Open Call for Curators: Co-Curate with Us!

Guidance Notes

6 February 2020
The Opportunity

We are seeking one curator from each of the Western Balkans countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia) to respond to the themes explored by UK-based artists in the moving image exhibition, FUTURE ECOLOGIES. In collaboration with the British Council and LUX, you will introduce artworks by contemporary artists from the Western Balkans whose works resonate with the themes in FUTURE ECOLOGIES to show in parallel with the UK-based works. You will also create an audience engagement programme that attracts audiences, both familiar with, and new to contemporary artist films.

This is a design, development and exchange opportunity for curators in the Western Balkans to curate FUTURE ECOLOGIES in their respective countries and develop a public engagement programme. Selected curators will travel to the UK for a week-long curatorial intensive hosted by LUX where they will meet with UK-based artists and arts organisations as well as refine their curatorial concepts for presenting FUTURE ECOLOGIES in the Western Balkans.

- **Open to:** Curators from the Western Balkans countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia) with a proven track record of curating exhibitions
- **Application Deadline:** 12:00 midnight (CET) on 8 March 2020
- **Costs to cover travel, visas, accommodation and subsistence for the UK curatorial intensive week trip** will be covered in addition to the Bursary below
- **Bursary:** 1,000 GBP net

About Future Ecologies

FUTURE ECOLOGIES is part of WE ARE HERE: Artists’ Moving Image from the British Council Collection and LUX, a series of artists’ film programmes that interrogate how contemporary artists explore themes like storytelling and heritage, social inclusion, gender identity, urbanisation and sustainability, and diverse voices through biography, documentary, poetry and fiction in film.

Through a mix of documentary, (science) fictional and poetic modes, the works in FUTURE ECOLOGIES bring together incisive views on the environment, ecologies and cosmologies, climate change, the Anthropocene, colonisation and extractive industries, urban futures and sustainability.

At the heart of FUTURE ECOLOGIES is a curated compilation of four works by Uriel Orlow, Louis Henderson, Charlotte Prodger and Ben Rivers. In addition to the compilation, there are a series of time-based media installations by artists like Lawrence Lek and Jane and Louise Wilson that can also be displayed with the compilation. Please see the [Future Ecologies](#)
Exhibition Specifications attachment for further details about the works and their installation requirements.

About the British Council
The British Council was founded in 1934 and is the UK’s international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. We work with more than 100 countries across the world in the fields of arts and culture, the English language, education and civil society. Last year, we reached more than 80 million people directly and 791 million people overall, including online, through broadcasts and publications.

The British Council Visual Arts team are committed to promoting the achievements of the UK’s best artists abroad. We connect the UK’s visual arts sector with professionals internationally. We focus predominantly on staging and supporting contemporary art projects enabling mutual exchange for arts professionals and engagement of audiences internationally.

About our Partner
LUX is an international arts agency that supports and promotes artists’ moving image practices and the ideas that surround them. Founded in 2002 as a charity and not-for-profit limited company, the organisation builds on a long lineage of predecessors (The London Film-Makers’ Co-operative, London Video Arts and The Lux Centre) which stretch back to the 1960s.

For more information: www.lux.org.uk

Curatorial Intensive: Working with Artists’ Moving Image
As part of this co-curatorial opportunity, successful applicants will travel to the UK for a Curatorial Intensive study week. Facilitated by LUX, the curators will explore the practice of curating artists’ moving images in contemporary art and cinema and will embrace a broad conception of curating as the treatment of works from their acquisition, archiving, preservation, restoration, and reformatting, through to screening, programming, installation, circulation, translation, and interpretation. There will be a focus on refining the curatorial concepts for FUTURE ECOLOGIES in the Western Balkans where curators will have the opportunity to view the UK-based works.

We will consider the history of artists’ moving image practices in the UK and beyond, some of the conceptual and theoretical ideas that inform it, the international networks of distributors, collections, festivals and institutions that support it and the practices of presenting work in a range of contexts from museums, archives, cinemathques, and other sites.

The programme will consist of a series of seminars, talks and screenings with LUX staff, UK based curators and programmers and contemporary artists plus visits to the British Council Collection, key institutions and galleries in London, and a day research trip to Bristol where we will attend an exhibition opening at Spike Island.
Throughout the week, curators will have the opportunity to network with the professional sector. There will also be the chance to connect with fellow curators, artists and programmers at a talk where successful applicants will be expected to give short presentations introducing themselves and their work. Included in the week is a series of discussions with some of the UK-based artists in WE ARE HERE and curators working with moving image.

The programme will be led by Benjamin Cook, founder Director of LUX and LUX Scotland who has been professionally involved in visual arts and independent film sectors in the UK for the past 22 years as a curator, producer, archivist, writer and teacher.

**What are we looking for with this Open Call?**

In collaboration with the British Council and LUX, you will respond to the themes explored by UK-based artists in FUTURE ECOLOGIES by submitting a unique curatorial proposal that includes contemporary artists’ works from the Western Balkans to show in parallel with the UK-based works. These works do not necessarily have to be film-based works. You will also create an audience engagement programme that will attract audiences, both familiar with, and new to contemporary artist films. The audience engagement programme should involve other stakeholders like civil society organisations, activist groups, artist collectives and academics who are active in the thematic areas of FUTURE ECOLOGIES to facilitate a wider social dialogue within the exhibition space. You may also wish to think about programming aimed at professional development for artists, curators, filmmakers, programmers and students.

**Key Responsibilities**

Successful applicants will be expected to:

- Work with LUX and British Council curators who will help shape the overall programme around the UK-based works in FUTURE ECOLOGIES
- Collaborate with the other regional curators to agree a cohesive narrative around the themes in FUTURE ECOLOGIES
- Along with your own selection and the UK-based works, be prepared to include other regional works selected by the curators (subject to agreement with the other curators and artists)
- Collaborate with organisations and institutions in the Western Balkans (including but not limited to – contemporary art museums and galleries; film festivals; cultural and youth centres, independent galleries, arts academies with display spaces; screening rooms/cinemas, activist groups, civil society organisations appropriate for the themes)
- Attend the curatorial intensive study week in the UK for research and development
- Present a short introduction to your work/collective/organisation to professional contacts during the research visit in the UK
- Manage the delivery of the exhibition at proposed location(s) in your respective countries, including the opening event
• Participate in press and marketing for the exhibition at all events
• Design the audience engagement events (workshops, discussions, talks)
• Write labels and interpretation text for all works in your presentation of the exhibition
• Write a catalogue essay (max. length 2000 words), if agreed to produce
• Write an evaluation report at the close of the project

What does this opportunity offer?
• Access to the British Council and LUX collections of the best of contemporary UK-based artists’ films and introduction to UK-based artists
• The chance co-curate an exhibition in collaboration with the British Council and LUX
• A week-long curatorial intensive study visit hosted by LUX in London with a group of regional curators/collaborators including workshops and site-visits in the UK
• To collaborate with other in-country and Western Balkans partners
• Opportunity to exchange knowledge and skills around shared models of practice with support from experts in the field of moving image
• The chance to develop new audiences and broker connections with the UK and Western Balkans professional sector

Key Information
• Open to: Curators from the Western Balkans countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia) with a proven track record of curating exhibitions
• Application Deadline: 12:00 midnight (CET) on 8 March 2020
• Curatorial intensive study week: Successful applicants will be required to travel to the UK from 25 April – 3 May 2020
• Exhibitions: Applicants must be prepared for the first exhibition in the Western Balkans region to open in July 2020
• Costs to cover travel, visas, accommodation and subsistence for the UK curatorial intensive week trip will be covered in addition to the Bursary below
• Bursary: 1,000 GBP net.

How to Apply:
Applications must be submitted according to the following:
• Application should be in English and clearly labelled with the curator’s name
• Applications should be no longer than 5 pages, filled out electronically, rather than by hand, submitted by email. Please note that for any applications longer than 5 pages, the selection panel will only read the first 5 pages.

• All documents should be combined in a single PDF file. The email submission should be a maximum of 5MB.

Your proposal should include the following:

• A brief biography and description or links to your previous curatorial work (300 words max and 3 links max).

• Why you are interested in working on FUTURE ECOLOGIES (300 words max).

• A clearly articulated synopsis of your concept and/or exhibition proposal and how it relates to the open call brief (500 words max).

• In addition to the FUTURE ECOLOGIES compilation, a list of the additional time-based media installation works from FUTURE ECOLOGIES.

• An indicative list of contemporary artists’ works from the Western Balkans (where possible, please provide an image and/or link); these works do not necessarily have to be film-based works, but if they are please indicate whether you will show them as individual works or your own curated compilation.

• Identify a venue(s) or type of venue(s) you envision for the exhibition and public events in your country. More than one city/location per country would be preferred.

• An indicative outline of your proposed educational programme (this could include inviting one of the UK artists and/or curator for a talk and/or workshop) (300 words max).

• An indication of what resourcing you require from your partner venue and British Council team (200 words max).

• An indicative, top-level budget proposal for exhibition design, installation and delivery. Please see the Future Ecologies Exhibition Specifications attachment for further details on how British Council can support delivery.

Along with the proposal, applicants should submit the following:

• Letter of support from management/director of any partners you intend to engage (no more than 1-page max). They should indicate their readiness to contribute to project costs per proposed budget, sign loan agreements, and adhere to British Council policies and standards on safety and communication.

• Letter of support from your employer, if applicable (no more than 1-page max).

• Confirmation that you possess valid travel documents and can submit it for a UK visa prior to visit.
• Confirmation that you are available to travel for the Curatorial Intensive study week from 25 April – 3 May 2020

**Essential Criteria**

1. Must be a curator in the Western Balkans countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia) with a proven track record of curating exhibitions

2. Must submit the application in full

3. Confirm availability and commitment to travel to the UK for the Curatorial Intensive study week (25 April – 3 May 2020)

In addition to the three essential criteria, the selection panel will assess applications based on the clarity, strength and imaginative quality of the curatorial proposal; how it meets the open call brief; its feasibility for delivery within the given timeline; proposed budget; why the applicant wishes to participate, demonstration of their willingness to collaborate; proven partnership with the exhibition space(s).

Shortlisted applicants may need to be available for a follow-up conversation between 9 – 14 March.

If you have any questions, please email programmes@britishcouncil.rs. We look forward to receiving your proposals.

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