

SALT BRIDGES

Contemporary Art at the Oxford University Department of Biochemistry

Engaging Science Consultant's Brief

For issue, 1 August 2007

Summary

The Department of Biochemistry is seeking to appoint a Science Consultant to develop a public engagement plan for **Salt Bridges**, the contemporary art programme for the new Biochemistry building. The Science Consultant will work in partnership with the Department's art consultant to develop a practical plan of future activities, which use **Salt Bridges** as a resource for communicating with new audiences about science, art and architecture.

Introduction

The Department of Biochemistry at Oxford University is developing a programme of contemporary art commissions as part of a major capital project. The aims of this programme are

- To create an outstanding contemporary art collection within a world-class scientific research department
- To facilitate inter-disciplinary discourse between artists and scientists
- To involve artists in the intellectual life of the department
- To provide new approaches and resources for public engagement with science and art.

The purpose of this consultancy is to address the public engagement aim by researching and establishing a plan of activities for the first two years of opening of the new building (late 2008 – late 2010).

The Department has secured a generous grant from Arts Council England South East to support this work.

Salt Bridges

Salt Bridges is led by Consultant Artist, Nicky Hirst, who was appointed in August 2005 to establish an overall creative concept for the art programme and make proposals for specific artist projects including a commission of her own work. Nicky Hirst has proposed a deft and subtle creative concept that provides a versatile point of departure for other projects whilst maintaining imaginative and intellectual rigour. She has proposed a role for the art programme that draws an analogy between art and the new building and the relationship between the order and chance in the scientific process.

“Chaos, chance and poetry can be layered onto the more controlled and analytical structure of the building. The artworks need to incorporate notions of beauty and pattern, what fits, economy of means and ideas of form and order. The artworks need to conflate the boundaries where the processes and practices of art and science begin and end.” Nicky Hirst, September 2005.

Several projects are currently being developed including two large works on internal and external glass by Hirst, a residency in the Structural Bioinformatics and

Computational Biochemistry Unit by Tim Head, a photography residency linked to the construction project by Peter Fraser, large wall paintings for the Atrium by Ian Davenport and a series of 'chandelier' commissions. Full details on the Biochemistry Art Programme can be found on the project website <http://saltbridges.bioch.ox.ac.uk>.

Details of public engagement activities that have already taken place are provided in Appendix 1.

Consultant's Brief

- To work in partnership with the arts consultant to research and plan a programme of public engagement activities for the first two years of opening of the new Biochemistry Building (2008 – 2010).
- To identify a range of target audiences through consultation with the project partners, artists and other key organisations. This will include audiences with specialist interests (biochemistry, science, contemporary art, public art, architecture, urban design, planning) as well as the general public.
- To consider how **Salt Bridges** engages with socially excluded groups as required by the University's Diversity and Equal Opportunities Policy.
- To develop a varied programme of different types of public engagement activities, with different timescales to reach different audiences in different ways. An indication of the content of each activity is required and how this relates specifically to **Salt Bridges**.
- To consult with and identify potential partner organisations and networks at local, regional, national and international levels. (See appendix 2 for outline consultation list)
- To consider a variety of public engagement activities including, but not limited to, public open days, website, presentations and lectures, publications, workshops, temporary events and debate.
- To provide a timeline with links to other regional and national events such as Architecture Week and National Science Week.
- To recommend ways in which the Public Engagement Plan can support outcomes that will have a legacy beyond 2010, for example through the production of resource packs, publications or skills retained within the Department.
- To include recommendations for evaluating the public engagement programme.
- To prepare a realistic budget estimate for the delivery of the Public Engagement Plan.
- To prepare and submit one funding application to support the core public engagement programme¹.

¹ It is anticipated that this will be to the Wellcome Trust People or Society Award Scheme.

- To identify any other sources of potential partner funding for specific activities.

Management

Salt Bridges is managed by an experienced Arts Steering Group with representation from the Department of Biochemistry, Hawkins/Brown Architects, Ruskin School of Drawing and Fine Art and Louise O'Reilly Visual Arts². The Department of Biochemistry is represented by Jonathan Hodgkin, Professor of Genetics, Mark Sansom, Professor of Bioinformatics and Denis O'Driscoll, Departmental Administrator. Further details on the project partners are provided in appendix 3.

The Department appointed Louise O'Reilly as the art consultant for the project following a competitive tendering process in August 2005. Her remit includes commissions management, arts fundraising and audience engagement.

Consultant Appointment Process

The Science Consultant appointment will be made by the Arts Steering Group via a competitive tendering process. The consultant's brief is being sent to a list of potential partners and advertised in the following ways ...

Consultants are invited to submit an expression of interest by 5.00 pm on **Monday 17 September** to Louise O'Reilly Visual Arts, PO Box 52174, London E2 9WR or louise@lorva.co.uk. The Department is aiming to hold interviews during the week commencing 24 September 2007.

Consultants are invited to submit a CV detailing the skills and experience relevant to this role, together with a letter setting out:

- Comment on relevant previous experience and skills
- Reasons for applying for the consultancy
- Brief outline of proposed approach to the project
- A breakdown of the fee, anticipated expenses and VAT liability
- An indication of likely apportionment of time
- The Consultant's expectations of the Department of Biochemistry as a client
- Two professional referees

Timescale

3 Aug 2007	Science Consultant's Brief issued
17 Sept 2007	Expressions of interest received
w/o 24 Sept 2007	Short-listed candidates interviewed
Oct / Sept 2007	Consultant appointed
Oct 2007	Set up
Nov 2007	Consultancy starts
Feb 2008	Outline plan
April 2008	Final plan & funding bid submitted

Fee & Expenses

The Department has a maximum fixed budget for the Science Consultancy role of £9,000 this is inclusive of VAT and expenses.

² In association with Artpoint Trust Ltd.

Fundraising

Salt Bridges is supported by the Department of Biochemistry, Oxford University Estates Office, Gulbenkian Foundation, Wellcome Trust, Arts Council England and a number of private donors.

The programme is subject to further fundraising as is the delivery stage of the audience engagement plan.

An application to the Wellcome Trust Large Arts Grant scheme was submitted in April 2007 for the production stage of two commissions by Tim Head. This application included a bid for £23,000 for the delivery stage of the audience engagement plan. The detailed planning of this activity forms part of this consultancy, however, the following outline was provided in the Wellcome Trust application:

- Science/Art/Architecture open days (3 per year x 2 years) organised to coincide with a) National Science Week (March 2009 & 2010 partnering with engaging science organisation) b) Fine Art degree shows (June 2009 & 2010 partnering with Ruskin School of Drawing and Fine Art and Slade School of Fine Art) and c) Open House (September 2009 & 2010, partnering with Oxford Brookes University Department of Architecture Planning and Urban Design)
- Science student open days (1 per year x 2 years) focusing on science and visualization – (re)engaging an existing science student audience at the science/art interface
- Science/Art workshop activity targeted at years 8 and 9 (i.e. pre GCSE options), linked to aspects of science and art curriculum, which includes visits by pupils to a scientific research environment & arts school environment. (2 per year x 2 years)
- Annual Oxford Science & Art Lecture (1 per year x 2 years, January 2009 & January 2010)
- Virtual Events – webpages on Tim Head projects accessible to the general public on SBCB website, Dept of Biochemistry homepage & 'news of the day' item on University Website.
- Science / Art publication available in print (target journals to be confirmed) and online.

The outcome of the Wellcome Trust Large Arts Grant application will be known in September 2007.

Evaluation

The public engagement plan will include recommendations regarding evaluation and will be expected to establish a base line for future evaluation.

The Arts Steering Group has established the following evaluation criteria for the development of the plan itself. A number of these criteria have already been met or met in part as a result of audience engagement activity in June 2007.

- An imaginative, stimulating and deliverable programme of proposed activities.
- Establishment of a core mailing list of contacts and website hits commensurate in number with target contact numbers. (part achieved June 2007)

- Proposed activities for the general public, specialist audiences (science / architecture / art), young people and culturally diverse groups.
- At least one significant partnership established with another HE institution and one local school.
- At least one significant partnership established with an organisation specialising in public engagement of science linked to future delivery of that aspect of the project.
- A successful launch event establishing the core audience and support network for the project. (achieved June 2007)
- Submission of a funding application to support audience engagement plan delivery. (achieved April 2007)
- Enhanced awareness within the Department and University of **Salt Bridges** (achieved June 2007).
- Establishment of contact with at least 5 potential private donors to **Salt Bridges**. (achieved June 2007).

Further Information

For further information about the project please contact,

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07710 784704

Professor Jonathan Hodgkin
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Appendix 1

Previous Public Engagement Activity

- January 2006 Art & Science at the University of Oxford
Public Lecture by three artists working with Science
Departments at the University of Oxford.
Katherine Yass (William Dunn School of Pathology)
Nicky Hirst (Department of Biochemistry)
Richard Deacon (Oxford Centre for Gene Function)
Chair, Sian Ede, Director of the Arts at the Gulbenkian
Foundation.
Attendance = 85
Promoted via University, civic and arts networks.
Venue, Martin Woods Lecture Theatre, Dept of Physics.
- March 2007 **Salt Bridges** website launched
- June 2007 Art, Science & Architecture
Public lecture by three artist and their collaborators working on
projects for the new Biochemistry Building.
Nicky Hirst / Morag Morrison, Hawkins Brown Architects
Tim Head / Prof Mark Sansom
Peter Fraser / Prof Jonathan Hodgkin
Chair, Louise O'Reilly
Attendance = 70 – 80
Promoted via Architecture Week brochure & website,
direct email shots (x2) and partner websites.
Venue, Martin Woods Lecture Theatre, Dept of Physics
- June 2007 **Salt Bridges** Exhibition, Entrance Space, Modern Art
Oxford, Pembroke Street, Oxford.
Attendance (tbc)
Promoted as above plus Modern Art Oxford brochure and
web-site.
- June 2007 **Salt Bridges** Reception, Modern Art Oxford
190 invited
Attendance (approx 65)
Personal letter of invitation from Head of Department of
Biochemistry.

Appendix 2

Outline Consultation List

Science (science consultant)

University of Oxford, Department of Biochemistry
The Oxford Trust
Exsite UK (Association of Science Centres)
Royal Society
Cheltenham Science Festival
Royal Society
Science Made Simple
University of West of England
BBSRC (Biotechnology and Bioscience Research Council)
Small Talk

Art (art consultant)

Oxford Inspires
Modern Art Oxford
Photoworks
Arc Plus
OVADA
Slade Centre for Electronic Media Arts
Ruskin School of Fine Art
Oxford Brookes University Dept of Fine Art
Oxford City Council Arts Officer
Oxford County Council Arts Team
Allways Learning
IXIA

Architecture & Built Environment (art consultant)

Oxford Brookes University, Depts of Architecture, Planning & Urban Design
Architecture Foundation
CABE
Open House
Solent Centre for Architecture and Design
RIBA & RIBA SE

Public Engagement General (both)

University of Oxford Department of Continuing Education
University of Oxford Diversity and Equal Opportunities Unit

Appendix 3

Details of Project Partners

The Oxford University Department of Biochemistry is a world leader in Biochemistry Research. It is the largest Biochemistry Department in Europe and contributes significantly to the University of Oxford's national and international standing. The status of the Department reflects its central contribution to breakthrough areas of chromosome biology, DNA stability and cancer research, protein and virus structure, and computer modelling. (www.bioch.ox.ac.uk)

Hawkins\Brown Architects have been at the forefront of British architecture for seventeen years producing buildings of a consistently high quality for a wide variety of clients. Hawkins\Brown actively seek inspiration and parallels with arts practice and have worked on projects with artists such as Anya Gallachio, Hans Op de Beeck, Martin Richman, Rob and Roberta Smith, Rachel Whiteread and Richard Wilson. (www.hawkinsbrown.co.uk)

The Ruskin School of Drawing and Fine Art is represented by Paul Bonaventura, Senior Research Fellow in Fine Art Studies. The Ruskin School opens up facilities across Oxford University to creative individuals and organisations nationally and internationally. (www.ruskin-sch.ox.ac.uk/research/laboratory)

Louise O'Reilly Visual Arts / Artpoint Trust Ltd. Salt Bridges is being developed and managed by Louise O'Reilly in association with Artpoint Trust Ltd. Louise O'Reilly has 15 years' experience of delivering creative projects in the public realm and was Director of Artpoint from 2000 - 2005. Artpoint is a creative company working with artists to support new thinking for the built environment and public space. Artpoint receives regular funding from Arts Council England and is the strategic agency for public art commissioning in south-east England. (www.lorva.co.uk, www.artpointtrust.org.uk)

Appendix 4

Salt Bridges Public Discussion, 21.06.07

Summary of evaluation feedback.

Numbers attending approx 80 – 90.
Forms returned 22.

Male	6
Female	13
<u>Total</u>	<u>19</u>

Under 15	0
16 – 24	0
25 – 44	11
45 – 64	10
Over 64	0
<u>Total</u>	<u>21</u>

How much did you enjoy this event?

Excellent	15
Good	7
OK	0
<u>Total</u>	<u>22</u>

Has attending this event encouraged you to attend more architecture week events in the future?

Yes Definitely	14
Possibly	6
No	1
<u>Total</u>	<u>21</u>

Other Comments

- More of the same.
- An interesting subject, but really important that quiet speakers, especially if hesitant also, can be heard.
- Very interested to hear Nicky Hirst talk. Very good.
- Very good format – could have been extended discussion – gone on longer for more questions and refreshments after with an opportunity for informal discussion.
- Jolly good, well done, good format.
- Too long.
- Pleased it was held in such a good environment.
- I think Nicky is brilliant. The glass wall reminds me of Pompidou in Paris. Lovely I think.
- Discussion was good.