

# Live Art

## Frequently Asked Questions, Top Tips, and Useful Lists

The staff of Artsadmin, the Live Art Development Agency and New Work Network have compiled this information and advice resource. It is intended to be a starting point for artists who work in Live Art and who are at the start of their career.

Just as the practice of every artist is different, so are their professional development needs. We therefore encourage each artist to treat the information provided here as a springboard for their own self-directed research.

### What is Live Art?

Live Art is an umbrella term encompassing a range of performance, performative and time-based practices that are unrestricted by artform boundaries.

There are many useful summary texts about Live Art available online, including:  
Joshua Sofaer's *What is Live Art?*  
[www.joshuasofaer.com/texts/exhibit\\_wila.html](http://www.joshuasofaer.com/texts/exhibit_wila.html)

*What is Live Art?* on the Live Art Development Agency website  
[www.thisisliveart.co.uk/about\\_us/what\\_is\\_live\\_art.html](http://www.thisisliveart.co.uk/about_us/what_is_live_art.html)

### Where can I go to find out more about Live Art?

The Live Art Development Agency has a Study Room, which is a free, open access research facility for anyone interested in Live Art. The Study Room houses an extensive library of Live Art related publications, dvds, videos, cd-roms, magazines, journals, artists' materials, and other information.  
[www.thisisliveart.co.uk/resources/index.html](http://www.thisisliveart.co.uk/resources/index.html)

Unbound is an online shop for Live Art books and dvds. It is a one-stop shop for everything Live. Unbound specialises in publications, dvds and artefacts related to contemporary art practices: from experimental theatre to body art, from the history of performance art to performance theory, from digital performance to art activism.  
[www.thisisunbound.co.uk/](http://www.thisisunbound.co.uk/)

The best way to find out more about Live Art is to go and see as much work as possible. Get connected and find out what's on by subscribing to elists (see below).

*Guerilla Performance and Multimedia* by Leslie Hill and Helen Paris (ISBN 0-8264-5330-9) is an excellent resource written for artists by artists. It's full of advice about how to go about your practice and career. If you want to buy a copy it's a hard book to find but there is a reference copy in the Live Art Development Agency Study Room.

You should also think about getting a copy of the latest Live Art Almanac and the Everything you STILL Wanted To Know About Live Art But Were Afraid To Ask dvd from Unbound, the Live Art Development Agency's online shop. [www.thisisUnbound.co.uk](http://www.thisisUnbound.co.uk)  
Reference copies are also available from the Live Art Development Agency Study Room.

### What are Artsadmin, the Live Art Development Agency and New Work Network and how do they assist artists?

#### 1. Artsadmin

Artsadmin makes art happen. Our vision is to be an arts lab for the 21st Century for the creation of performance, site-specific and interdisciplinary work, where the innovative, experimental and unusual are nurtured. We do this by:

- Discovering and developing artistic talent and supporting artists at all stages of their

career

- Responding to the creativity of artists and using our expertise to help them realise ambitious ideas
- Creating safe and supportive spaces for artistic experiment, risk-taking and development
- Being truly collaborative; sharing knowledge and resources and creating meaningful partnerships and networks
- Responding to the changing environment we live in; being a leader in the arts for work that addresses the issue of climate change and finding ways to reduce the environmental impact of the arts

As artists continue to question the world, to push boundaries and challenge preconceptions, our role is to help them to do it.

Distinct activities:

- Provides comprehensive management services to 12 artists on a long-term basis whose work ranges across theatre, visual art, dance, and live art
- Acts as producer for numerous artist led projects in the above art-forms
- Provides long-term advocacy and support to 20 Associate Artists
- Curates projects and commissions new work
- Runs a bespoke one-to-one advisory service and several artistic development initiatives including bursary schemes and online links and resources
- Offers extensive education, participation and training opportunities
- Manages Toynbee Studios; offering space for artists to research, rehearse and perform, in addition to regular public events and showcases
- Offers paid traineeships to emerging producers and arts administrators
- London, national and international reach

For advice or to make an appointment contact one of our advisors, Manick Govinda, Nikki Tomlinson or Cat Harrison at: [advisoryservice@artsadmin.co.uk](mailto:advisoryservice@artsadmin.co.uk) or +44(0)20 7247 5102.

[www.artsadmin.co.uk](http://www.artsadmin.co.uk)

[www.artsadmin.co.uk/opportunities/resources.php?category=10017](http://www.artsadmin.co.uk/opportunities/resources.php?category=10017)

## **2. Live Art Development Agency**

The Live Art Development Agency offers resources, professional development initiatives, and projects for the support and development of Live Art practices and critical discourses in the UK and internationally.

All of the Agency's work is undertaken strategically, in partnership, and in consultation with artists and organisations in the cultural sector with the aim of responding to the innovative, diverse and shifting nature of Live Art, and contributing to the development of new art, artists, audiences, contexts, discourses, and policy.

The Agency houses an open access Study Room research facility; runs Unbound, an online shop for Live Art books, DVDs, and editions; pioneers models of artistic and professional development, dialogue and debate; contributes to research culture, knowledge transfer and pedagogy; and develops new ways of increasing access to, and engagement with, Live Art through programming and publishing projects.

Distinct activities:

- Live Art specialism
- London, national and international reach
- Resources and research facilities, including the Live Art Collection and other online resources
- Advocacy and strategic interventions through curatorial projects, research initiatives and partnerships
- Publishing and distribution

[www.thisisLiveArt.co.uk](http://www.thisisLiveArt.co.uk)

### **3. New Work Network**

New Work Network's mission is to support the development of artists engaged in experimental, interdisciplinary and boundary-breaking arts practices including: fine-art based performance, new media, live art, experimental dance, site-specific work, sonic art, moving image, sci-art and socially engaged practice.

We initiate unique, practice-based professional development programmes that respond to the specialist needs of artists to enable them to critically engage and contribute to society. We also nurture practitioners to be entrepreneurial by guiding them through the development of artist-led initiatives that provide them with fundamental and sustainable skills and generate activities that complement institutional cultures.

As a catalyst for networking, knowledge-transfer, skills exchange and collaboration, we activate encounters between artists, arts professionals and stakeholders to forge new relationships that create opportunities for artists.

New Work Network also strives to advance social and cultural confidence in practitioners by motivating new routes for audiences, existing and new stakeholders to access, experience, participate and invest in the often invisible, but absolutely essential processes, that sustain artists to 'make work'.

Distinct Activities:

- Membership organisation with over 1000 members nationally
- A national networking organisation that provides a social networking website for members
- Supports practitioners working in 'new work', which embraces a broad range of arts practice that is considered to be experimental, interdisciplinary and boundary breaking
- Delivers innovative formats of professional development for the cultural sector including toolkits and articles as part of our online and downloadable resources
- Advocates the cultural value of the new work sector through partnership development

[www.newworknetwork.org.uk](http://www.newworknetwork.org.uk)

[www.newworknetwork.info](http://www.newworknetwork.info)

### **Are there any other organisations that support artists working in Live Art?**

Many organisations support artists working in Live Art either through providing information and advice or providing opportunities to present work.

- Live Art UK. A good link to 'key' Live Art organisations in the UK [www.liveartuk.org](http://www.liveartuk.org)
- Compass Live Art (Yorkshire & The Humber) [www.compassliveart.org.uk](http://www.compassliveart.org.uk)
- Total Theatre [www.totaltheatre.org.uk](http://www.totaltheatre.org.uk)
- PANDA (Performance Art Development Agency), North West [www.panda-arts.org.uk](http://www.panda-arts.org.uk)
- Theatre Advisor at Oval House (for London based artists) [www.ovalhouse.com/advisor/index.php](http://www.ovalhouse.com/advisor/index.php)
- Theatre Bristol [www.theatrebristol.net](http://www.theatrebristol.net)
- Independent Theatre Council (ITC) [www.itc-arts.org](http://www.itc-arts.org)
- A-N. The Artists' Information Company. In particular seek out information about NAN (networking), Interface (critical writing on-line) and AIR

[www.a-n.co.uk](http://www.a-n.co.uk)

- Artquest [www.artquest.org.uk](http://www.artquest.org.uk)
- New Black Arts Alliance [www.blackartists.org.uk](http://www.blackartists.org.uk)
- Walking Artist's Network – [www.walkingartistsnetwork.org/](http://www.walkingartistsnetwork.org/)
- Dramaturgs Café - [www.thedramaturgscafe.moonfruit.com/](http://www.thedramaturgscafe.moonfruit.com/)

## **What about presenting work? Where should I start?**

Often the best opportunity for artists to present their work early on in their career is at 'platform' events. These events often show the work of many artists in a short space of time and to a supportive audience. They are excellent opportunities to try out work in front of an audience and to network with other artists at a similar point in their career.

There is also a growing number of artists-led initiatives (often springing up through artists deciding to create and forge their own contexts for making and presenting work – which is also something you could consider if the context for your work does not exist already) and also a range of night club spaces and sub-cultural contexts for you to present work outside of 'institutional' frameworks.

The best place to find about these opportunities is through the individual websites, e-lists and discussions groups (see the next section) but opportunities include the following events and organizations:

- AiR Project - FRESH AiR – Queen Mary, University of London  
[www.airproject.qmul.ac.uk/](http://www.airproject.qmul.ac.uk/)
- SPILL Festival (London) - includes a national platform for emergent artists -  
[www.spillfestival.com](http://www.spillfestival.com)
- Camden People's Theatre - Sprint festival and Tonic (London) - [www.cpttheatre.co.uk](http://www.cpttheatre.co.uk)
- Battersea Arts Centre (London) - Scratch nights - [www.bac.org.uk](http://www.bac.org.uk)
- New Work Yorkshire - Artist-led network for Yorkshire based practitioners based, incl. the Perambulator platform - [www.newworknetwork.org.uk/userinfo.php?uid=1201](http://www.newworknetwork.org.uk/userinfo.php?uid=1201)
- Rules and Regs (national) - [www.rulesandregs.org](http://www.rulesandregs.org)
- Rational Rec (London) - [www.rationalrec.org.uk](http://www.rationalrec.org.uk)
- Testing Grounds (South East) - [www.testinggrounds.org.uk/](http://www.testinggrounds.org.uk/)
- Experimentica at Chapter Arts Centre (Cardiff) - [www.chapter.org/index.html](http://www.chapter.org/index.html)
- Platform North East (Newcastle) - [www.platformnortheast.org](http://www.platformnortheast.org)
- PILOT- West Midlands, run by Kindle Theatre and supported by China Plate  
[www.chinaplatetheatre.com](http://www.chinaplatetheatre.com)
- Artists Support Projects at LICA (Lancaster Institute for Contemporary Arts) -  
[www.nuffieldtheatre.com/](http://www.nuffieldtheatre.com/)
- hAb and Digital Summer (Tamsin Drury) [www.digitalsummer.org/dsanim.html](http://www.digitalsummer.org/dsanim.html)
- Chester Performs – Up The Wall -

[www.chesterperforms.com/Content/Projects/UptheWall.aspx](http://www.chesterperforms.com/Content/Projects/UptheWall.aspx)

- Circuit Platform (Leicester/East Midlands region) - <http://circuitfestival.yolasite.com/>
- Hatch (Nottingham) - [www.hatchnottingham.co.uk](http://www.hatchnottingham.co.uk)
- The Basement, Arts Production South East [www.thebasement.uk.com](http://www.thebasement.uk.com)
- Fierce! (West Midlands) - [www.wearefierce.org](http://www.wearefierce.org)
- Mayfest in Bristol – across different venues - [www.mayfestbristol.co.uk](http://www.mayfestbristol.co.uk)
- Warwick Art Centre- Bite-size festival - [www.warwickartscentre.co.uk](http://www.warwickartscentre.co.uk)
- Wunderbar festival (North West) - [wunderbarfestival.co.uk](http://wunderbarfestival.co.uk)
- Matrix Arts Projects- based in Carlisle, run platform events focusing on international exchange - [www.matrixartprojects.org](http://www.matrixartprojects.org)
- Forest Fringe - [www.forestfringe.co.uk/](http://www.forestfringe.co.uk/)
- Chisenhale Art Club – [www.chisenhaleartclub.tumblr.com/](http://www.chisenhaleartclub.tumblr.com/) and TV Dinners [www.chisenhaledancespace.co.uk/node/253](http://www.chisenhaledancespace.co.uk/node/253)
- Stratford Circus - [www.stratford-circus.com/index.htm](http://www.stratford-circus.com/index.htm)
- Art Evict - [www.artevict.com/](http://www.artevict.com/)
- ]Performance Space[ (London) - [www.performancespace.org/](http://www.performancespace.org/)
- Bethnal Green Working Men’s Club (London) - [www.workersplaytime.net/](http://www.workersplaytime.net/)
- Duckie (London) – [www.duckie.co.uk](http://www.duckie.co.uk)
- Stoke Newington International Airport (London) - [www.stkinternational.co.uk/STK/STK.html](http://www.stkinternational.co.uk/STK/STK.html)
- Club Wotever (London) – [www.woteverworld.com/](http://www.woteverworld.com/)
- Eat Your Heart Out (London) - [www.eat-your-heart-out.com/](http://www.eat-your-heart-out.com/)
- Act Art – [www.actart.co.uk](http://www.actart.co.uk)
- Bird Club (London) - [www.birdclub.org.uk/](http://www.birdclub.org.uk/)
- I’m with You (London) - [www.imwithyouclapton.wordpress.com](http://www.imwithyouclapton.wordpress.com)
- 25sg (Newcastle) - <http://25sg.org/>

Festivals might not be the best context for everyone’s work, but over the summer there might be a number of opportunities available to test ideas and try work in the summer festival format. These opportunities might include Glastonbury, Latitude, The Secret Garden Party, The Big Chill as well as others.

### **Where can I find up-to-date information about Live Art activities and opportunities?**

We recommend that all artists keep well connected through subscribing to one or more of the Live Art e-lists and discussions groups.

### **New Work Network**

New Work Network Membership notifications:

A membership network for those involved in new work. Join online and build a website profile. Members receive email notifications to keep in touch with recent activities covering: online forum debate, upcoming events, artists' projects and opportunities. Join online at: [www.newworknetwork.org.uk/register.php](http://www.newworknetwork.org.uk/register.php)

### **Artsadmin E-digest**

A comprehensive e-mail digest from ArtsAdmin that covers information about opportunities, employment, training, conferences, calls for artists, professional development, networking, ...

To subscribe to the ArtsAdmin e-digest list go to:

<http://www.artsadmin.co.uk/opportunities/e-digest.php?id=31>

### **Live Art Development Agency eBulletin - thisisliveart**

The Agency sends out information once a week about a small selection of Live Art opportunities and events. To subscribe:

[http://www.thisisliveart.co.uk/about\\_us/join\\_maillist.html](http://www.thisisliveart.co.uk/about_us/join_maillist.html)

The Agency also sends out a regular enewsletter about its own activities and occasional postings about special Agency events.

### **Live Art Discussion List**

A comprehensive and active discussion list with information and debate relating to Live Art, performance art and new performance. Often includes calls for artists, artists' opportunities, 'what's on', funding and commissions info.

Subscribe to the list by visiting:

Website: [www.jiscmail.ac.uk/lists/liveart.html](http://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/lists/liveart.html)

### **criticalnetwork**

criticalnetwork is a website and e-bulletin, covering art events of the week ahead, with relevant information about artists, organisations, publications and opportunities, all recommended by criticalnetwork. A collective of UK-based practicing artists maintains the content of criticalnetwork. There is a specific focus on activity in the UK and Ireland, concentrating on critical and contextual art, events and discussion.

Subscribe to the list by visiting:

Website: [www.criticalnetwork.co.uk/](http://www.criticalnetwork.co.uk/)

### **Other useful e-groups/websites**

Artvehicle

Runriot

Artrabbit

E-Flux

Kultureflash

Flavorpill

ART-ALL@JISCMAIL.AC.UK

Artartart (Matt Roberts Arts)

Etcetera (Disability Cultural Projects)

Southwark Arts Forum

Creative Capital

CIDA

Bellyflop

Don't Panic

Wooloo.org

Time Out

Critical Network

Also don't forget about Facebook and Twitter profiles.

## Where can I find relatively cheap space to rehearse?

There are a few spaces in London that can offer reasonable and cheap space for you to rehearse and/or use as studio spaces to develop work. You should think about approaching these places if you need space - and these suggestions are not exhaustive. You could also think about art bartering for space with your existing networks – i.e. Can I use your studio for a few hours if I help you with ...

Artsdamin - <http://www.artsadmin.co.uk/resources/links>

Chisenhale Dance Space – <http://www.chisenhaledancespace.co.uk/studio>

Motel de Nowhere - <http://moteldenowhere.wordpress.com/about/>

]PerformanceSpace[ - <http://www.performancespace.org/s-p-a-c-e.php>

## Where should I look to find funding for my work?

We recommend that when it comes to funding you should make sure you fully research your options, be realistic in your planning, read the available information, and talk to any available funding advisors.

Don't forget the elists above will also post out opportunities for funding, residencies and commissions.

When starting in your career the best sources of funding are often those close at hand – support from a regional initiative or local authority. Many artists also balance a paying 'day-job' with their professional practice. If however your project requires more funding then here are some places to start looking:

Arts Council England - Grants for the Arts  
[www.artscouncil.org.uk/funding/index.php](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/funding/index.php)

Awards For All  
[www.awardsforall.org.uk](http://www.awardsforall.org.uk)

Tower Hamlets Arts Forum. A good local authority funding guide  
[www.lbthartsandevents.info/](http://www.lbthartsandevents.info/)

DCMS (Department of Culture Media and Sport) Guide on arts funding  
[www.culture.gov.uk/reference\\_library/publications/3597.aspx](http://www.culture.gov.uk/reference_library/publications/3597.aspx)

## What is the best way to represent my work?

There will be many times in your career when you need to represent your practice to others – a one on one artist advice session, a submission for a commission, a funding application, etc. When the time comes think carefully about how you can best present / represent yourself, and at the same time think about what the person / people you are presenting to want to know about you and what you do. Remember that there is unlikely to be 'one' package that you should have but rather a selection of 'components' you can package together.

We would suggest that there are three key areas that you must always address:

**Content** what it's about (and why)

**Form** what it looks like / how it works

**Context** how it relates to the sector and its history; how it relates to what the venue / funder / commissioner is doing / interested in; and how it relates to what

other artists are doing

If you are preparing a package of information to give someone or to submit with an application then ask yourself some of the following questions. The answers to these questions can often be found by applying common sense and / or the person you are preparing the information for can provide them.

- Should I provide documentation of my work (maybe a dvd of a full performance) or a promotional package (like a showreel with edited highlights)?
- How much material should I provide?
- What form should my documentation / package take – dvd, images, text, URL link to on-line material?
- Should I include a cv (a list of what I've done) or a biography (a more discursive approach)?
- Should I include press clippings, reviews or testimonials? If I don't have any available can I arrange for someone who has seen my work – eg university tutor – to write something for me?

If you are writing a proposal you should ask yourself:

- Have I covered all the bases – ie have I made sure all the 'required' information (such as addressing guidelines of an application procedure) is included?
- What should the tone of my writing be – hard-sell or background information?
- Do I want a reaction / response? If yes, have I built in a mechanism for this response (such as 'please let me know if you will be able to attend my performance')?

Our four top tips, in relation to preparing written statements about your work are:

1. To make sure you write a short (paragraph) and long (page) version early on in the development of your project and continually update and revise these statements as your project progresses. Preparing statements at this early stage will ensure that you can clearly articulate your ideas and that you have material 'ready to go' if someone requests it.
2. Get a friend to read a draft with 'fresh eyes'. You'd be surprised how much needless jargon is used in writing proposals. Ask your friend to 'put themselves in the shoes of the reader'.
3. Be sure to provide the information that is 'required'. This almost always includes the content, form and context.
4. Target your proposal. Make sure your material is written for the person who is going to read it. And if you are writing a letter never use 'dear sir/madam'; instead do some basic research and identify the name of the person you want to communicate with.

## **Critical Writing**

You should also try and think about how you can create written contexts for your work to be represented within. Reviews about your work in the press are always great, but with the event of independent online blogs there are a growing number of mechanisms for you to think about engaging with writers about and around your work, its presentations and also its relationship to your practice. Again, if the right context for writing about your work doesn't exist you could set up a blog and ask for contributions. Open Dialogues ([www.open-dialogues.blogspot.com](http://www.open-dialogues.blogspot.com)), New Work Network ([www.newworknetwork.info](http://www.newworknetwork.info)) and Bellyflop ([www.bellyflopmag.com](http://www.bellyflopmag.com)) are good models for you to consider either becoming involved in or adapting to your own needs.

## **What one thing do I need to remember?**

Don't forget that you are an artist! Your work and artistic ideas are your main asset. You need to keep your ideas fresh and refreshed. And you need to work towards 'knowing' your ideas and how best to communicate them to others.