

Reimagining Play at Dulwich Picture Gallery

Q&A Session, 23 July 2024

The below document is a summary of the drop-in online Q&A session for prospective applicants to the Reimagining Play competition at Dulwich Picture Gallery (DPG). The session was conducted by Lydia Allain Chapman, Project Manager at LFA, and also attended by representatives from the Gallery.

Your team

Q: The project team requires the inclusion of a qualified architect: does this have to be part 3, or is part 2 sufficient?

The architect on the project team requires a Part 3 Qualification, or international equivalent. A qualified urban designer is not a sufficient substitution for qualified architect or landscape architect. Any questions about this you can email us at info@londonfestivalofarchitecture.org.

Q: Is it worth applying if we're based outside of London?

Yes, it is still worth applying. This competition is open nationally/internationally. Given the strong focus on engagement in the brief, we would recommend exploring a collaboration with someone who is based more locally to the gallery itself.

Q: Is it preferable to go through an established architecture practice?

It's not preferable to work with an established practice for this competition; it can be someone at an early stage of their career, provided they are qualified. It is part of our mission to have competitions open to emerging designers!

Q: Does the qualified architect need to take a formal role as Principal Designer?

No, but the qualified architect should help to achieve a successful delivery of the project. Roles will be clearly defined on contract/appointment with Dulwich Picture Gallery.

Q: Are you prioritising applicants from particular Boroughs?

As set out in the eligibility guidelines, we are particularly keen to see designs from teams / individuals who live locally to the gallery. The jury will ensure local teams are adequately represented on the shortlist.

Q: Can a team be one person only?

Yes, if the person is qualified! It's a big project with a relatively quick turnaround, so if you are successful you will have to think about how you would feasibly deliver the project.

Q: Can an architect be on multiple teams?

Yes, but ideally they would not be in the same role on both teams. We want as balanced a shortlist as possible, so it would be better for the architect to focus their efforts on a single submission.

Your design and the gallery context

Q: Is there a maximum size or height for the installation?

The design should not exceed the parameters of the space allocated for it and should not touch the gallery building. It should not exceed the height of the building (approx. 8m).

Dulwich Picture Gallery is a listed building so the successful design needs to go through listed building consent, for which the winning team will receive relevant documentation.

Further briefing on the site will be provided to shortlisted teams at stage 2.

Q: How should the design of the installation connect with the indoor space?

We recommend conducting research around the art collection inside Dulwich Picture gallery, which may be useful in inform how you respond to the brief in conceptual terms at the first stage. Overall, this project aims to remove barriers to entry to the gallery by creating an accessible garden.

Q: Is there a preference towards a design/proposal that is playable or more informed by the idea of play and children?

Generally speaking, there is a preference for a design that is in itself playable or possible to be engaged with physically. How you define play is open to interpretation – please include your reflections on this at stage 1.

Q: Why are moving parts in the installation design actively discouraged?

This is because the installation would be in a location that will not be invigilated all the time to mitigate the risks created by moving parts. The sculpture needs to be robust and require minimal maintenance.

Q: For Round 1, are loose design proposals acceptable? Would clear design visuals hinder or help you at this early stage?

We are not asking for any design work at Round 1. Responses to the brief for this first stage can suggest ideas in the form of a drawing or sketch, if that's how you best communicate your ideas.

Q: How will the risk assessment be conducted at Round 2?

You are asked to provide a full risk assessment at Round 2. The winning design will go through all relevant risk processes, with the involvement of play safety inspectors and the local authority.

Q: How important is sustainability in terms of the judging criteria?

The sustainability of the design is part of the judging criteria for Round 2. 15% of your mark will be on your approach to environmental sustainability, and another 15% on the longevity of the piece. 10 years is the minimum time period for the installation and its material composition.

The inclusion of a plan for these materials when disassembled in the submission would be welcomed by the jury.

Q: Will the winner own the project once complete?

The design IP will be owned by the designer, but the physical sculpture will belong to the gallery.

Q: Are there surveys of the site available, including earth types?

Further site information will be available to 6 shortlisted teams for Round 2.

Q: I'm away for October half term. Is it still possible to apply?

Yes, it's still possible to apply for the competition if you are unable to attend the Public Engagement Workshop the second stage. Please make this clear in your application.

Q: Are you envisioning to work with any groups of children on a permanent basis while the installation is in place? Will there be a dedicated space for these groups?

DPG has an existing schools and families programme that is very active and now expanding further with the planned addition of a learning centre to the gallery site.

Whilst there may be programming that surrounds the sculpture, for the majority of the time this needs to be playable whilst invigilated.

Budget

Q: Does the budget/cost need to be addressed at the first stage?

No, entries will be judged in Round 1 in the way their experience makes them suitable for the project, and how well they respond to the brief. We will ask for more details regarding budget at Stage 2.

Q: What is the £80,000 anticipated to cover?

As set out in the guidelines, the £80,000 should cover designer fees, which will be 12.5% of the overall budget. They should also cover a contingency of a minimum of 10% (preferably 15%) as well as material costs, installation costs, and maintenance costs. Please see the Open Call for further details.

Q: Does the planning application for the installation need to be submitted by the designer?

DPG will submit the planning application with input or collaboration from the designer. They have already engaged a planning officer who has overseen a number of sculptures already installed in the gallery's garden.

Q: What does a 'strong collaboration with Engagement team on addressing local audiences' mean exactly?

The Engagement team at DPG run a learning programme that is strongly informed by the local community, and the design should likewise reflect the interests of community groups.

Q: Will you provide costs consultant at a later stage?

You are expected to provide a feasible budget for your design at Round 2. If you're unsure about your cost calculations, you may wish to source external support to address these.

Q: Is it possible for a fabricator builder to invoice or contract directly with the client? This would allow smaller firms to not be affected by VAT.

We will not penalise small firms/emerging designers through the competition process. The cost of VAT should be factored into the budget overview presented by the design team at Round 2.

Q: Do you have to include a maintenance plan/contingency for 10 years within the 80k budget?

Yes, you'll be expected to provide this in the Round 2 submission. *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.

Q: What PLI cover would you be asking the designer to have in Round 2?

PLI should be at a minimum of £5 million, but this will ultimately be agreed between the client and the winning designer once they have been selected.

Q: The brief breaks down the scope in two tasks: to develop a feasible and costed design, and to project manage the fabrication and installation. We wanted to clarify whether the 10k designer fee would cover both of these tasks, or if managing the fabrication and installation would come under a separate fee?

This depends on the structure of your team: you may well have a design team working on the design, fabrication and management of the project. You will be required to present a breakdown of this team structure in your Round 2 submission and agree this with the client on appointment.

If you have any further questions you are welcome to contact

info@londonfestivalofarchitecture.org