

R-SPACE GALLERY CIC

The Art of Linen: Research and Feasibility Study Brief

Supported by Arts Council of Northern Ireland (National Lottery) and R-Space Gallery CIC

25 November 2014

R-Space Gallery CIC is a contemporary art/craft space in Lisburn, Northern Ireland.

We seek to commission an organisation or consultant(s) to carry out a research/ feasibility study to inform the development of a potential International Arts Biennial with the working title

The Art of Linen.

‘The Art of Linen’ project background

‘The Art of Linen’ (working title) will be a cultural celebration of Lisburn’s Linen History, giving it contemporary relevance through a festival programme of visual arts and other related events.

R-Space Gallery envisions being the lead partner in what would hopefully become an annual/biennial event of national importance.*

Strategic aims & objectives of the project

- Develop cultural tourism in Lisburn through associating it’s rich linen history with contemporary visual arts and other related practices;
- Develop a flagship event for Lisburn’s regular cultural calendar with a strong visual arts element;
- Promote Northern Irish artists and makers to an international audience;
- Build new, and strengthen existing partnerships with local, national and international organisations;
- Meet objectives in the Arts Council of Northern Ireland’s five year Strategy and Lisburn City Council Tourism Development Plan and
- Continue to develop R-Space Gallery as the primary destination in Lisburn city centre for contemporary visual arts and craft.

*A similar event, the British Ceramics Biennial in Stoke-on-Trent

(www.britishceramicsbiennial.com), has ensured the reputation of the city as a centre of craft excellence despite the decline in it’s traditional industrial output. The event could also take inspiration from the Samuel Beckett ‘Happy Days’ festival in Enniskillen Co. Fermanagh (www.happy-days-enniskillen.com) by embracing a broad and multidisciplinary approach to celebrating Linen including music, film, poetry as well as contemporary visual arts & craft. The scope, contents and funding required of the project are to be explored within the research of this proposal.

Research Objectives and Information Needs

Develop a feasibility study to

- enable the production of a festival/biennial that meets international standards,
- establish viable sources of funding,
- facilitate securing support for the project at a governmental level,
- enable the project to become one of the major events, and the principal visual arts event, in Lisburn City Council's Tourism Development Action Plan,
- establish the sustainability of such an event for future years.

Research project proposal

Research should include

- Existing models of similar events in other UK/Ireland locations
- Scale and scope of event including timescale,
- Potential partners (venues/sponsors/organisations)
- Projected costs
- Funding opportunities
- Artists/makers/contributors
- Potential audience figures
- Potential for an annual or biennial event
- SWOT analysis
 - Including how it is measured against the ACNI 5 Year Strategy and Lisburn City Council Tourism Development Plan

Profile of Researcher

It is essential that the researcher for this project has previous experience of the arts sector and has extensive knowledge of festival/biennial events (UK/Ireland, International). The researcher should have an excellent track record of working with high profile clients, developing research suitable for presenting to major organisations and government offices with excellent presentation skills.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

R-Space Gallery will require monthly feedback reports and a final written report and a presentation to staff, board and a core group of identified possible partners and stakeholders of the outputs from this project. The report must be clear, manageable and user-friendly. The main volume of the report and any appendix volumes should be produced as 1 hard copy and an electronic version. Copyright for the report should be assigned to R-Space Gallery.

Timescale

R-Space Gallery has allocated three months for the completion of this project from
1st January - 31st March 2015

Monthly summary dates: 30 January, 27 February, 27 March 2015 (Final report to R-Space)
Presentation of findings period 30/31 March 2015

Budget

Research fee is £4,500

Travel £875

Report/presentation costs £360

Total Budget - £5735

Content of proposals

The closing date for proposals is 15th December 2014

Respondents are asked to outline:

- Their proposed methodology, budget and timetable (1 A4 Page)
- Their relevant skills and experience (1 A4 page)
- The details of two references

Proposals should be emailed to the address detailed below and all respondents will be acknowledged. The final decision will be by **19th December 2014**.

Contact details

If you would like to discuss this brief prior to submitting a proposal please contact the Gallery using the contact details outlined below.

R-Space Gallery

rspace@linenroomslisburn.com

Robert Martin & Anthea McWilliams

028 9266 3179

Project background development to date

Over the last three years R-Space has identified and been communicating with key strategic partners in the University of Ulster, Irish Linen Centre & Lisburn Museum, Lisburn City Centre Management and Lisburn City Council's Tourism Office. R-Space has also developed links with the Biennale Internationale du Lin de Portneuf through a collaborative exhibition - Linen Diaspora with Karen Flemming (University of Ulster) 2012.

There is broad consensus that an event of this type is needed in Lisburn to develop cultural tourism and put visual arts programming higher on the agenda in the city. There is currently no major visual arts event in Lisburn, nor any major regular arts/cultural event that celebrates the history of the city.

Some of the other major events include:

Festival of Speed (August - www.festivalofspeedni.com)
National Countrysports Fair (May/June - www.countrysidefestivals.com),
Hillsborough Oyster Festival (Sept - www.hillsboroughoysterfestival.com)
Down Royal Festival of Racing (Oct/Nov - www.downroyal.com)
Sunflower Fest (Aug - www.sunflowerfest.co.uk)

Ulster Pipe Band Championships
Highland games

Other useful websites

www.visitlisburn.com
www.lisburncitycouncil.org.uk
www.islandartscentre.com

Other Linen / Textiles Biennales

<http://www.bienale.it/2013/it/>
<http://www.biennaledulin.ca/>

About R-Space Gallery CIC

R-Space CIC is a contemporary visual arts space, presenting a programme of exhibitions, events and arts activity in the City of Lisburn since August 2011.

R Space's ambition is to increase access, understanding and enjoyment of contemporary visual arts, crafts, design, performance and other related arts activities. It collaborates with a diverse range of excellent and challenging, local and international artists working in different media to provide audiences from a wide range of educational, social and cultural backgrounds with different points of access to the arts.

R-Space Gallery is a Community Interest Company which supports contemporary visual arts and crafts to as wide a public as possible. It's founders and directors are arts professionals Robert Martin and Anthea McWilliams.

Gallery Aims

- To be a catalyst for visual arts activity in the region; promoting, improving and advancing the arts in general and contemporary arts in particular
- To promote awareness and knowledge of the visual arts, encourage and engage audiences, offer educational opportunities and support arts practitioners on a financial and practical level.

Gallery Programme

R-Space Gallery runs an all-year programme of contemporary fine and applied arts exhibitions. Work is selected on the basis of originality and quality of design whilst balancing a wide range of art forms. The Gallery aims to show new and challenging work by Northern Irish, UK and international artists. R-Space acknowledges support from ACNI (Lottery), Lisburn City Centre Management and Lisburn Arts Advisory Committee.

