BRIEF FOR APPLICANTS: MONTGOMERY CANAL ARTIST IN RESIDENCY OPPORTUNITY

This residency is a collaborative project between the Arts Council of Wales, Glandŵr Cymru - The Canal & River Trust in Wales, and Addo.

Bursary: £12,000 for 6 months starting in December 2014

We are inviting applications from artists with an interest in landscape, architecture and ecology with a collaborative/participative approach to undertake a residency based on the Montgomery Canal at Llanymynech near Welshpool.

Working with staff and volunteers for the recently-formed Canal & River Trust to draw out and address issues of connectivity across the organisation, paying particular attention to how Glandŵr Cymru engages with local people e.g. through volunteering opportunities, community adoptions and non-waterway related visits.

The residency aims to embed artistic processes within Glandŵr Cymru's core functions. The organisation is in a period of change and it may be possible for the artist to influence that change at this crucial time.

Background
Glandŵr Cymru, the Canal & River Trust in Wales, has teamed up with the Arts Council of Wales to create a series of artists' residencies across waterways in Wales over a three year period. This partnership is highlighting not only the heritage and historic significance of Wales' canals, but also celebrating their current relevance to local communities and contemporary Welsh culture. The Trust is exploring how contemporary arts can play a new role in conserving, animating and re-interpreting the waterways in Wales.

The Site
The artist will be based on the England / Wales border at Llanymynech but will be expected to work at and visit locations along the Montgomery Canal.

One of the most important canals in the country in terms of habitat, much of the canal corridor is a Site of Special Scientific Interest. The Welsh section of the canal is of international importance and is designated a Special Area of Conservation due to the presence of rare aquatic plants, otters and water voles. Several nature reserves border the canal, filled with wildflowers and insects, including dragonflies and damselflies.

The Montgomery Canal was built between 1796 and 1819, with a later phase completed in 1832, it is transport infrastructure, largely intact, which clearly expresses its function as an

engineered waterway, with associated water controls, operational and domestic buildings for those employed on it and a wealth of buildings associated with trade and industry.

It was an important trade route, with horse-drawn boats carrying goods and is a good example of a rural canal constructed to transport lime for agricultural improvement. With 128 listed buildings it has great archaeological and historical significance.

Towns and villages are connected by the canal, but are few in number, each having a distinctive role and benefit from the canal, for example Pool Quay was a hub of timber shipment for Montgomeryshire Oak and Newtown, at one point, had 81 flannel mills. Llanymynech, with its abundance of carboniferous limestone, was a key driver for the construction of the canal, and as a result Llanymynech became a hub of activity including a tramway, limekilns, docks, stables and other supporting buildings. The whole canal had 98 limekilns at the height of lime activity.

The Montgomery Canal was a pioneering waterway in relation to the use of cast iron lock gates, aqueducts and bridges (with iron "fish-bellied" bridge decks), making it of international significance. George Buck, Engineer, designed many of the structures, including the unique paddle gear used in the operation of the locks, which can still be seen on the canal today. At Penarth, Newtown, is a very early example of a salmon fish pass constructed in conjunction with the weir and canal feeder. The most significant structure is the Grade II* Vyrnwy Aqueduct.

Use of the Montgomery Canal slowly declined as rail and road networks improved. It was finally abandoned after it burst its banks in 1936. As boat numbers decreased, its wildlife value increased. It has become one of the UK's best wildlife sites, recognised as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and a Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The canal is a top European site for wildlife, but also world-class for two of its plants. *Floating water plantain* has thin stems with small leaves that rise to the surface, hence the name. It has white three-petalled flowers. *Grass-wrack pondweed* has narrow strap-like leaves and flowers like small reddish-brown cones, which peek above the water's surface.

Currently, one restored section of the canal connects to the Llangollen Canal, while the other is only accessible by a slipway at Welshpool. Work continues to join the two sections through the aid of volunteers and the work of the restoration partnership.

The Project

There are opportunities to become involved with plans to enhance the landscape corridor and to conserve the aquatic plants of the canal, drawing out the story of the canal's contribution to ecology, ecosystems and combating wider environmental concerns. The project also offers the opportunity to highlight the canal's significant heritage and its influence on the industrial and social history of the areas and communities that it connects.

The proposal is therefore to engage an artist for a six-month period during December 2014 to September 2015 to work with Glandŵr Cymru staff and volunteers in order to investigate and understand how the need for conservation and preservation and to manage visitors can still contribute to the local economy, well-being education and enjoyment of the canal system. Using the work done in the recent past as a starting point, the artist will build on existing links to complementary projects locally and regionally in order to aid Glandŵr Cymru's aim to:-

- *Make a difference to the communities that the canals serve and to CRT staff by encouraging a greater sense of ownership of the waterways*
- *Raise the profile of the waterways*
- *Make Wales' canals and rivers more accessible through high-quality contemporary art activity and engagement experiences*
- *Nurture innovation in revitalising and conserving the canals and rivers and improving the waterways environment*
- *Create enduring partnerships, particularly with cultural institutes located near or next to the waterways*

In the longer term we hope that by working with artists Glandŵr Cymru will embed artistic working practices within their everyday structures, seeing these as important and relevant to their organisations on-going relationship with it's public.

The broader aims of the project are to raise the profile of Glandŵr Cymru and the Montgomery Canal in particular, develop relationships between existing groups and project partners, exploring and developing ways in which artists may contribute to the development of the organisation and its facilities.

Partners
Representatives from Glandŵr Cymru, ACW and Addo along-side key local stakeholders will form the Steering Group for the project. Addo will act as the main point of contact between the group and the artist, offering support to the artist. Local groups and associations will work with the steering group and the artist to identify local participants in the initial stages of the project.

Outcomes
The material outcomes of the residency are open but may take the form of temporary artworks created with input from canal users, volunteers and staff. There is also potential to explore and develop proposals for the future use of the site. Interesting and contemporary ways to explore and share the history of the site are a key feature of this proposal. Events such as exhibitions, workshops, talks, seminars, and tours may be key elements within the project. A

large exhibition, featuring work from the artists across all six planned residencies, is due to take place at a key Welsh venue or gallery at the end of the project in 2016. The artist will be expected to show work produced as part of this residency, or as a result of themes explored during their time in residence, in the final exhibition in 2016.

The Artist
The artist will be someone interested in working within the industrial and agricultural heritage of Wales and particularly the canals of Wales with an interest in environment, architecture or design with previous experience of working with others to develop ideas. An ethos of collaborative practice and engagement is uppermost.

This opportunity is open to UK and International Artists.

Applicants must demonstrate:
• Creative originality and professionalism in their work
• The ability and desire to work collaboratively with the public and other partners as part of their creative practice
• A willingness to immerse themselves in the life and culture of the area
• An understanding of the issues of working in partnership and the concerns and opportunities presented by rural tourism.
• The artist must be aware of and abide by the laws for working with children and vulnerable adults, should they undertake such work as part of the residency.
• In the event of manufacture/installation of artworks by the artist, the artist must demonstrate current and appropriate indemnity insurance relevant to the artist in person and to any object/s to be manufactured.

Studio
The artist will be provided with a flexible space at Llanymynech, which could be used as a studio/workspace/meeting space/gallery.

Payment
The selected artist will be paid in installments to be agreed on appointment. This fee is inclusive of all travel costs, living expenses, and studio equipment.

How to Apply
To apply for this residency, please send the following information to tracy@addocreative.com by 3rd November 2014:

- Up to 10 digital images in a PDF document or a Powerpoint presentation, or a 10-minute (max) showreel. All work should be numbered and include, title, date, dimension and media;
- An up-to-date CV;
- A brief letter of application that broadly outlines why you are interested in this opportunity and how it is relevant to your practice;
- Two letters of support.

When sending files large files (over 4MB), please provide hyperlinks to online files or a DropBox containing the files. Information submitted in other formats will not be accepted.

Please note that we do not require a project proposal at this stage as we anticipate that details of activity to be undertaken as part of the residency will be developed following a period of interaction with the area, community and key stakeholders.

Selection Process:
A panel of key stakeholders involved in the Montgomery Project will shortlist candidates for interview from the applications received.

Interviews will take place during the week of 17th November 2014. Candidates must be available for interview during this period. Up to £100 per artist will be available to cover travel and subsistence expenses incurred by attending an interview. Interviews via Skype may be arranged. At interview, interviewees will be expected to speak in more detail about their work and working processes and the approach that they envisage taking towards the residency.

If you have any queries regarding the recruitment process, please email info@addocreative.com

Further Information: www.addocreative.com

Contact Details:

For queries and further information, If you have any further queries about this opportunity, please contact: Tracy Simpson, Addo, 07890203218, tracy@addocreative.com