

Enchanted Parks: The House of Lost and Found

Tuesday 4 – Sunday 9 December 2018

Artists' Brief

Introduction

Enchanted Parks is Gateshead's innovative and magical after-dark arts adventure in the atmospheric setting of Saltwell Park. Taking place in midwinter, Enchanted Parks provides an unusual and playful artistic experience for a very broad audience and unique creative opportunities for artists working across a range of disciplines and media.

We have gone through a commissioning phase for programming the 2018 event, and we are now inviting artists to propose ideas for a large-scale finale to the narrative journey in response to the brief outlined in this document. Proposals can be for new commissions, existing works or adaptations.

The Event – Background

Enchanted Parks is a much-loved annual winter event – an after-dark trail of artworks through Saltwell Park, a beautiful gated Victorian Park with a wide range of interesting spaces to animate. Over the last 11 years, Enchanted Parks has built up a loyal audience (an average of 30,000 people each year) and commissioned over 100 original artworks. The event sells out and attracts great press coverage and repeat visitors as well as finding a new audience each year.

The event is commissioned by NewcastleGateshead Initiative Culture Team working in partnership with Gateshead Council Culture Team. The Creative Producer is Maddie Maughan and Susan Mulholland is the Writer.

The event will be open to the public each evening from Tuesday 4 December to Sunday 9 December 2018. It takes place over 4-5 hours each evening with allocated entry times every 15 minutes. Audience members follow a defined route through the park at their own pace, usually staying for around 90 minutes in total. In the past, the programme has included anywhere between 10 and 17 individual artworks from small and intimate to large and spectacular and across the full range of artforms.

The Brief – The House of Lost and Found

Narrative

Below is the narrative which has been developed for this year's event, along with some background information about our protagonist, Peter Chevalier and some of the characters that may be referenced during the event:

The service we offer is simple.

We reunite lost things with their owners.

Many things can be lost.

A lost object, a precious possession but also those things that cannot be picked up physically, like a lost voice, a song, a friend, a love, your marbles.

We've travelled far to be here. We've sought and collected your lost things.

We invite you to come and find them and celebrate with us the feeling that comes when two things that have been separate, come together once more.

This is the story of a travelling fair, although not a fair of fast, over-priced rides and candy apples. A fair that has been travelling in one guise or another for centuries. Earliest sightings reported in 18th Century Europe, later in the 19th century across the Atlantic and again in the heady days of London in the 1920s.

At the helm is Peter Chevalier, an illusionist and philanthropist who has gathered around him an extended 'family' of people who are in some way lost. This weird and wonderful 'family' have attracted attention, suspicion and awe wherever they turn up and turn up they do, overnight they appear, stay for a few days and then disappear. Each fair is different, taking on the quirks and foibles of whatever place they end up in but the story is always the same: what have you lost and how can we help you find it?

But surely it's not possible for this to be the same Peter Chevalier who began this work hundreds of years ago? How can one man travel across centuries? Can you trust an illusionist? What would bring him here? What lost things does he claim to be returning? What is it that he is searching for? And will he find it?

The service we offer is simple.

We reunite lost things with their owners.

The House of Lost and Found.

Background information

Peter Chevalier's family dates back to the 1700s in Italy. They made their fortune in selling horses and left mainland Europe in the late 17th Century bound for the New World.

Once established in America, the family used their wealth for the good of others setting up orphanages, hardship funds and services that attempted to reunite lost children with their families.

Peter Chevalier was an anomaly. He did not step into his father's shoes, choosing instead to travel across America as an illusionist. However his travelling fair was not too far from his family's philanthropic enterprises, as it became a haven and sanctuary for people who had no place left to go. No one was turned away.

His growing family of performers would travel from town to town, seemingly turning up overnight and vanishing just as quickly. Each one a collector or seeker, fulfilling Chevalier's ambition to reunite people with that which they had lost. Each one as interesting as the next.

Here is just a flavour of who we might encounter:

Lydia Luna, known as Mamma Moon to her friends, enjoys tea served in bone china only. Tea leaves in a tea-strainer (absolutely no teabags) and stirred with a silver teaspoon. Lydia knows there are never enough teaspoons which is why she has a collection in the thousands. Whether or not Lydia is the reason the rest of us don't have enough teaspoons, remains to be seen but should you be in need of one, seek her out.

Jasper Miller, of the Arkansas Millers, is a strong believer in the power of a found penny. So much so that he finds it impossible not to see a penny, pick it up and enjoy the luck that accompanies it. Maybe he has one of your pennies? Jasper would be happy to share his good fortune or at the very least share the weight of his growing collection:

'See a penny, leave it be and bad luck shall come to thee'

And as for Peter himself?

Sightings are reported of him across two centuries, perhaps because someone using his name has always accompanied the fair, perhaps because there is no record of him dying? We do know that the Chevalier line ends with him, he didn't have any children. We do know he had a wife, Pascal (nee Morgan), who disappeared.

We've found a man who has experienced a great loss.

We've found a story that would like to be told.

We look forward to your discoveries.

Style

Taking inspiration from the narrative and characters detailed above, we are interested in styling the event as a Victorian travelling fair. We'd encourage artists to propose work that fit this style in terms of aesthetic, but we're also keen to explore the merging of this style with various time periods and locations that the fair may have travelled to, and the quirks and foibles it takes on when it appears in Gateshead.

A Pinterest board for further research can be found [here](#).

Narrative

In 2017 Enchanted Parks took a new approach and began working with writer, Susan Mulholland, to craft a narrative, story and characters for artists to respond to and for audiences to immerse themselves in when they attend the event.

The story helps to root the event in Saltwell Park and Gateshead and to give another immersive dimension to the experience for the audience and a strong narrative brief for artists to respond to.

If we find that there are links that could be made between artworks as an additional level to the narrative, we may discuss these possibilities with you during the commissioning process.

Route and Site

Enchanted Parks follows a one-way route around the park with the narrative unfolding as the audience progress on their journey. The route for 2018 has been developed by the Creative Producer and commissioning team and as such the site we are looking at for this particular commission is the **Octagon Lawn**.

The Octagon Lawn is a large, flat, open space on grass. It has a large tarmacked area on a very slight incline facing into it, which provides space for quite a large number of the audience to view from.

The lawn is approximately 40m wide when facing it from the tarmacked area, and each side of the Octagon is approximately 15m. There is a pathway around the circumference of the lawn, allowing for audience to circle the installation if that was desired.

You may wish to undertake your own site visit in advance of submitting a proposal, but this will be at your own expense.

Artworks

Artwork Brief

Having gone through an initial commissioning phase, which included an open call for submissions to the main programme, we are now looking for a large-scale piece that will act as a finale to the audience journey and narrative.

As the audience journey through the event they will encounter installations which include collections of smaller-scale lost items, a fire installation, intimate projection mapping, floating sentences moving the narrative on, a garden of lost voices, and they will leave the park through a hall of mirrors where the narrative is concluded. There will be set dressing and lighting design throughout to add to the Victorian fair aesthetic.

The programme to date is available on request.

We are looking for a large-scale, beautiful and most likely sculptural installation which brings an added level of scale to the event as a whole, whilst adding to the narrative in the sense of lost things travelling with the fair, or something large that has been found and is being returned to Gateshead, bringing a sense of celebration or satisfaction to the finale.

Examples of the types of installation that could work include a large transport vehicle (a ship, plane, train, hot air balloon, etc.), which seems to have appeared and look slightly out of place and potentially only part of which can be seen; the portal from which the travelling fair appears; lost or found planets, stars – the sense that the fair has travelled further than you could imagine; abandoned fairground rides – the sense that things can be lost to the past even if they do not belong to you; and we are open to artist ideas for anything else that might respond to the brief.

We are seeking creative ideas that are high quality and captivating. They should be engaging and accessible, but can also be challenging and thought provoking. The work should excite and enthrall and respond to the theatrical narrative set out above. Audiences have come to expect Enchanted Parks to be a magical experience with artworks that surprise and delight.

Please note: this piece should respond to the overall narrative, rather than being based around a single character.

We are particularly interested in works which are site specific/sympathetic and which use the fabric of the park and the spaces that it offers in new and interesting ways.

Artworks can be new commissions or the presentation or adaptation of existing works, providing they fit the context and the brief.

We welcome proposals, which include an element of community engagement or participation in advance of the event. Please detail this in your proposal if applicable. Support in making links with local schools and community groups will be available.

Key Practical Considerations

The most important consideration is how any piece will work within the very specific format of this event and for the large audience Numbers, but here are some specifics you should bear in mind whilst coming up with your idea:

- The audience move through the event continually and at their own pace, following a defined route with an average 300 people being admitted to the event every 15 minutes.
- Artworks need to be able to accommodate this volume of audience, whilst considering the environmental conditions in terms of duration and/or scale. For example, audience members are unlikely to stand and watch something which lasts for more than a couple of minutes and this is also likely to cause queues of people behind unless it is of a scale which can accommodate a large viewing group.
- Weather conditions may be challenging – snow, rain, frost and wind are all likely! All artworks must be able to reliably withstand these conditions for the duration of the event.
- The event attracts a very broad audience across all age ranges being particularly popular with family groups, including very young children, but also attracts local cultural professionals and artists.
- Please take into account how the park will look in winter, when the trees are without leaves.
- If your proposal does not include integral lighting / flames etc., please consider how it will be presented in the dark. Technical / lighting design support can be provided, but you should detail what you might require in your proposal.
- The development/making process for the commissions will take place in the artists' own facilities or spaces.
- Artists will deliver the artworks to Saltwell Park for their installation or final onsite production with support from the production and technical team. This should be considered as part of the budget for the work.
- The get-in period is likely to be in the region of 3-4 days if required.
- A full technical run-through will take place on Monday 3 December - the night before the event opens to the public. All artworks must be completely ready for presentation.
- The public event is 6 nights in length.
- Production support will be available for the get-out over 1-2 days. All artworks should be removed within this time.
- In the main, works are left in-situ during the day over the duration of the get-in/event/get-out period. The park is open to the public over this time. There will be some security presence and/or barriers if required. In the case of particularly valuable or sensitive equipment it may be necessary to consider demounting / remounting each day.

Support includes:

- Creative Producer and Production Manager support and advice through the development and making process
- Technical support for the install, duration and get-out

Budget

The budget available for this commission is £10,000 (exclusive of VAT if applicable).

Timeline

Proposal Deadline: 9am, Friday 5 October 2018

Creative Producer may contact artists: W/C 8 October 2018

All applicants informed if shortlisted or not: W/C 8 October 2018

Site visits for shortlisted artists: TBC

Short listed artists informed if commissioned or not by: W/C 15 October 2018

Work on artworks (additional site visits if necessary): Mid-October - December

Mid-production progress report due: TBC

Get in: Friday 30 November - Mon 3 December (TBC)

Tech run: Monday 3 December

Event dates: Tues 4 – Sun 9 December

Get out: Mon 10 December

Shortlisted artists will be invited to undertake a site visit (expenses covered) if it is felt appropriate before the final selection is made.

Proposals

Proposals should be submitted by email to enchantedparks@ngi.org.uk

Please outline your idea on a maximum of four sides of A4 and include visuals or images in support of your proposal (including illustrations or sketches) and/or examples of previous work.

An outline budget should be submitted alongside your proposal. Your budget should include: fees, materials, consumables, space hire for making, production and/ or rehearsal, equipment hires and/or purchases needed to realise the piece within the Enchanted Parks context, transportation to and from the park, travel for your team and insurance of the work.

Power and some crew support for the get-in/out will be provided. If lighting is integrated in the work this should be included, otherwise external lighting of the work can be provided and lighting design support will be provided. Accommodation and subsistence for your onsite team will be provided.

Artists are welcome to submit more than one proposal.

Deadline for proposals: Friday 5 October 2018

Contact

General Enquiries:

Bob Allan
Culture Team Programme Development Executive, NewcastleGateshead Initiative
enchantedparks@ngi.org.uk

To discuss your proposal with the Creative Producer before submitting:

Maddie Maughan
maddie@maddiemaughan.co.uk

Map of Saltwell Park

The potential event area is shown within red circle.

The public enter the event via the entrance on Joicey Road.

Historically, artworks have been focused in the Southern-most portion of this area, i.e. not including the Northern Fields and Lake – however the Lake has been used on a few occasions.

Features include:

- Open lawns
- Enclosed lawns (e.g. the Octagon Lawn)
- Groves of trees
- Various paths and walkways
- Formal gardens including the Memorial Rose Garden
- The Saltwell Dene including bridges
- Saltwell Towers
- Bandstand
- Loggia seating
- Pavilions and shelters
- The Lake and island

