

The Atkinson, Sefton Libraries, and The National Trust

Call for Artists: Coastal Commission, Formby



Introduction

2017 is Sefton's Year of the Coast, and marks the 50th anniversary of the National Trust's stewardship of Formby. The Atkinson, in partnership with Sefton Library Service and National Trust, is offering a new commission opportunity for an artist, maker or artists' collective at the National Trust's site at Formby. The artist will develop a new work or project that invites new public engagement with the coast, and its natural and human histories and futures, connecting the site with the Atkinson Museum and its collections.

Applications are welcomed from artists working in any discipline, or across art forms. We are particularly keen to hear from artists who actively engage with communities or publics within their practice, or who produce work that includes elements of participation or performance. Artists at any stage in their career, except for those currently studying, are invited to apply.

The project will take place between June 2017 and February 2018 to include research and development, delivery and evaluation. An Artist's Fee of £5000 and Production Budget of £5000 is available for production of the project, and a further £1500 is provided to produce a work or project to be displayed at in the Atkinson's new Coast gallery.

The full brief can be downloaded [here](#)

Deadline for applications: 5pm, Wednesday 21st June 2017

Interviews: Wednesday 5th July 2017

This commission is the part of *At The Library*, a programme of artists projects, commissions and residencies taking place in Sefton's Libraries. The project is supported through public funding from Arts Council England and the Heritage Lottery Fund.

For any questions or enquiries please contact Maria Brewster on library@scottbrewster.co.uk

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Artists Brief

The Coastline is Sefton's defining feature, stretching from historic docklands of Bootle through the working docks at Seaforth, via Crosby's dunes and the Alt Valley marshlands to Formby's pinewoods, and beyond to Ainsdale's windswept beach and Southport's pier and funfair in the North. The Sefton Coast is one of the largest and most spectacular unspoilt sand dune systems in the country, supporting a huge variety of plants and animals.

To mark Sefton's *Year of the Coast*, and 50 years of the National Trust's work in Formby, we wish to commission an artist, maker or collective to make a new work or series of works that invite new engagement with the Formby site. The project should offer local people and visitors a new way of looking at, thinking about, or experiencing the extraordinary, ever changing, Formby coast. The commission is open to practitioners working in any discipline or art form.

We offer an open, exploratory brief. The work can be made in response to any aspect of the area's human or natural history, or the relationship between the two. The Artist will have access to the Atkinson's natural history collections and expertise of museum staff. The Ranger team and Library staff offer a significant conservation, local and historical knowledge that can be used to support the artist's research.

Engagement with local people will be essential to the success of the project and it is vital that artists who apply are open to working collaboratively. We would like the work, or its development, to link in some way to the library at Formby, whether through basing processes or activities there, or drawing upon the resource of Library staff, library users and local people as collaborators in and contributors to the development of the work, and as audiences.

The completed work may be presented on site (as an intervention, installation, participatory event or performance, or in any other form) or presented off-site, online or as a publication. The artist need not have prior experience working in an outdoor context, as they will receive support in developing a proposal appropriate to the site.

An element of the commissioned work will be presented in the Atkinson Museum's Landing Gallery, which is currently being developed. The Atkinson's Museum displays reflect the changing relationship between communities and coast, and the new gallery will focus on current and future concerns and responses to this environment. This may take any form (including but not exclusive to sculptural work, digital work, film, images, art objects, print material or publication, documentation of an event).

Application and Selection Process

We aim for a simple and straightforward application process. We do **not** request a detailed proposal at this stage. Please provide a letter of application comprising:

- an introduction to your artistic practice.
- a brief response to this opportunity, describing what interests you about the context of Formby and the Sefton Coast and why you would like to be considered.
- up to 4 examples of works or projects that you feel represent your practice and its relevance to the project. (Please provide photographic documentation via JPEGs or web links. Film or video work/documentation should be uploaded to Vimeo or Youtube)
- a current CV or biography and two references

Please send this information compiled as **one** PDF document not exceeding 5 pages and no greater than 5MB in total.

Artists will be shortlisted for interview on the basis of:

- relevance, quality and ambition of artistic practice and ideas.
- approach to the opportunity
- approach to audience engagement and evidence of this in their practice

Applications should be addressed to Maria Brewster on library@scottbrewster.co.uk. Please ensure that both your name and **COASTAL COMMISSION** appear in the subject line.

Selection Panel

Up to 4 artists will be invited meet the selection panel on Wednesday July 5th in Formby. Artists unable to travel may be interviewed via Skype. Reasonable UK travel expenses to attend interviews will be reimbursed on the submission of receipts.

The panel will consist of:

- Emma Anderson, Director, The Atkinson
- Kelda Savage, National Trust Cultural Programme Manager
- Kate Martin, National Trust Ranger
- Maria Brewster, Independent Curator and Producer

Site Visits

Individual artists are welcome to arrange a site visit/tour before submitting an application but this is not a pre-requisite, and we are not able to cover travel costs. Formby is free to visit (a small charge for parking applies) and artists are welcome to make an unaccompanied visit at any time.

Facilitated visits, with Ranger tours and a chance to discuss any questions about the brief, will be offered on 1st & 8th June 2017.

To book a place on a facilitated site visit, please contact Maria Brewster on library@scottbrewster.co.uk

Practicalities

Up to 4 artists will be invited for a site visit and informal interview for which reasonable travel expenses within the UK will be provided.

Artist's Fee: An artist fee of £5000 to be paid in 3 installments - at the beginning, midpoint and conclusion of the project. The fee is based on approximately 20-22 days of the artist time.

Production budget: Total budget £6500 to be managed by the project team. The project production budget of £5000 includes any costs related to delivery of the project including but not limited to: associate artists or sub-contractor fees, materials, equipment, technical support, installation and de-rig, packing and transportation etc. A further budget of up to £1500 is available to produce a work, documentation, publication or other presentation arising from the project to be part of the Atkinson's new *Coast* Museum Display.

Travel and per diem: £500 to cover travel to and from Formby and around the local area; and towards per diem, will be provided. This will be paid direct to the artist for them to manage as required.

Accommodation: We are flexible about the artist's arrangements for accommodation, which will be provided locally and will be organised by the production team in discussion with the artist.

Workspace: can be provided at a number of potential locations to be agreed with the selected artist. Workspace will be available at the Library and a temporary studio is available for use at The Atkinson

Additional budget and resources for marketing and documentation will be available. All budget figures stated above are inclusive of any VAT.

Key Dates

Pre-application site visits: Unaccompanied visits at any time, dawn to dusk.

Facilitated visits and Q&A regarding the brief: 1st & 8th June

Deadline for Applications: Wednesday 21st June 2017

Informal Interviews: Wednesday 5th July

Project begins by: August 2017 Project concludes by: 28th February 2018

For any other enquiries or information about the commission or the context, please contact Maria Brewster on library@scottbrewster.co.uk

About Formby & The Sefton Coast

The Sefton Coast contains one of the most unique ecosystems in England, stretching for 21 miles between Waterloo and Southport. Halfway up this stretch of coastline, Formby comprises a sweeping sandy beach, a complex of dunes and a stunning pinewood with views to the Lake District and the North Wales mountains. The National Trust has cared for the landscape at Formby for the last 50 years. The conservation charity has cared for 210 hectares of this special stretch of coast since 12 April 1967, when it was safeguarded through the Neptune Fund, set up specifically to purchase and protect coast around the UK. Visit www.nationaltrust.org.uk/formby for more information about the National Trust at Formby.

Formby is an area of great importance for its mobile sand dunes – some of the best in the entire UK - and the wildlife that lives here, including rare Natterjack Toads, sand lizards and red squirrels in the woodland. The habitat ranges from the tidal sand flats, mobile and fixed dunes, and slacks- low hollows formed by windblown sand, which often fill with fresh water in winter. Formby beach alone has 500 acres of sand dunes, saltmarsh, and a large area of pine woodland. Up to 460 species of flowering plant, including 33 rare species like Petalwort - a rare liverwort can be found. Other flowers that carpet the dunes are Yellow Bartsia, round-leaved Wintergreen, early Marsh Orchid and Helleborines.

Humans have left their mark on the landscape since prehistoric times. Erosion of sand on the beach at Formby reveals layers of mud and sediment, laid down and covered in the late Neolithic and early Bronze Age. At certain tides, traces of Neolithic footprints are revealed. In June 2016, over 50 human footprints from 7000 years ago were uncovered on the beach. Formby was one of the earliest Viking settlements in the UK, leaving a Norse name for the village. The shoreline is treacherous to navigate and the remnants of numerous shipwrecks can be seen from the beach at low tides. The first recorded independent lifeboat service in Britain was established in 1776 at Formby Point. Victorian tourists would travel to area to gather specimens for their collections, causing the extinction of around three several rare plant species. A local entrepreneur designed a seaside resort here, and began to build it – only the ruins of its lido and promenade remain, partly buried in the sand. At the same time local families found a way to cultivate asparagus in the otherwise barren dunes, creating a successful industry and a regional delicacy.



Project Partners

The Atkinson

The Atkinson is Sefton's cultural hub: a museum, exhibition galleries, theatres, cinema and town library, in a fine Victorian building, extensively refurbished in 2014. Our programme is structured around a strong sense of place, celebrating extraordinary histories, individuals & events and the natural environment. The Coast, Sefton's defining geography, is a resonant and enduring theme. Our collections include natural and local history and Egyptology; and over 3,000 works of art, many of national significance, including work by the Scottish Colourists, Camden Town Group, Bloomsbury Group, major artists such as Laura Knight, Paul Nash, Henry Moore and Jacob Epstein and C20th Northern artists such as LS Lowry. We attract over 500,000 local, regional and national visitors every year.

www.theatkinson.co.uk

Sefton Libraries Contemporary Arts Programme

Sefton's six libraries provide a "thinking space in a public place". Extensive archives & local history collections are held at Crosby Library in Waterloo; smaller community libraries are located in Formby, Maghull, Netherton & Bootle. Our Contemporary Arts programme, *At The Library* is a new suite of commissions, projects and residencies focussing on the library as a space for creativity, learning and community engagement. The programme for 2017 includes projects by The Fairland Collective and Emily Speed, and collaborations with Bluecoat Print Studio and Live Art Development Agency. It is funded by Arts Council England.

Ten minutes walk from the shore, Formby Library is one of the best used in the Borough, and several walking, reading, local history and children's groups meet there daily. As well as its collections of fiction, non-fiction and local history, Formby Library has a newly planted garden, a dedicated children's library and large meeting room.

www.facebook.com/ArtAtTheLibrary

www.instagram.com/atthelibrary2017

National Trust and Trust New Art

The National Trust is an independent conservation charity caring for some of the country's most beautiful places for the benefit of current and future generations. With the help of our members, supporters and volunteers, we care for 300 historic buildings, 241 gardens, 250,000 hectares of land, museum quality collections and 775 miles of coastline. The Trust will spend £1 billion on essential conservation work over the next 10 years to safeguard the future of these extraordinary places.

www.nationaltrust.org.uk

Trust New Art is the National Trust's programme of contemporary arts inspired by our places. National Trust has been working with living artists since the 1980s, and in 2009 created Trust New Art through a partnership with Arts Council England. The programme makes contemporary arts available in National Trust properties; builds new and diverse audiences; and offers new opportunities to artists to work in new contexts.

www.nationaltrust.org.uk/trustnewart

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