

Cement Fields

New Art North Kent

Foundations

A 9-month mentorship programme supporting UK-based early-career artists.

About the programme

Foundations is a 9-month mentorship programme providing early-career visual artists with bespoke development support. Through regular meetings, the programme offers practical advice and support to help artists address specific challenges they are facing in their practice. It is designed specifically for artists who are currently underrepresented across the contemporary visual art sector and/or face barriers to accessing opportunities and developing their career.

Cement Fields sees North Kent as a place for exploration and through our work we welcome artists to use its unique contexts to explore bold questions and new ideas. We have a long history of supporting early-career artists through our artistic programme and are committed to creating generous and supportive environments where artists can be ambitious and take risks.

Recognising the precarious nature of sustaining an artistic practice in the current climate, *Foundations* is intended as a space for artists to receive bespoke support that addresses their specific needs, build new relationships and networks to support their ongoing work, and progress with their creative practice.

Foundations is supported by Arts Council England and in partnership with Open School East's Alumni Springboard Programme.

About Cement Fields

Cement Fields is a visual art organisation working collaboratively with artists and communities to create ambitious new art along the Thames Estuary in North Kent.

Our programme is an exploration of place and process, defined by the multiple shifting landscapes that stretch along the Thames from Dartford to Whitstable. It's a place where boundaries blur, where busy urban centres sit alongside

industrial sites, where waters slow in marshes and wetlands, and the major arteries of rivers and roads connect rural areas and seaside towns.

We invite artists, participants, and audiences to use North Kent's unique contexts to ask radical questions and explore new ideas. Through this interaction we create experimental new art and develop imagination, skills, and pathways into creative careers.

Cement Fields has grown out of Whitstable Biennale, a visual art festival founded in 2002 that ran for 10 editions, with an international reputation for developing experimental new work, often giving artists their first commission.

Cement Fields is proud to be a National Portfolio Organisation, supported using public funding by Arts Council England.

Find out more about our work at cementfields.org.

About Open School East

Established in 2013 and located in Margate, Open School East is a free, independent art school and community space that focuses on collective learning through the arts. They support cultural practitioners at an early stage of their career to develop and sustain their practice, and enable young people and adults alike to learn new and transferable skills, develop their confidence and shape their creative voice by becoming active learners and co-producers of OSE's programmes.

Find out more about their work at openschooleast.org.

What we offer

Starting in October 2024, the programme will provide six UK-based early-career artists with development sessions with a mentor from the Cement Fields team.

Each artist will have access to five online one-to-one sessions, in addition to opportunities to come together with the rest of the artists on the programme to meet and share their experiences, learning, and future plans.

The nature and focus of the support will be bespoke and will be led by your needs. Particular areas we are equipped to address through this programme are:

- Reflecting on your creative practice and feedback on ideas/works in progress.
- Developing a new project or idea.
- Addressing the specific challenges of running socially engaged projects.
- Applying for further opportunities, such as funding, grants, open calls, and residencies.
- Building networks with peers, artists, curators, and other arts organisations.
- General career related questions, including advice on working with arts organisations, pitching ideas, and practical skills, such as preparing a portfolio and CV.

To support their participation in the programme each artist will receive a £150 bursary to cover the cost of materials, travel or other expenses.

There is no cost to apply or participate in the programme.

Who can apply

We welcome applications from UK-based artists with a primarily visual arts and/or socially engaged practice, who are at an early point in their career and have developed a strong practice, but who would benefit from a dedicated period of support to help take the next step.

A cohort of six artists will be selected, with priority given to artists who are currently underrepresented across the contemporary visual art sector and/or face barriers to accessing development opportunities through their background or practice.

We are particularly interested in hearing from artists who are able to identify how a sustained period of mentoring might help to address a specific and current need in their practice and professional development, and why they believe Cement Fields might be able to support this.

We ask applicants to make clear how they fit these criteria in their application.

Foundations is delivered in partnership with Open School East's Alumni Springboard Programme, with one place reserved for an alumni of the OSE Associates Programme.

Artists who do not live and work in the UK, or are currently in undergraduate or postgraduate education, are not eligible to apply.

How to apply

Complete the application form at: cementfields.org/foundations-apply

Deadline for applications: 9am, Monday 9 September 2024

Applications may be made via video or audio, rather than the online form. Please record your responses to the application questions and email the file to info@cementfields.org. Please limit your response to no longer than 3 minutes per question.

We will be hosting informal Q&A sessions online on Friday 16 August 2024 for interested artists to ask questions before applying. If you would like to book a session, please reserve one here: foundations-2024.eventbrite.co.uk

Timeline

Q&A sessions: Friday 16 August 2024

Application deadline: 9am, Monday 9 September 2024

Interviews: w/c 16 September 2024

Programme starts: October 2024

Programme ends: June 2025

Access

If you have access requirements, would prefer to apply in a different format not listed above, and/or would like us to make reasonable adjustments to the application and/or interview process, please contact us at info@cementfields.org.

We welcome applicants attaching an access document to their application. For more information on writing an access document, guidance is available at www.accessdocsforartists.com.

Contact

If you have any questions about the programme or the application process, please join one of our [Q&A sessions](#) or contact us at: info@cementfields.org.

Application Questions

*Questions marked with * are required.*

Section 1: Tell us about yourself

- Email*
- First name*
- Last name*
- Address*
- Post code*
- Phone number
- Website or other link to your work (e.g. social media profile)
- Do you consider yourself an early-career artist?* [Yes/No]
- Do you consider yourself to have a primarily visual art and/or socially engaged practice?* [Yes/No]
- Are you currently in education?* [Yes/No]
- Are you an alumni of Open School East?* [Yes/No]

Section 2: Tell us about why you are applying

- Tell us about your artistic practice and how you have got where you are, including education and other relevant experiences* (2000 character limit)
- Tell us how you meet the application criteria and why you would like to participate in the programme* (2000 character limit)
- What would you like to focus on during the mentoring, and what impact are you hoping the mentoring might have for you personally?* (2000 character limit)

Section 3: Access

We want to ensure everyone working with us feels as comfortable as possible. There is the option below to disclose anything you would like us to know at this stage. This can be anything you feel is relevant, especially that which might help us better accommodate your participation in the programme.

- Is there anything we can do to better facilitate your involvement in the programme?

Section 4: Upload supporting documents

If you wish, you can upload the following supporting documents. These aren't required to apply.

- Upload a current artist CV
- Upload a portfolio/documentation of your work
- Upload an access document

Section 5: Equal Opportunities Monitoring

Cement Fields takes seriously our responsibility to offer equal opportunities. We aim to ensure that no applicant receives less favourable treatment because of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

We hope you can help by completing this form, which will be used to report to funders and to record how well we are reaching out to potential applicants. We will only publish anonymised data.

For the purposes of compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998, by completing this form, you give consent to Cement Fields processing the data supplied on this form for the purposes of equal opportunities monitoring.

Your responses in this section will not be used to assess your application.

Section 6: Additional questions

- Would you like to be added to Cement Fields' mailing list to hear more about other opportunities and upcoming events? [Yes/No]

- How did you hear about this opportunity?
[Instagram/Twitter/X/Facebook/Website/Email newsletter/Word of mouth/Other]

Privacy Policy

To provide this service we store relevant personal data on our secure internal database. Cement Fields is committed to protecting your personal information and being transparent about what information we hold about you. Data is always collected, used and stored in line with our Privacy Policy: cementfields.org/privacy-policy [I understand and agree to Cement Fields storing my data]

FAQs

What do we mean by ‘early-career’ artists?

We recognise that everyone’s career path is different but we broadly define this as artists who are in the first 10 years of establishing their practice, who have reached an important phase in their development, and for whom this opportunity would help them take the next step in their career.

What do we mean by ‘underrepresented’ artists and those who ‘face barriers to accessing opportunities and developing their career’?

We acknowledge the structural exclusion in the arts, are committed to equality of opportunity for all, and are actively striving to make our organisation more inclusive. Therefore, we welcome applications from anybody who believes they have faced exclusion or lack of opportunity.

In particular, we welcome and encourage submissions from artists without who identify as Deaf and/or disabled, neurodivergent, global majority (referring to people who are Black, Asian, Brown, dual-heritage, indigenous to the global south, and/or have been racialised as ‘ethnic minorities’), working-class or from a low socio-economic background, LGBTQIA+, migrant or those who have experience of the immigration system, and/or those otherwise marginalised in the arts.

Do you need to be based in North Kent to apply?

No, we are open to applications from artists living in any part of the United Kingdom.

How will the sessions be delivered?

Sessions will primarily take place online via Whereby or Google Meet, but depending on location and availability, there is the possibility of in-person meetings (exact arrangements will be discussed with selected artists).

How regular are the mentoring sessions?

At the start of the programme, a schedule will be discussed and agreed with the selected artists based on their availability, deadlines, and personal circumstances. This may include sessions being spread out across the duration of the programme, or condensed around a specific moment.

Is there any obligation to create/produce anything as part of the programme?

There are no fixed outcomes expected of selected artists, or requirements to produce/create new work as part of the programme. We will work with you to identify reasonable goals for the mentoring, which we will work towards collaboratively through the sessions.

We may update this document at any time to incorporate additional questions and feedback from applicants. All changes/additions will be clearly marked.