

Artists Brief

University of Bristol Theatre Collection – Fox & Gill Archives
Revealed Artist Commission

Project Background:

The Fox and Gill Archives Revealed Project is a 6-month project funded by The National Archives to catalogue, care for and support engagement with the archive of internationally renowned artists John Fox MBE and Sue Gill.

John Fox and Sue Gill were founding members of the radical theatre company Welfare State International (WSI) in 1968 and spent nearly 40 years working with communities across the UK to devise and stage celebratory, spectacular and deeply local works. Viewing art as an essential part of everyday life, WSI worked to make art as accessible as ‘free dentures, spectacles and coffins’.

WSI closed in 2006, but Fox and Gill continued their work as the Dead Good Guides, an artist-led company, exploring new ways for art to live and breathe in the everyday, believing that ‘creativity isn’t something that should sit on a pedestal—it should walk beside us, woven into the fabric of our lives, communities, and landscapes’.

The John Fox and Sue Gill Archive (1968-present) records the artists’ personal creative journeys through over 100 boxes of notebooks, research and development, photographs and recordings.

Significant themes found within the archive include:

- The natural world, seasons, weather and climate
- Gardening, growth and rejuvenation, working with natural materials
- Performance, storytelling, celebration and ceremony
- Social prescribing

The Brief:

We are looking for an artist who will find imaginative ways to engage the community with the ethos, practice and archive of John Fox and Sue Gill, across up to six of creative workshops.

The workshops will be held on Thursdays at the University of Bristol Barton Hill Micro-campus between February-April 2026 and cater for a local community of 10-12 individuals with mixed access needs. The community group meet on Thursdays so the successful artist will need to be available on this day of the week.

The project has set a budget and timetable for the artist of 16 days work at £300.00 per day, between the start of February and end of April 2026.

A separate budget for costs for workshop materials is available.

Roles & Key tasks:

- Work collaboratively with the project team to access and explore the Fox and Gill archive housed at the University of Bristol Theatre Collection
- Design, produce and deliver a series of creative workshops which engage community members with themes, concepts and practices found within the archive
- Embed co-creation practices into workshops, being flexible and responsive to the needs of the participants/community
- Work with the Project Coordinator to manage and report the artists budget, including invoicing and organising of materials required for workshops
- Work with the Project Evaluator to support the development and delivery of project/workshop evaluation.
- Work collaboratively with the project team to ensure all elements of the project are delivered effectively

Knowledge, skills and experience:

Required:

- Experience of designing, delivering and evaluating creative workshops within a budget and time frame
- Experience of community engagement and co-creation
- Knowledge of participatory arts practices
- Demonstrable interest in, and understanding of, the themes set out in this brief
- Ability to establish supportive relationships with a wide variety of people and groups, with an emphasis on care
- Creative approach to planning and problem solving
- Flexibility to adapt workshops to the needs of the participating community

Desired:

- Experience of working with archives within creative practice
- Experience of working with multi-cultural community groups based around the Wellspring Settlement in Barton Hill, Bristol

Duration:

16 days total

You will be expected to allocate project time to around: 15% research, 80% development/delivery, 5% evaluation – this is flexible and will depend on the progression of the project

The expected earliest start for the project is the first week of February.

Artists Fee:

£4,800.00 to be paid in instalments

Based on 16 days across four months at £300.00 per day.

60% of the funds will be made available at the start of the project, with a further 30% at a midway point with an update of progress and a timeline for completion. The remaining 10% of the funds will be transferred to the artist on receipt of the evaluation report.

Separate budget for workshop materials:

£50.00 per day

How to apply:

There are three ways to apply:

1. **Written:** Please email an Expression of Interest to athene.bain@bristol.ac.uk

Please include:

- Your name, address and email
- CV (max 2 pages)
- Three images of previous work
- Brief description of practice and experience working with communities within a co-creation/workshop settings (500 words)
- An outline of your interest in the opportunity and approach to working with the archive and community within a creative workshop setting (500 words)

Format: Please ensure all documents are submitted as PDF files

2. **Video:** Please email a video Expression of Interest to athene.bain@bristol.ac.uk

Please include:

- a video of no more than 10 minutes describing your practice and experience working with communities within a co-creation/workshop settings and an outline of your interest in the opportunity and approach to working with the archive and community within a creative workshop setting

- Three images of previous work
- Please include your name, address and email
- Please include your CV (max 2 pages or a 2-minute video summary)

Format: Please ensure that videos are submitted as MP4 files.

Applications open: Friday 19th December

Applications close: Midnight, Sunday 11th January 2026

Successful applicants will be notified by **Monday 19th January 2026**

Interviews likely to take place week of last week January – held online or in person at the University of Bristol Theatre Collection.

Please note that unfortunately, due to the number of applications we receive, feedback will only be given to those who are invited to interview.

About the University of Bristol Theatre Collection:

The Theatre Collection was founded in 1951 to support the establishment of Drama as an academic discipline in the UK, and has grown to become one of the world's leading collections relating to the history of British theatre and live art. The Theatre Collection comprises over 140 named collections and archives, including actors and collectors Raymond Mander and Joe Mitchenson. It also holds artworks, audio visual material, costumes, designs, set models, playbills and programmes of this most ephemeral of art forms. The collections are particularly strong from the late 18th century onwards and document life both onstage and offstage, providing a unique insight into theatre and live art, their creative processes and broader cultural contexts. The Theatre Collection's holistic approach to collecting across archives and objects, and the interconnectedness between the collections, make it an outstanding research resource

About the Barton Hill Micro-campus:

The University of Bristol Barton Hill Micro-campus is one of a range of organisations housed in shipping containers at the Wellspring Settlement in Barton Hill. It is a place in which community-based teaching, research, workshops and engagement in partnership with local individuals, groups, and organisations is developed and delivered. We engage with the local community to better understand people's needs, aspirations and challenges. By bringing people together, opportunities are made for co-designed research and to develop programmes in partnership with local stakeholders. The micro-campus runs an active timetable of weekly events and drop-in sessions, including a free little library service, free legal advice and coffee mornings.