

Open Call
Reimagining Play at Dulwich Picture Gallery



1

The commission

Dulwich Picture Gallery has partnered with the London Festival of Architecture (LFA) to create a site-specific, playable sculptural installation for the Gallery's new sculpture garden. Architects, designers, and artists are invited to submit their ideas for a unique installation that will invite wonder and play from audiences of all ages, while welcoming visitors to the Gallery.

This new competition is a unique opportunity for a creative designer or design team to gain a public commission that bridges the intersection between art, architecture and design. A child's perspective sits at the heart of this brief and strong collaboration with the Gallery's Programme and Engagement team on addressing local audiences will be essential to its success.

The commission will have a long-term home (c. 10 years) within the garden and is planned to be installed in spring/summer 2026. The winning team will be announced in December 2024 and awarded a budget of c.£80,000 to develop and deliver their design in partnership with Dulwich Picture Gallery and its audiences.

Context

Dulwich Picture Gallery

Dulwich Picture Gallery is an internationally renowned art gallery and registered charity which has made great art accessible for the public ever since it opened its doors and set the blueprint for museums in 1817. With an iconic collection of European masterpieces and a dynamic programme of exhibitions, events, and community initiatives, we are passionate about engaging audiences and bringing art to life and life to art within our vibrant and creative spaces.

Dulwich Picture Gallery is the world's first purpose-built public art gallery. It houses a world class Collection of Old Masters, as well as innovative exhibitions that shine a light on lesser-known artists from the Baroque to the late 20th Century. Their mission is to maximise the Gallery's unique potential - its building, art, grounds, people and location - for future generations. The Gallery's vision is to be a welcoming, inspirational cultural destination for everybody, unlocking fresh perspectives through the art of the past and present.



Dulwich Picture Gallery interior

Open Art

This commission will have a long-term home within the new sculpture garden at Dulwich Picture Gallery which forms a key part of the Gallery's ambitious project '[Open Art](#)'. A series of enhancements and new developments across Dulwich Picture Gallery's site will fully integrate the gardens, transforming three acres of green space into a sculpture garden with a difference and securing this much loved and internationally renowned destination for future audiences.

The Gallery is working with leading architect practice Carmody Groarke and renowned landscape artist, Kim Wilkie to realise this next phase in the Gallery's journey. 'Open Art' is comprised of connected elements that will make the most of the entire extent of the site, enhancing previously underused areas and the experience for all visitors.

The key objectives of Dulwich Picture Gallery's Open Art project are to:

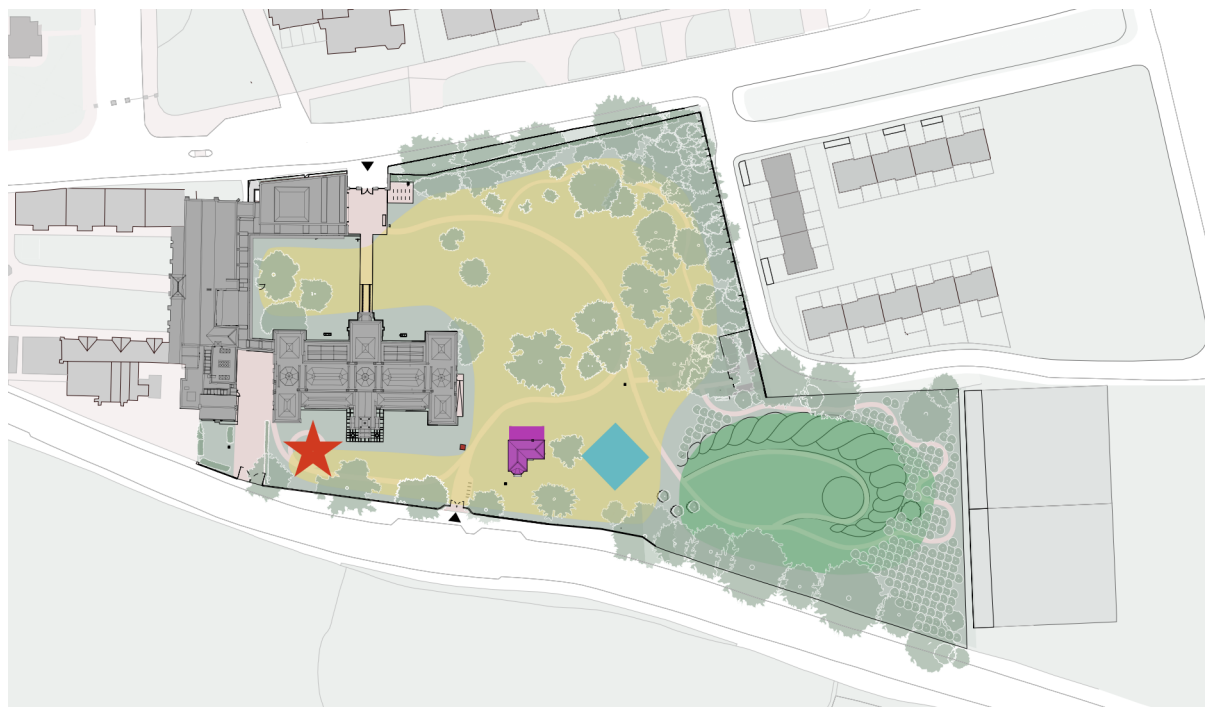
- Enhance and enrich opportunities for audiences to participate
- Grow and develop our audiences in a meaningful way
- Provide dynamic and engaging ways to connect with the collection
- Strengthen the business model sustainably

3

Site

This new commission will be displayed in the Gallery's gardens and the proposed site sits alongside the west front of the Gallery's Soane building.

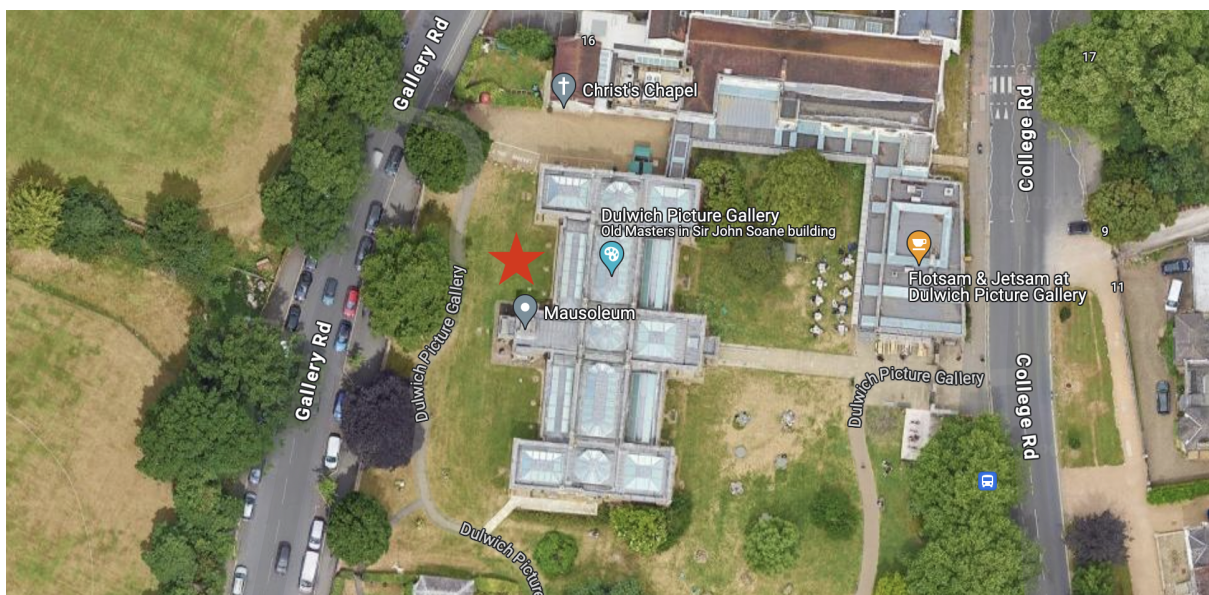
As part of the 'Open Art' project, a new entrance will be opened up alongside Gallery Road, improving overall access across the Gallery and encouraging use of the grounds to the west. The commission is likewise intended to encourage footfall to this previously underutilised area of the grounds.



The red star on this plan marks the approximate location of the new sculpture. The footprint of the installation is not specified or limited but will need to take into account health and safety measures and consider proximity to the listed building.



View of the exterior



Aerial view from Google Maps: the red star on this plan marks the approximate location of the new sculpture.

4

Design Requirement

Dulwich Picture Gallery are looking for a unique sculptural design that will not only contribute visually to their new sculpture garden but will be fully playable and prompt different ways of engaging with art in this space.

The key objectives of the project are to deliver a design that:

- Invites wonder and play from audiences of all ages
- Is informed by the voices and perspectives of primary aged children (4 - 11 years)
- Responds to the unique context of the site, creating a connection between the Gallery building, the artwork inside and the garden outside
- Is inclusive and welcoming to all families, children and individuals of all ages
- Is visually striking and engaging

Further guidance:

- Designs must be practical and realistic, whilst responding to the project objectives – evidence should be given that it is buildable within the budget
- Any winning design will be robust enough to withstand all weather conditions
- Where possible the final installation should be able to be constructed or assembled in situ
- Designs should also consider sustainability and require minimal maintenance
- Non-movable elements rather than movable elements are encouraged
- The Work is expected to be in place for a minimum of 10 years.
- The design should be accessible to the broadest possible audience. Concepts should be developed with an understanding of how the proposed design could contribute to the happiness, safety, and wellbeing of the wide-ranging individuals and groups using the gardens.
- The selected design will be subject to planning permission and approval, and will need to address the design's context within the curtilage of a historic building and located on metropolitan open land.

5

Public Engagement

Shortlisted teams will be required to engage with the local audiences identified by Dulwich Picture Gallery in the development of the design, including local community partners from Southwark, Lambeth and Lewisham. This will be facilitated initially as part of the competition process by LFA and the Gallery's Programme and Engagement Team.

The winning team will continue to engage with identified audiences after the competition phase to fully develop their design.

In addition, the winning team will be required to give one public talk about the artwork as part of Dulwich Picture Gallery's public programme.

6

Budget

The total budget available for delivery of this project is circa £80,000 including VAT. This needs to include all costs associated with implementation; materials, any necessary licenses/planning fees, maintenance*, other capital costs and contingency. Minimum contingency within the budget should be 10%, although we recommend allocating 15% contingency in your stage 2 proposal, if shortlisted.

The £80,000 budget outlined includes a maximum £10,000 designer fee to cover on-going design fees and other costs required to deliver the concept. Facilitation for co-design/consultation workshops must be factored into the overall budget and can sit outside the designer fee.

The winning team will be responsible for leading on the fabrication and installation of the design, whilst working closely with Dulwich Picture Gallery internal teams to facilitate the installation.

The winning team will be expected to undertake the following tasks:

- To develop a fully costed, feasible design that can be installed in Summer 2026
- Project management of the fabrication and installation of the winning design. They will be supported by the Curatorial and Programme and Engagement Team.

*Ongoing maintenance of the installation will be provided by Dulwich Picture Gallery's site team. This includes regular checks and cleaning, but not major works. Any significant planned maintenance over the 10 year period (e.g. replacement of parts) should be factored into your proposed budget at stage 2.

7

Submission requirements

Competition entries must be submitted through zealous.co before the deadline closes. This is a two-stage competition where you will be asked to submit an expression of interest alongside additional information through an application form. Shortlisted candidates will be awarded an honorarium of £1,000 to work up their designs and engage in participation workshops with target audiences at Dulwich Picture Gallery.

This first stage submission should include:

Your experience:

- Brief biographies of all the project team.
- A 200-word description about your practice along with any relevant technical and consultation experience acquired through previous projects.
- A selection of relevant previous work, including images.

Your response to the brief. Please provide reflections on the following prompts:

- The overall design brief - why you are interested in being involved in the project?
- What does play mean to you?
- How would you engage audiences to develop your design, if selected?

You can submit your response to these prompts in any format. For guidance, this should be a short paragraph of max. 300 words per prompt or 90 second video per prompt. Your experience and response to the brief should be presented in single PDF submission. Please note this should be no more than 10 pages and maximum 5MB.

Alternatively you can submit separate documents in multiple formats (e.g. video) but the content should not exceed the '10 page' limit, or equivalent.

No design work is required for the first stage.

To submit your entry please go here:

zealous.co/londonfestivalofarchitecture/opportunity/reimagining-play-dulwich-picture-gallery/

Shortlisting

Submissions will be shortlisted by the judging panel. Up to six shortlisted practices will then be invited to develop a design concept based on the information laid out in this open call and will be awarded an honorarium of £1,000 Inc. VAT each. The work required for the second phase of the project will be reflective of the honorarium sum.

At shortlisting, the second stage submission should include:

- Maximum 10-page document explaining your proposal to be shared with the jury for review, prior to interview. Your submission should include:
 - Detailed design drawings (we accept a variety of formats including hand or computer drawn 3D design visualisation)
 - Key construction details drawn to scale, with key dimensions noted
 - Outline budget*
 - Draft Risk Assessment and Method Statement for installation
 - Draft Risk Assessment for usage
 - Engagement plan
 - Maintenance plan
- PowerPoint presentation for the purposes of judging.

*If your practice is not VAT registered, you will need to consider this when preparing your budget.

Submission information

For any questions about the competition or submission process, please email:
info@londonfestivalofarchitecture.org

8

Eligibility

The competition is open to architects, landscape architects, designers and artists. We welcome collaborations; however, the project team must include a qualified architect or landscape architect.

We are inviting larger architecture or design practices to team up with smaller studios or other creatives for this project. If you are interested in forming a team or collaboration for this submission but don't already have the connections you need, please get in touch.

The judges encourage entries from, or collaborations with groups who are underrepresented in architecture and design and are particularly keen to hear from artists and collectives who identify as Black, Asian and minority ethnic, disabled and/or people from lower socio-economic backgrounds. Dulwich Picture Gallery is committed to ensuring that its programme, partnerships, and reach are inclusive. The commissioners will give priority to applications from artists with experience of working, living or studying within our key priority boroughs of Southwark, Lambeth and Lewisham.

9

Deadline and submission details

- Deadline for first submission is Thursday 5 September, 12pm (midday).
- Submissions received after time this will not be considered.
- For competition enquires please contact: info@londonfestivalofarchitecture.org
- We are using zealous.co to administrate our application process. To submit your expression of interest for this competition, you will need to set up a free login on zealous which will enable you to begin your submission as a Draft and save it as you go. You can find information about [how to submit via zealous here](#).
- To submit your entry please go here:
zealous.co/londonfestivalofarchitecture/opportunity/reimagining-play-dulwich-picture-gallery/

10

Schedule outline

Submissions open: 9 July

Online Q&A for interested applicants: 23 July, 12pm - 1pm. Register [here](#)

Submissions closed: Thursday 5 September, 12pm (midday)

Successful shortlisted teams notified: w/c 23 September

Site visit with shortlisted teams: 2 October

Public Engagement workshop with families: October Half Term (one half day between 29 October and 1 November)

Round 2 submission deadline: 13 November

Final judging / interviews: w/c 18 – w/c 25 November 2024

Winner notified: December 2024

11

Judging panel

Chantelle Culshaw, Dulwich Picture Gallery, Deputy Director

Helen Hillyard, Dulwich Picture Gallery, Curator

Yinka Ilori MBE, artist and designer

Krishan Nathaniel, Harrow Council, Principal Urban Designer

Councillor Richard Leeming, Southwark Council
Binki Taylor, The Brixton Project, Founding Partner

NLA Chair – Rosa Rogina, London Festival of Architecture, Director

12

Judging criteria

Round 1 Judging Criteria

- **Practice/Team profile (40%)** - Does the team have skilled professionals for delivering the proposal in line with eligibility outlined in the Open Call? Does the team have a diverse set of skills and experience? Are the previous work experiences and/or their work methodologies and wider design aspirations relevant to the competition?
- **Initial vision (30%)** - Does the proposal's initial written reflection to the brief suggest innovation, surprise and creativity? Does it explore a new and original way to use approach play, taking into consideration the unique site context?
- **Approach to Engagement (30%)** - Does the proposal include relevant experience of past engagement with children and/or community groups? Does it propose methodologies that would engage meaningfully with the audiences identified in the brief?

Round 2 Judging Criteria

- Overall design – 25%
- Costs – 20%
- Approach to environment and sustainability – 15%
- Longevity and implications for maintenance – 15%
- Contextual design and public engagement – 15%

13

Further information

- Submissions will be judged on originality, demonstration of creativity, relevance to the brief as well as feasibility and how the proposal works in the context of the site.
- To process entries to this competition we will share your application and any associated personal data provided on the application with our jury and competition partners.
- All applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application, but due to the volume of submissions we may not be able to provide feedback to entrants individually.
- Applicants may not be assisted in any way in their submission by members of the judging panel, the client body, organisers, members of their family, close business associates or employees.
- The ownership of Copyright of the design will be in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988, that is Copyright rests with the author of the submitted design.
- All designs remain the intellectual property of the designer however the winning design will itself when built will be the property of Dulwich Picture Gallery.
- Please bear in mind the project requires a fast turn around and may have peak moments when your practice will need to dedicate sufficient staff to deliver the project on time, to budget and to the high standard expected by all stakeholders.
- If your practice/collaboration is appointed to deliver the project it will need to have the following insurance: Employers Liability, Professional Indemnity, Public Liability.
- Significant efforts are made by all stakeholders of the project to ensure wide media coverage.
- LFA reserve the right to use images from the submissions for promotional purposes in press, social media and publications. All endeavours will be made to ensure accurate accreditation.

14

Access

Accessibility, diversity and inclusion are core values of the LFA at all levels of our organisation, and we are committed to delivering projects that are representative of the whole city and can be enjoyed by everyone. At the same time, we recognise that there are still significant barriers for groups in our society to be able to enjoy and participate in festival activity.

We will support with any resources and adjustments for anyone who needs it, to make applying for this role easier e.g. alternative document formats, interpreters, hybrid meetings. In the application form you will be asked how we can support you throughout the process; this will not influence your application.

www.londonfestivalofarchitecture.org/access/

15

Useful links

London Festival of Architecture

www.londonfestivalofarchitecture.org

Dulwich Picture Gallery

<https://www.dulwichpicturegallery.org.uk/>

Dulwich Picture Gallery Open Art

<https://www.dulwichpicturegallery.org.uk/about/open-art/>

The Past for the Present Project

<https://www.dulwichpicturegallery.org.uk/learning/access-and-participation/participation-projects/>

The Colour Palace, Dulwich Pavillion 2019, LFA

<http://2019.londonfestivalofarchitecture.org/event/dulwich-pavilion-2019-the-colour-palace/>

After Image, 2017, Dulwich Pavillion, LFA

<https://www.ifdo.co/projects/dulwich-pavilion>

16

Contact

To submit your entry please go here:

zealous.co/londonfestivalofarchitecture/opportunity/reimagining-play-dulwich-picture-gallery/

For general enquires please contact: info@londonfestivalofarchitectre.org

17

Disclaimer

The competition organisers are not liable for lost, misdirected, or late entries. Decisions of the jury represent their professional judgments and all decisions are final. While it is the intent to construct the winning scheme, the organisers reserve the right to not proceed with construction for any reason. Material submitted by you shall be your sole responsibility, shall not infringe or violate the rights of any other party or violate any laws, contribute to or encourage infringing or otherwise

unlawful conduct, or otherwise be obscene, objectionable, or in poor taste. By submitting such material, you are representing that you are the owner of such material and/or have all necessary rights, licenses, and authorization to distribute it.

16

Commissioning organisations

DULWICH PICTURE GALLERY

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<https://www.dulwichpicturegallery.org.uk/>

Facilitated by

The logo for the London Festival of Architecture (LFA) is displayed within a magenta rounded rectangle. It features the letters 'LFA' in a large, bold, white sans-serif font, followed by the words 'London Festival of Architecture' in a smaller, white sans-serif font.

The London Festival of Architecture (LFA) is a month-long celebration of architecture and city-making, taking place every June across London. Now in its 20th year, LFA's mission is to open up discussions around architecture, test new ideas and promote emerging talent. LFA brings together the public and built environment professionals for the whole month of June and seeks to inspire and engage our audience with a programme that showcases London as a global architecture hub. LFA is run by NLA, London's built environment community.

www.londonfestivalofarchitecture.org

X: @LFArchitecture

Instagram: @LondonFestivalofArchitecture