

Cultural Reforesting: Darkness in Urban Spaces

Brief for an artist

01 Project overview

The London Borough of Richmond upon Thames is looking for an artist or art collective to explore the theme of darkness in urban spaces.

Richmond Arts Service are collaborating with the Richmond Planning Policy Team as part of an artist-led research programme, Cultural Reforesting.

Darkness in urban spaces

Choosing whether to light our parks and open spaces can be a contentious issue. Many of Richmond's green spaces are left intentionally dark to avoid unnecessary artificial lighting that can disturb protected species like bats. These spaces are called 'dark corridors'.

However, for many people who use parks and green space to walk dogs, commute to and from work and for leisure, darkness can compromise their ability to use and enjoy the spaces. We also need to ensure community safety.

It's currently not a requirement to protect 'dark corridors' in planning terms. Much of the UK experiences excess light pollution, particularly in London.

This project could impact policy and strategy around the Borough, influenced by the voices involved.



02 The Brief

The brief

We are looking for an artist or art collective from any discipline to explore this theme and work with local communities to understand darkness in urban environments.

Artist(s) should have socially engaged participatory practices at the core of their work.

- How do we balance the needs of human park users with more-than-human ones?
- What do ideas of darkness mean to our cultures in 2023?
- Is darkness a human right / should everyone have access to darkness?
- Does light ensure community safety and does darkness equate to risk?

We are keen for an artist to work collaboratively with local people, where process is as important as the potential output. We are therefore open to an output that organically arrives through the project and is realistic to the budget.

We expect artist(s) to be self-sufficient in managing production of the project.

Outputs will be displayed as part of the Richmond Arts & Ideas Festival in 2025.

London Borough of Richmond upon Thames will provide:

- £12,000 (excluding VAT) inclusive of all artist fees, production support, materials and expenses for the delivery of the project. Please note that all costs incurred directly by the artists will be subject to VAT unless registered as VAT exempt.
- Support connecting with individuals and communities in Richmond.

About us

Richmond Arts Service's mission is to build community through creativity. We foster creativity and enjoyment of the arts, enable people to reflect on their lives and develop new ways of seeing the world.

Cultural Reforesting asks the big question, how can we renew our relationship with nature? Through a range of artist-led, interdisciplinary research projects over this decade, which scientists have defined as the crucial one to act, the programme aims to provide wide-ranging positive action in this ecological crisis.

These projects have led to films, exhibitions, sculptures, young people's projects, schools' workshops and more. For more information see the [Orlean's House website](#).

Richmond's Planning Policy team is responsible for setting out priorities for the development of the borough and writing the policies and guidance used to make decisions. Policies focus on topics including transport, climate and sustainability, design, health and well-being and involving local people in the planning process.



Cultural reforestation 2022: The Dataset's Dream by Bryony Benge-Abbot and Thomas Sharp

03 Submit an expression of interest

How to apply

If you are interested in putting yourself forward for this project, we would like to invite you to provide the following:

- An introduction to yourself through a link to your website and/or a copy of your CV
- Tell us why you are interested in the project. We are not expecting proposals or concepts at this stage but are looking to get a sense of your approach and the way you work as an artist or artist collective.

Your submission can be through a word document or PDF (300 words max), a short audio or video clip (no longer than 2 minutes), or through another creative and playful response.

We are keen to work with artists from a variety of backgrounds with different skills, stories, and experiences. We actively seek applications from our diverse communities including Global Majority, Deaf, disabled, neurodivergent, LGBTQ+, to represent diverse lived experiences in our projects.

If you have access requirements and would prefer to apply in a different format or would like us to make reasonable adjustments to the interview process, please let us know. If required, please submit an access document that includes an outline of your disability access needs.

We will be selecting three artists to further discuss their project ideas. There will be a fee of £250 per artist or artist collective/group invited to interview to share their ideas.



Creatives will be selected using the following criteria:

- Concept thoughts in response to the brief
- Experience of working with communities
- A socially-engaged practice
- A clear collaborative research practice
- An experimental approach

Please send applications by 16 July 2023 to:

beatrice.mcdermott@richmondandwandsworth.gov.uk with the subject line: Darkness in Urban Spaces

We encourage artists to answer our [Equal Opportunities Monitoring form here](#) when completing their application. The form is anonymous.

Project timeline

Date	Milestone
16 July 2023	Deadline for expression of interest
21 July 2023	Shortlisted artists contacted and invited to interview (There will be a fee of £250 per artist or artist collective/group invited to interview to share their ideas)
w/c 14 August 2023	Interviews
August 2023	Artist or artist collective appointed
September 2023 - September 2024	Project to take place
June 2025	Richmond Arts & Ideas Festival