

Edge of An Era: Archive

Call for proposals for new works responding to a specific series of seminal performance events which took place in the 1980's

Application deadline: Monday 17 September, 2018

[Apply here](#)



Credit: Cover Image from EDGE 88 catalogue - Tina Keane's The Diver. Photo Gary Varrar

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Introduction

We are inviting proposals for four new works for *Edge of an Era: Archive* which will be presented online. The project is led by Helena Goldwater, Rob La Frenais and [Live Art Development Agency](#) in partnership with [Artsadmin](#) and [Central Saint Martins](#), University of the Arts London.

The selected artists will be invited to choose one UK-based artist involved in a specific series of seminal performance art events which took place in the late 1980s (see list below) and make a response to their work. This will be based on archival material relating to their work, which will be made available to the commissioned artists.

The resulting outcome will be presented online on the project website and also be featured as part of an event on Thursday 6 December 2018 in London.

Background

In the late 1980s, *Performance Magazine* (1979-1992) started presenting some of the first site specific performance art events in the UK, including *Art in Danger*, *At the Edge* and *Last Sweat of Youth* at the Diorama and Air Gallery. This culminated in *EDGE 88*, one of London's first site-specific performance/installation festivals which was attended by artists such as Helena Goldwater, who was at the start of her career. Thirty years later, Helena Goldwater and Rob La Frenais, (former editor of *Performance Magazine* and Director of *EDGE 88*) in collaboration with the [Live Art Development Agency](#) (LADA) are revisiting this and other 1980s performance art events, connecting influential artists from the 1980s with current generations. See further 'History and Context' below.

Proposals should consider:

- Which UK-based artist you are interested in responding to, and why. (Please see the list of artists who were part of the events below.)
- How you might interact with an archive focused on performance art from the 1980s.
- How to think about, and respond to, work that was made in the 1980s in ways that speak to now.

Selected artists will receive:

- £1,000 (inclusive of taxes and expenses) to cover the production, artist fees and any costs associated with the creation of the work.
- Curatorial and production advice and support towards the creation of the work from LADA and/or Artsadmin.
- Publicity and promotion of the work through the forthcoming *Edge of an Era* website as well as our partner websites and their social media.

Deadline for applications:

Monday 17th September, 2018

Eligibility

- Applicants should be UK based.
- Applicants can apply as a solo artist or as a group. If applying as a group, the commission fee will remain the same.
- As these commissions are a response to the 1980s events listed below, artists involved in any of these are not eligible to apply.

Selection panel

Alex Eisenberg - Digital Programmes Manager, Live Art Development Agency

Helena Goldwater - Project Curator, Artist

Lois Keidan - Director, Live Art Development Agency

Rob La Frenais - Project Curator, founder of Performance Magazine

John Seth - Pathway Leader, 4D/Fine Art, Central Saint Martins, University of the Arts, London

Cecilia Wee - Head of Artist Development / Producer, Artsadmin

Further Information

Your work may take a variety of forms, such as performance, performance to camera, performative lecture, video/moving image, 2D including photographic, installation, and so on but all work must be suitable to be shown online on the project website (which includes considerations of length and the context of this project).

As this is an online commission, if you choose to propose a performative work, documentation of that work should be able to be presented as a stand alone video or audio piece in and of itself which will be featured on the project website.

Ideally, you would be available to join us at the public live event on Thursday 6th December 2018 in London.

Any further questions please don't hesitate to contact alex@thisisliveart.co.uk

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How To Apply

Please use our online application form:

[Access the online application form](#)

Guidance

The questions on the application form are listed below. We strongly recommend writing your answers beforehand and then pasting them into the online form when you are ready to submit. It is not possible to save the form.

Accessibility

To request information in another format or if you would prefer to submit your application in an alternative format for access reasons, please do get in touch in advance with alex@thisisliveart.co.uk.

About Your Proposal

1. A brief summary of your proposal (max 50 words, required)
2. A detailed proposal for commission (max 750 words, required)

Proposals should consider:

- Which UK-based artist you are interested in responding to, and why. (Please see the list of artists who were part of the events below.)
- Information on how the final outcome will be presented online, including duration.
- How you might interact with an archive focused on performance art from the 1980s.
- How to think about, and respond to, work that was made in the 1980s in ways that speak to now.

Supporting Material

You can submit supporting material including a link to a website in the boxes below. You can upload supporting material on the internet (e.g. Youtube, Vimeo, Dropbox etc.) and share that link below - please remember to include any passwords, if applicable, - or upload a PDF containing supporting material.

- **CV/Biography** - File Upload (required)
NB: Ideally a PDF of no more than two pages, and no larger than 5MB. Please name your file to upload according to the following structure: Surname First Name Edge of an Era CV.pdf (e.g. Smith John Edge of an Era CV.pdf)
- **Supporting Material** - File Upload
NB: Ideally a PDF and no longer than 10 pages.
- **Link 1** - optional

- **Link 2** - optional
- **Website** - optional

You will also be asked to supply your **contact details** and **monitoring information**.

History and Context of the Project

EDGE 88 was launched after 2 years of planning, campaigning and studying overseas examples, such as the 1987 Documenta, which contained a comprehensive performance programme for the first time. It was preceded over a 3 year period by performances and installations organised by Performance Magazine: *Art in Danger* at the Diorama, and *At The Edge* and *The Last Sweat of Youth* at AIR Gallery, and followed in 1989 by EDGE 89, and *The Last Weekend*, Allenheads. EDGE 89, organised by Tracey Warr (who went on to co-edit the seminal book *The Artists Body*), comprised of a promenade version of Isaac Julien's influential film *Looking for Langston*, staged in Kings Cross, where the current site of Central Saint Martins now stands, and Cornelia Parker's train installation, *Left Luggage*, held in St Pancras station. These events will also be included in *Edge of an Era*.

EDGE 88 was “an idiosyncratic survey of contributions...what interests me is the artists' ability to respond to an unusual space or situation and to appropriate it for one's own obsessions” (Rob La Frenais talking to Sarah Kent in Time Out, 1988)

The EDGE 88 team, including Sara Selwood at the AIR Gallery, and Projects UK in Newcastle secured funding from the Arts Council to stage a programme of 24 performance-based works in Clerkenwell, London in 1988, some of which then toured to Newcastle. Clerkenwell was then a semi-derelict and cheap place to live, rather than the developed and expensive area of London it is now. And so it was possible for them to negotiate the use of a variety of spaces from the Slaughterhouse, Flaxman Gallery, the Cloister Garden of the Grand Priory Church, Ironmonger Row Swimming Baths, the Woodbridge Chapel, and the disused prison cells under the then Kingsway Princeton College.

Accompanying the works was a catalogue, edited by Marjorie Althorpe-Guyton, and published in conjunction with Performance Magazine, (then edited by Steve Rogers). It included artists' pages and essays by Dan Cameron, Silvia Eiblmayr, Steven Durland and Gray Watson, exploring the avant-garde, feminism and representation, performance in the US and Canada and thinking around 'content', as well as an introduction by Chrissie Iles.

The artists programmed included both UK-based artists – Rasheed Araeen, Ian Breakwell, Stuart Brisley, Helen Chadwick, Rose Garrard, Mona Hatoum, Tina Keane, Alastair MacLennan, Denis Masi and Silvia Ziranek, and international artists - Marcelle van Bommel (The Netherlands), Jerzy Beres (Poland), Vera Body (Hungary), Valie Export (Austria), Vera Frenkel (Canada), Derek Kreckler/Adrienne Gaha/Sarah Miller aka Told By An Idiot (Australia), Nigel Rolfe (Ireland), Ulrike Rosenbach (West Germany [sic]), Carolee Schneeman (USA), Carles Santos (Spain), Roberto Taroni (Italy), Zbigniew Warpechowski (Poland), Paul Wong (Canada) and Peter Zegveld (The Netherlands).

Deanna Petherbridge succinctly captures the unique atmosphere and impact of EDGE 88, writing in the Financial Times: “Wandering around Clerkenwell, the inner city village with its secret squares, unexpected alleys, bosky churchyards and good pubs is pleasurable enough on a mild Autumn evening. To also discover curious installations and obsessive activities along the way makes for a rich and very metropolitan experience. As well as gallery venues

such as AIR and the Flaxman Gallery, artists have chosen swimming pools, churches and disused offices for their 'laboratory' pieces. The installations, using videos, lasers, live performance, props and written material, are works on the edge of fine art practice: on the edge too, of politics and emotions. Sometimes a cutting edge...sometimes a blunt instrument."

EDGE 88 represents the culmination and peak of such activity in London in the 1980s. It also marks a moment of change. Preceding the 1990s, performance art was a, mostly, respected and key experimental practice linked historically to fine art. There had been a dynamic community of artists who 'made things happen', and audiences keen to experience the cutting edge of art making.

After 1989 everything changed. With the rise of the YBA and the shift in focus to marketability, performance art lost its position in the contemporary art gaze. It could not seemingly be bought; its temporality, and perhaps radical politics and experimentation, were not considered conducive to sales. The response was not a negative one – out of the ashes grew a burgeoning of multidisciplinary performance, which sought funding, venues and support from elsewhere than the contemporary art worlds. The '90s though changed how performance was viewed and contextualised. *Edge of an Era* seeks to highlight not only an important event and grouping of artists and writers, but also to demonstrate the historical context that they inhabited and the legacy that remains.

Credits and Supporters

This project is curated by Helena Goldwater and Rob La Frenais, Alex Eisenberg and Live Art Development Agency.

In partnership with ArtsAdmin and Central Saint Martins, University of London.

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