

SPAN Arts: LOVE STORIES TO NATURE COMMISSION

We invite artists and creative practitioners to send us their ideas for new work as part of our Love Stories to Nature commissions.

All ideas need to respond in some way to the theme The Environment.

What do we mean by Environment?

We embrace this word in its widest possible context:

- It could be inspired by or in response to our natural and built physical environment, be that urban or rural, mountains or coast, fields, or forests
- It could be macro or micro, from the global context to microbiology
- It could be the climate emergency we are all facing, from a global challenge to personal everyday actions
- It could be our relationship to the environment, its importance, impact or value on a personal, community or societal scale.
- It could be any or none of these things, we ask you to define what it means in relation to your idea.

What we are looking for

Ideas that:

- Come from the heart
- Are inspiring, innovative, and creative
- Are ambitious, provocative, and engaging
- Are Pembrokeshire/West Wales focused but nationally and/or globally relevant
- Embrace the wide meaning of The Environment, from our natural and built spaces and landscapes to the realities of the climate emergency
- Understand that even though love stories are often positive and uplifting, not all of them have happy endings. The environment can be something that offers enrichment, inspiration, and renewal, equally it is something that is under attack and being abused. We welcome ideas that respond to either or both the light and dark sides of the story.
- Offer a mix of locations across the county

We are open to any art forms from visual arts and crafts, creative writing and poetry, theatre, drama, dance, sound, photography, sculpture, and 3D work, time-based and digital work and purely participation-based practice.

We welcome ideas that take place in person, inside or outdoors, hybrid or digitally as part of this commission.

We expect to see some element of community/public engagement within the commission, be that central to the creative process or as part of a workshop/ sharing/show/exhibition/performance. We are as interested in the process as we are in any end product.

In coming up with your idea, we ask you to think about the legacy of your work and what difference it will make. Within the 2026/27 commissions, we are specifically looking for ideas that will

- Reduce feelings of climate anxiety and disconnection from their local environment in the project participants
- increase participants' emotional capacity to take a positive action against the climate crisis

The process:

We are looking to commission four new projects over the next twelve months. We will have two deadlines for ideas:

Monday 6th of April 2026

Monday 17th August 2026

The Love Stories to Nature commission budget is currently £10,000. Though we are fundraising with an aim to increase this. In each round, we hope to commission two projects at £2,500 each.

You can either respond directly to the brief (download below), or come to one of up to two open sessions we will host online to ask questions or talk about your idea before submitting it. You do not have to come to one or more of these sessions in order to apply.

Commissions awarded in April must be delivered by the end of October 2026, and those commissioned in August must be delivered by the end of January 2027.

Open sessions: these sessions will take place on Tuesday the 24th of March and Tuesday the 28th of July. These will be group sessions held online via Teams and are aimed at artists and creative practitioners and hosted by the SPAN team. They offer the chance to ask any questions you may have about the commission. If you would like to attend, please email info@span-art.org.uk

How to submit an idea:

We invite you to submit your ideas for this commission in whatever format works best to get your message across, it could be written, video or audio.

Whatever format you choose, we ask you to tell us:

Who you are and a bit about your creative practice:

What sort of work you make, what inspires you, how long you have been doing it or any past projects, shows or experience you think would be helpful for us to know about.

What your idea is:

Tell us what you want to do and why, and explain what sort of impact you hope your idea will make and to who. Also, tell us how your idea relates to the brief The Environment.

The size of the commission you are applying for:

As well as telling us the total you are applying for, you need to include a rough breakdown of costs that covers, but is not limited to:

- The cost of your time
- Any materials
- Space/venue hire
- Travel and transport
- Anything else you need to deliver your idea

Please ensure that all fees you quote are **inclusive of VAT**

Timescale:

Give us an idea of how you see your process running, what you will do when and the steps you will take. Remember, commissions awarded in the April meeting must be delivered by the end of October 2026, and the commission awarded in August must be delivered by the end of Jan 2027.

What you need from us:

Other than the money, what support or assistance would you need for us to make the idea a reality? This could be mentoring, advice, support identifying participants/audience, or help to find venues or locations. Just let us know.

We don't have a word count of ideal video length; just make sure you cover all the points above. Please don't feel you need to write an epic novel or record a feature-length film, try to keep it short and to the point.

Once you are done send this information to info@span-arts.org.uk

How the commissions will be selected?

All the ideas submitted by the deadline will go to a panel who will read them over, then meet together online to discuss their fit against the brief and select two commissions to support in each of the two rounds.

Who is making the decisions?

Decisions will be made by a small panel which included representatives from the SPAN team and at least two other external partners / community members / volunteers.

What's the time scale?

We aim to make decisions as quickly as possible, the panel is held within two weeks of the deadline, and we aim to let everyone know the decisions within a week of the panel meeting. If the idea is selected it may take a couple of weeks to agree the final details and sign a contract so, please consider this when planning the timescale of your work.

What happens next?

Once a decision is made, if the panel want to award a commission, the SPAN team will arrange to meet with you to agree the details of the work and finalise your budget. If the panel, choose not to award a commission you will be offered feedback and be able to re-apply with either a new or amended idea for the next panel meeting if you wish.

We expect the commissioned artists to become a cluster. Your commission will be independent, though we expect you to connect and share with the other artists and take part in a co-evaluation session in February 2027. There will be a separate fee for this.

As part of your reflective practice through the delivery of your commission, we ask you to keep a reflective journal, this can take any form, from text-based to video/audio, whatever works best for you. The purpose of this is to help inform your work through the commission and to help us understand the difference we are making through doing this sort of work.

What we can offer:

The Love Stories to Nature commission budget is currently **£10,000**. Though we are fundraising with an aim to increase this. We invite commissions of varying scales and anticipate making four awards out of this total budget.

We are asking you to tell us the level of resources you need to see your idea come to life. As a guide to help you, your budget should include:

A fee for your time: this includes planning as well as delivery time, and you should take into account your time to participate in the sharing sessions. SPAN Arts supports fair pay for the artists and creative collaborators we work with and would expect to pay between £150 to £300 per full working day, depending on your experience and if it is prep/planning time or active delivery.

Delivery costs: this could include funds to pay for space or venue hire, equipment or materials, travel or transport costs, and collaborators or support artist fees if you are working with other people. These are just some things you may or may not need to think about, depending on your idea.

If you would like support to work out your budget, you can come and talk to us in one of the open sessions before submitting your commission.

Outside of financial support for successful commissions, SPAN can offer:

- Mentoring and advice: both from the SPAN team and from external partners
- Partnership brokering: for example, if you want to work with a specific group of people or on a specific site/location, SPAN can help negotiate this
- Use of office or workshop space at our Narberth building, though we encourage activity that takes place across the county

Eligibility:

The commission is open to those who are UK residents and over the age of 18. You can be based anywhere in the UK; however, we actively encourage ideas from artists who have a personal connection to West Wales and who understand the unique context of the region.

We actively encourage ideas from artists from Global Majority backgrounds, people who are Disabled and/ or Neurodivergent, and Welsh speakers and will work to support any access needs you may have.

Love Stories to Nature in brief:

Call out for creative ideas that engage the community around the theme of The Environment

Total commission budget of £10,000, we anticipate making anywhere from three to five commissions out of this budget

Deadline for ideas are 6th of April 2026 and the 17th of August 2026

Tell us about your idea in whatever format best tells your story and send it to **info@span-arts.org.uk**

If you want to you can come to one of the open sessions to discuss your idea before applying.

If your idea is selected, you will start your work with support from the SPAN team. You will keep a reflective diary of some form, engage with the other artists who have been commissioned and play an active role in helping us understand the difference this work is making.

Remember commissions awarded in April must be completed by September 2026 and August commissions must be completed by January 2027.