

**OLD FIRE
STATION**

crisis

**HIDDEN
SPIRE**



Freelance Lead Artist
**Collaborative Installation, Sculpture &
Participatory Arts Project**

Recruitment Pack

About the role

The Hidden Spire Collective are a participatory arts group based at the Old Fire Station run in collaboration with Crisis Skylight Oxford.

They are seeking a freelance visual artist with experience in collaborative making, sculpture, installation or spatial practice to collaborate on a new arts project exploring the theme of Hope and Despair from July–October 2026 (artist involvement Sept-Oct).

The project will culminate in the creation of a portable collaborative structure/sculpture that can be activated through one or more public sharings, encounters or performances within gallery and/or public/community settings.

The selected artist will work collaboratively with participants and project staff to shape both the process and final public outcomes. Emphasis in this project is on co-creation, responsiveness, experimentation and shared authorship.

Ideally, we are looking for an artist with experience both in collaboratively creating sculptural/installation work and in developing live activations, performances or public encounters connected to that work. However, we are also very interested in hearing from artists whose experience is primarily in collaborative making, sculpture or installation, even if they have less experience in live activation or performance.

The Lead Artist will:

- collaborate with participants to develop the artistic direction of the project
- facilitate creative workshops and collaborative making sessions
- work with the project lead to support participants to contribute ideas in different ways and mediums
- help shape a portable collective structure/installation
- integrate live/public activation into the creative process
- contribute to planning and reflection with the project team
- support the delivery of one or more public sharings

The artist will work alongside a project lead and support staff.

We are looking for an Artist who:

- has experience in collaborative visual arts practice, particularly creating sculpture, structures, installations or spatial work with groups
- is interested in participatory and socially engaged approaches to making
- is confident developing work in response to emergent ideas and group-led processes and facilitating collaborative processes
- has experience of — or an interest in — live/public activation, performative elements or public encounter within visual arts practice
- can balance strong artistic thinking with openness, adaptability and accessibility

The Lead Artist will be supported by an experienced creative team, including a project lead and support staff, who will help hold the participatory process, support group welfare and engagement, and ensure collaborative decision-making throughout the project. While experience in participatory facilitation and socially engaged practice is welcomed, the artist is not expected to hold sole responsibility for these areas.

Experience in any of the following is particularly welcome:

- installation and spatial practice
- sculpture and collaborative making
- portable structures or temporary architecture
- public art/intervention
- processional or carnival arts
- interdisciplinary visual arts practice
- live art or performative activation



When?

The structure and format of the final sharing will emerge through the collaborative process.

June–Aug 2026

Working alongside artists, researchers and facilitators, members will explore what hope and despair mean in their own lives and communities.

September -October 2026

Collaborative making and development of the portable structure/installation artwork.

October 2026

Public sharings/activations within gallery and/or public/community settings.

Sessions with participants will take place on the following Mondays, 2-4pm at the Old Fire Station

Session dates:

September: 7,14,21,28

October: 5,12,19

Opening and sharing:
w/b 26 October

Evaluation session:

Date TBC - likely schedule by the end of November

Artists must be available to attend and co-facilitate at least 5 of the weekly sessions, plus the evaluation session, and be available on the w/b 26 October.



About the Hidden Spire Collective

The Hidden Spire Collective brings together adults from different walks of life to create ambitious, publicly shared artwork. Some members have lived experience of homelessness, having first come to the Old Fire Station through Crisis Skylight Oxford. Others have grown up in Oxford, moved here from other countries, or joined through wider community networks. What unites the group is a shared commitment to creativity, collaboration and making work that matters.

Since 2020, the Hidden Spire Collective has been a space where people can create, experiment and learn together. Members work alongside professional artists to develop work shaped by their own experiences, ideas and interests. At the heart of the project is co-creation: the group decides what stories it wants to tell, what themes it wants to explore, and what kind of artwork it wants to make. Members of the group will play a central role in shaping the themes, materials, ideas and public expression of the work.

For this project: the group are particularly interested in:

- creating one collaborative piece with space for multiple voices and mediums
- creating work that can move beyond gallery spaces
- developing a portable structure or installation
- creating opportunities for public sharing and encounter

This is the sixth project by the Collective. About 90% of the group have taken part in an HSC project before. You can find out more about the previous HSC project here: <https://oldfirestation.org.uk/our-work/hidden-spire/>





Fee available and time commitment

£4,200-£5,600 depending on the agreed scope of the commission.

Fee to include:

- planning
- preparation
- workshop delivery
- collaborative development
- contribution to public sharing/activity
- Attendance of final project evaluation

Estimated commitment:

- approximately 12-16 days across the project period.
- Reasonable travel expenses can be discussed separately.

A separate materials/production budget will also be available.

How to apply

To apply, please submit the following to jak.soroka@oldfirestation.org.uk **by 27 July 2026**:

- a short statement of interest (1 side of A4)
- examples of relevant work
- brief information about your participatory/facilitation experience
- links to website/social media if available
- a [demographics form](#)
- Confirmation of whether you are able to attend the interview

Interviews will be held on 10 August at the Old Fire Station, Oxford

If you have any questions about the project please contact:

Sarah Cassidy, Head of Inclusion and Learning

sarah.cassidy@oldfirestation.org.uk



**OLD FIRE
STATION**

Old Fire Station, 40 George Street, Oxford, OX1 2AQ
Registered charity number 1140525