

The Contemporary: An Exhibition 2018

Theme (this is not the title): Singularity Art: Posthuman People, Places, and Spaces.

Date: Arts Week (14-18 May 2018). Likely to be Monday or Wednesday of Arts Week (exhibition time 6.00-7.30, with set up and clean up duration 5-9).¹

Location: Gordon Square (room TBA)

Number of exhibits to be hosted: 8

A few things to consider:

1. This exhibition is not funded.² However, I do have materials that can be borrowed e.g. iPads, mounting boards etc. Details are on the application form. It is possible to create an exhibition without funding as this is what we have done for the last two years and even for the Being Human Festival. With public facing events, it is good to demonstrate that meaningful work can occur without the injection of money.
2. The room we will be assigned will be a teaching room in Gordon Square like B03. It is NOT possible to EVER rent the Peltz Gallery (not only is there a year long waiting list, but substantial external funding is required), so please do not ask. Therefore, proposed exhibits should be reasonable for the space. This should not necessarily limit your imagination for in the past we have installed fish tanks, large pieces of metal, and a market stall (see attached links).
3. Collaboration is possible and welcomed. You can team up with peers at Birkbeck or other institutions. In the past, we have collaborated with students from Queen Mary. You can collaborate with students at any level, as long as they are enrolled students.
4. Copywrite still applies. You cannot show/display work that is not your intellectual property. This includes, but is not limited to, music, video, and photography. For example, if you are making a film, you must either own the footage/audio or have sourced it in the public domain. It is your responsibility to look into this as I cannot comment on – or research – case by case examples.
5. When you submit your application please ensure you will be available on the dates/times suggested above.
6. You MUST be present during the exhibition in order to discuss your work with visitors.

Inspiration

Here are some links for past exhibits. These links should give you a good idea about the scope and presentation of exhibits. All these exhibitions were entirely unfunded, so it gives you an idea about what is possible.

Exhibition 2016: <https://www.drgracehalden.com/exhibition2016>

Exhibition 2017: <https://www.drgracehalden.com/exhibition-2017>

¹ Currently, the precise date/time/location is TBA and this is entirely out of my hands as planning is the responsibility of the Arts Week committee. However, I have negotiated Monday or Wednesday 5-9. So one of those days!

² There might be a small budget for me to use for advertising e.g. the printing of programmes. It is at my discretion as to whether I use that money for anything else e.g. printing photographs. So, please proceed as if there is no budget.

Being Human Festival – Ruin and Rebuild exhibition – link 1:

<https://www.drgracehalden.com/ruinandrebuild>

Being Human Festival – Ruin and Rebuild exhibition – link 2:

<https://ruinandrebuild.wixsite.com/exhibition>

Tips

1. Complete the form in detail. Provide as much detail as possible on the summary and rationale for your exhibit. Exhibits should, obviously, be based on theory/research.
2. Think about what is feasible e.g. do not propose to interview survivors of a disaster if this isn't actually possible to do; likewise, do not suggest you will paint a huge mural if you do not have the materials or time to do this. This seems obvious, but I do encounter these problems a lot.
3. The application process is always competitive and I tend to award places to exhibits that are imaginative, impactful, and have a strong theory/research basis. This does not mean you need to reinvent the wheel! Each year I have featured a photography exhibition because the applications in question demonstrated a strong research foundation and the images proposed were thought-provoking. So, be imaginative but you do not need to actually create a sentient AI entity to be successful.
4. Health and Safety is important. Think whether your proposal will cause any risk. A past application proposed building a brick wall – this is impossible as it can fall over and damage the room or harm someone. However, not all 'risks' mean the termination of an idea. In the past, we have had an exhibition with a candle and another with a fish tank. While candles can set off the sprinklers, one candle housed within a burner will not. Fish tanks can leak; therefore, only fill it up to 25% capacity. So, do propose adventurous ideas but also stipulate in your application if there are any risks and how you propose to overcome/limit the risk.
5. If you are using work that is not your own e.g. you plan to play an audio track to accompany your graphic narrative, provide details about the copywrite e.g. public domain, creative commons etc and how/why you are able to use this.
6. It is OK if you do not have all the details yet! I need a strong summary and research foundation offered. I do not need to know every single detail. For example, it is enough to tell me you are working on a graphic novel / photography / film – you do not need to send me the work ahead of time nor stipulate what every panel/image/frame will involve. Like with your essays and dissertations, your exhibit will evolve over time. At this stage I want a SUMMARY.

Rules

1. Anyone from the MA Contemporary can apply – whether first or second year.
2. You can apply if you have successfully hosted an exhibit before.
3. You can apply if you have been unsuccessful previously.
4. You can collaborate with students outside the MA.
5. The work proposed must be your own.
6. You can submit work that has been exhibited elsewhere as long as there is no copywrite conflict in doing this. However, you cannot submit work that has already been exhibited at Birkbeck (simply because repetition is boring).
7. If your exhibit is accepted, you understand that during the course of the exhibition you and your work will be filmed and photographed.

8. The deadline is a hard deadline – submissions after this date will not be considered.
9. Stay on theme.
10. As this is ultimately a competition, I cannot comment on applications before they are submitted. So please do not email me and ask if your idea is possible/good as it will be unfair for me to comment.

Why take part?

1. It looks good on the CV if applying for further study (e.g. PhD) and grants (AHRC) as this is research dissemination. Many students who have taken part in this event have proceeded to undertake PhDs. 4 out of 5 students from the 2016 exhibition have either started PhDs or are currently applying.
2. It provides me with more to say in potential references.
3. Provides experience of public facing event hosting/organization.
4. Provides experience of practice based/led work.
5. Allows you to explore your creative skills and showcase your work to the academic community as well as to friends and family.