I built in a mechanism for this response (such as 'please let me know if you will be able to attend my performance')?

Our four top tips, in relation to preparing written statements about your work are:

1. To make sure you write a short (paragraph) and long (page) version early on in the development of your project and continually update and revise these statements as your project progresses. Preparing statements at this early stage will ensure that you can clearly articulate your ideas and that you have material 'ready to go' if someone requests it.
2. Get a friend to read a draft with 'fresh eyes'. You'd be surprised how much needless jargon is used in writing proposals. Ask your friend to 'put themselves in the shoes of the reader'.
3. Be sure to provide the information that is 'required'. This almost always includes the content, form and context.
4. Target your proposal. Make sure your material is written for the person who is going to read it. And if you are writing a letter never use 'dear sir/madam' instead do some basic research and identify the name of the person you want to communicate with.

### **What one thing do I need to remember?**

Don't forget that you are an artist! Your work and artistic ideas are your main asset. You need to keep your ideas fresh and refreshed. And you need to work towards 'knowing' your ideas and how best to communicate them to others.