



## **Culture Night Belfast – Creative Opportunity**

### **Culture Night Belfast Presents 2021**

#### **Introduction**

Culture Night Belfast is evolving. The last 15+ months have presented an opportunity to reflect upon the event, what it stands for, what works and what doesn't, and to think about how it moves forward in the coming years.

Historically, Culture Night has been one of Belfast's largest free events, a cultural celebration that has previously attracted almost 90,000 local, national and international visitors to the Cathedral Quarter and Belfast city centre. Following an extensive review, however, this reimagining, combined with the continuing impact of COVID-19, have directed us to radically rethink how we present ourselves in 2021, ahead of launching a new vision for the event in 2022.

#### **About Culture Night Belfast**

Now entering its thirteenth year, Culture Night Belfast (CNB) is the flagship project of the Cathedral Quarter Trust (CQT). Based in Belfast's thriving creative hub of the Cathedral Quarter, CQT's mission is to champion the artistic, cultural and heritage-focused regeneration of a thriving Cathedral Quarter. Culture Night Belfast is a key part of this mission.

#### **The Opportunity**

Culture Night Belfast (CNB) is seeking to commission a Creative Lead/Collective to conceptualise and deliver an outdoor artwork/cultural experience to engage visitors to the Cathedral Quarter over the course of the weekend 17<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> September 2021.

#### **The Objectives**

A number of key cultural stakeholders including Belfast City Council, are currently planning for a series of live experiences which will aim to create a safe, welcoming and vibrant environment across the City in September 2021. This presents an important opportunity for CNB to be a part of bringing Belfast back to life, attracting citizens and visitors to the Cathedral Quarter with an ambitious and original artistic experience which will signal a change in the future shape and form of Culture Night over the next few years.

CNB wishes to commission a piece of activity which will provide a reason to visit the Cathedral Quarter before heading off to visit our venues, cafes, bars and restaurants and enjoying all the wider city has to offer. CNB is committed to promoting, supporting and developing our venues, artists, performers and creatives.

## The Brief

CNB is looking for a creative response which considers, but is not constrained by, the theme of *The City Garden*. The concept of *The City Garden* has developed out of our collective experiences of the last year and the crucial role our gardens and shared outdoor spaces have played in our lives. *The City Garden* aligns with a number of key themes in [A City Imagining](#), Belfast City Council's Cultural Strategy 2020 – 2030, and also reflects an increasing focus on environmental sustainability and on the need for more green and shared spaces in the city.

For *The City Garden*, CNB plans to turn the heart of the Cathedral Quarter into a 'garden' for the city, transforming Cathedral Gardens, Writers' Square and the immediate area surrounding into a colourful, nature-inspired place for play, enjoyment and relaxation and evoking the feeling of a garden in the heart of the city.

*The City Garden* will be open to the public daily from Friday 17 September to Sunday 19 September 2021 between c4pm and 9.30pm and will be located in and around Cathedral Gardens and Writers' Square, adjacent to St Anne's Cathedral. Ideally we are looking for a walk-through experience where audiences may briefly linger, perhaps to experience something interactive or more immersive, but with a general structure of a route through a transformed space.

This format is currently how we can most effectively imagine being able to manage audiences when there are as yet unknown levels of social distancing. We are open to considering alternative suggestions of format, but proposals should not assume that it will be safe to gather a significant number of people in one static location for period of longer than a few minutes. We are particularly interested in proposals which are highly visual and have both a daytime and after-dark life, which use sound in an imaginative way and which may have immersive and/or interactive elements (taking account of Covid safe considerations).

The creative response we are looking for might include lighting, projections, installations, soundscapes, temporary planting, nature or floral themed work, all with an environmental focus. The response should be equally enjoyable and accessible by day and by night and should be suitable for all ages. Inspiration may come from: the renewed importance of spaces to breath and stretch our limbs, places where we can still be communal, the fact that many more people have taken up gardening and found refuge in it in the last year, spaces to think and be creative, the mythology and stories connected with different plants, different ideas of garden design and landscaping, biodiversity and environmental issues, food growing, recycling.

The work should aspire to align with the vision for Culture Night Belfast:

- To be ambitious, diverse and dynamic;
- Transform the familiar landscape of our city into a creative 'canvas';
- Bring cultural excellence, innovation and a sense of wonder to our audiences;
- Showcase Belfast locally, nationally and internationally as a city for artistic leadership, inviting the world to experience our vibrant creativity and distinctive character.

## Date

The current plan is that artwork(s) should be ready for presentation to the public by **Friday 17<sup>th</sup> September** and should remain in situ until **Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> September 2021**.

## Location

It is envisaged that artwork(s) are located within the areas of Cathedral Gardens, Writers' Square or the area immediately around St Anne's Cathedral. The work should be viewed from outdoors i.e., we are not intending that the public should enter buildings.

### Considerations:

- There is still much unknown about what restrictions will be in place therefore we want to steer away from performance and the requirement to gather in any significant numbers at a specific time.
- The vision for *The City Garden* is to create a welcoming, inclusive space that everybody can enjoy with an atmosphere that is equally appealing to families, diverse communities and those who rarely participate in culture as well as those who frequently do.
- The artwork(s) should be appropriate for viewing in both the daytime and the evening.
- The Artist(s)/Creative Team will work with the CNB Production team to develop and realise the concept including producing a detailed project plan, full costings and project execution and install. The production team will provide support in terms of permissions, licenses, technical and site provision, health and safety guidance, security and insurance.
- All site and operational oversight and management for the duration of public access will be provided by the CNB Production Team.
- As the management organisation for CNB, general oversight including budget and financial management will be provided by Cathedral Quarter Trust.
- The Artist(s)/Creative Team will work with CNB on the promotion and marketing of the work providing interpretation and interviews where required.

### Budget

A budget of £25,000 (including VAT) is available of which we anticipate no more than £5,000 against fees for creative concept development and management of the process of delivering the artwork. Additional technical and production support will be supplied from a separate budget.

### Submissions

Interested applicants should submit the following:

- A brief proposal (no more than 500 words) which outlines the concept and the proposed location for the work together.
- At least two visualisations of the proposal eg sketches, drawings, mood-boards.
- CVs of the Creative Lead and those involved in the project - applicants should be able to demonstrate a proven track record of delivering innovative creative projects.
- A budget breakdown of the £25,000 plus an indicative outline of the on-site technical provision required.

Deadline for proposals: **Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> June 12pm** by email to

[s.picken@cqtrust.org](mailto:s.picken@cqtrust.org)

(Susan Picken, Director, Cathedral Quarter Trust and Culture Night Belfast)

Contract awarded: **by Monday 5<sup>th</sup> July**

Contract completion including evaluation: **by Monday 4<sup>th</sup> October 2021**

All queries should be emailed to Susan Picken in the first instance.

Shortlisted applicants may be invited for an informal Zoom interview prior to the contract being awarded.

For further information on Culture Night Belfast please visit

[www.culturenightbelfast.com](http://www.culturenightbelfast.com)