



OPEN CALL FOR ARTIST (POETS / MUSICIANS / SOUND ARTISTS) Restoring and Exploring THE SECRET LIFE OF PONDS

Introduction

The Secret Life of Ponds is an Arts Council England and Wildlife Trust funded project run by UCL Geography and UCL Culture Public Programmes. Bringing together musicians, poets, freshwater scientists and London and Norfolk audiences, we will explore the declining UK pond and their extraordinary biodiversity, within a climate change context. The project aims to inspire environmental community action, and support nature recovery. The project will run for 6 months from October 2022 – March 2023.

We are looking to commission two emerging poets and two emerging musicians to join the project. The project will begin with an 1 weekend residency in Norfolk where the artists will take part in practical pond restorations, kick start creative collaborations, and begin learning about the science of ponds and freshwater habitats from Early Career Researchers in the UCL Pond Restoration Research Group.

The selected artists will work alongside lead artists Chris Redmond (Tongue Fu, Hot Poets) and Tom Fisher (Action Pyramid) across the weekend residency and on into a process of artistic creation in response to the ponds, within a climate change and nature recovery context. We want to make work that instigates discussion and new perspectives to allow the general public to engage with the science of pond restoration.

You will need to be available to devise work within a group between October-December 2022, and be available to share live performance during the week of 30th January 2023 at The Grant Museum in Bloomsbury, London, and the week of 11th February 2023 at The Forum in Norwich, as part of the Norwich Science Festival.

We are looking for artists with:

- A passion for environmental issues
- Experience of collaboration across artforms
- Openness to working with researchers
- Flexibility and openness to creatively explore science

You will need to:

- Be over 18 years old
- Be available for the below key dates
- Be happy to take part in project evaluation and associated project meetings

Key Dates

28/29/30th October 2022: Pond restoration and creative scoping November-January 2022: Collaborative devising of artistic pieces (R&D) Jan/Feb 2023: Exhibition and live performance at the Grant Museum March 11-18th: Exhibition and live performance at the The Forum, Norwich

Fee

We are offering a commission fee of £2000 per artist

Application Process

Please submit a video link of yourself performing or a link to your work (max. 5 mins), along with a short description either in written (max. 1 A4 page) or video form (max. 2 mins) of why you would like to take part in this project to sylvia.harrison@ucl.ac.uk. The application deadline is **Friday 30th September**.

A background to the Norfolk Ponds Project and the Secret Life of Ponds

*Bringing together sound artists, poets and freshwater scientists in an exploration of the declining UK farmland pond and their extraordinary biodiversity, in partnership with UCL Culture, UCL PRRG, Hot Poets and Action Pyramid we will facilitate a series of collaborations and artworks that will raise awareness of Natural England's Nature Recovery Network and the importance of restoring ponds, within a broader **climate change** context. The artwork will be presented in the Grant Museum of Zoology and The Norwich Forum, alongside a series of engagement activities for distinct urban and rural communities that aim to connect people with local pond habitats and **inspire creative action that celebrates nature recovery**.*

The Norfolk Ponds Project (www.norfolkponds.org) is an award winning not-for-profit environmental partnership, focussing on the conservation and restoration of rural farmland ponds in Norfolk. Working jointly with Sylvia Kluczewski (UCL Culture), project manager Helen Greaves (representing both Norfolk Ponds Project and UCL Geography), will facilitate a 3-month R&D process linking leading freshwater restoration scientists, poets and musicians in an exploration of the declining UK farmland pond and their exceptional biodiversity. This will then be showcased as three or more high quality pieces, with associated engagement activities, to audiences at The Forum in Norwich and The Grant Museum of Zoology in London. We aim to raise awareness of the Nature Recovery Network by creating a space for dialogue about the value of nature recovery in freshwater habitats within the broader climate change conversation, and to use the focal point of the pond to do this. We believe that live performance is a key tool for engaging non-scientific audiences with the concept of nature recovery in the context of climate change, and in partnering with UCL Culture who have unparalleled expertise in this area, we believe we have the all the necessary knowledge and skills to achieve a novel cross-disciplinary production in response to one of the biggest global challenges facing mankind.

The overarching aim of this project is to assist the development of the Nature Recovery Network in Norfolk through **peoples discovery of their local pond resource as a wildlife habitat**. This will be undertaken through awareness raising of the UCL research behind a) the role of ponds in the habitat network and b) **the role of pond restoration** in enhancing aquatic biodiversity and

supporting nature recovery. It is also hoped that this project will act as the catalyst to inspire a larger number of landowners to undertake pond restorations and creations in Norfolk.

The artistic outputs from the project will be displayed online on the NPP website (www.norfolkponds.org) and viewers will have the opportunity to respond to the artistic pieces and the supporting science via a questionnaire and an art competition.



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