

Application pack for *Sign Symbol Sound*

Thank you for your interest in applying to take part in the exhibition *Sign Symbol Sound*. You will find all the information you need in this pack to assist in your submission.

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Introduction

Modern Art Oxford and Oxford Brookes University invite people based in Oxfordshire to submit their creative responses to *Sign Symbol Sound*, a new interdisciplinary exhibition exploring language and creativity.

Selected submissions will feature in a collaborative online exhibition, installed in an outdoor curated space in Oxfordshire and will be available to view online from 4 September – 11 October 2021.

The exhibition will explore the innate creativity that can be found in everyday interactions, bringing a range of experiences together to consider how language grows, branching out to create infinite possibilities.

The project is led by Modern Art Oxford's Creative Associate (Participation) Laura Purseglove, and the exhibition will be co-curated by members of the volunteer team at Modern Art Oxford, demonstrating the creative collaboration underpinning the project.

Language shapes our experience of the world. Linguistic theorists have long explored our capacity for language, examining the internal mechanisms and external networks we use to express ourselves and understand each other, asking whether language is a cultural invention; a biological development in the human brain; or a closed system, governed by a set of rules.

One way of thinking about language is as an instinct, hardwired within us. In the same way that a spider knows how to spin a web, children acquire language spontaneously and without formal instruction.

The brief

Are we hardwired for language? Is language a cultural invention that shapes our experience of the world? And is language our first creative framework, the one from which other creative activities ultimately derive?

For this co-curated show, we are interested in receiving submissions that reflect sources of inspiration from any profession or personal experience, which resonate with the theme and reflect on the different relationships with language and creativity in your community.

Through the submissions to *Sign Symbol Sound* the final exhibition will explore our language making abilities and the theoretical ideas that have shaped our understanding of language and linguistics to date.

What kinds of languages shape our communities?

We are particularly interested in exploring the ways in which we acquire and use language, from our first experiences and beyond to consider the communities and social networks within which language develops and finds meaning. We also encourage responses which consider communication beyond formalised language; from sound and movement to communication networks from other species.

Submissions can take many different forms. From a shape, sound or movement, to mathematical and scientific languages, observations in nature to personal conversations, and abstract objects.

We are interested in the images, sounds, texts, movements and objects, which reflect your experience of language, creativity and community.

What you need to know

Sign Symbol Sound is an exhibition that will be launched on 4 September and will run until 11 October 2021.

Inspired by the themes of the project, the install process will be staged in an outdoor curated space in Oxfordshire, celebrating the innate creativity that can be found in every-day interactions in the local community. The exhibition will encourage creative, curatorial thinking beyond the traditional institutional contexts of indoor gallery spaces.

The project will be documented using film, photography and digital scanning. The final exhibition will be available to explore on the Gallery website from 2 September.

When submitting your work, please consider this installation process as a creative challenge that could enhance or inspire the way your work is communicated to a public audience. In the spirit of collaboration, we hope that artists whose work is selected will enter into a dialogue with our curators which will feed into the display and interpretation of their work.

Performance work can be documented with film and photography.

Video, film and sound works will be considered. However, due to our outdoor location we may work with you to explore more digital forms of presentation for works requiring a connection to electricity.

Finally, as a reminder, we won't have walls. Suggestions for creative ways to display your work are welcomed and we especially encourage submissions that complement the temporary nature of the outdoor space, which will be a guiding principle in the curatorial process.

Security

Please note: Due to the unconventional nature of the exhibition, we will require the loan of your work two weeks before the installation and will return works to you no later than Monday 6 September. As we are dependent on the weather conditions, for the install we shall arrange for the safe storage of your work at Oxford Brookes University should the installation schedule be affected. Standard security checks are undertaken at Oxford Brookes University including on-campus security measures, together with risk mitigation, which have been effective in preventing damage and/or theft.

Meeting the team

Our co-curators will be collaboratively selecting work for the show with our Creative Associate (Participation), Laura Purseglove. A total of 15 works will be selected for the final exhibition.

Specialist production teams from Oxford Brookes University and Modern Art Oxford will be handling your work and working with the curators to install your work.

If you are successful, we would require you to be available to meet (either in person or digitally) the curatorial team on Monday 19 July from 2-4pm.

This will be an opportunity to meet (either in person or digitally) the other selected creatives for the show and to discuss the developments of the curatorial direction with the wider team.

You will be shown the preparations taking place for the show at this stage and invited to feedback on the curatorial direction. We would ask that you consider yourself to be as much a collaborative participant in this new and exciting project as our volunteers and audience.

Key Dates

Install: 31 August - 3 September

Preview: Friday 3 September, 6–9:30pm at Oxford Brookes University (subject to confirmation)

Exhibition: 4 September - 11 October 2021

How to submit your work

You do not have to pay anything to submit your work.

To submit, please send the following as one attachment to: Sara Lowes, Curator of Creative Learning, *Sign Symbol Sound* at creativelearning@modernartoxford.org.uk:

1. Up to three images of the work or ideas you are submitting. These should be in jpeg format, each be no larger than 0.5MB, and each be saved as your name and the name of the work.
2. If you are submitting film or audio works, please send these as URL links only (such as via YouTube, Vimeo or SoundCloud).
3. A short written description of the work (including any links you would like to share) and its relationship to language and creativity. This should be of no longer than 300 words. Include your name, the name of the work, the dimensions, requirements (if any) for display, materials and date of production. This should be saved as a Word Document.
4. Clear recommendations on handling the work.

The deadline for submissions is 5pm on Monday 21 June 2021.

If your work is selected, you will be contacted directly by Sara Lowes, Curator of Creative Learning no later than Monday 5 July.

Please note: we are asking for electronic submissions only at this stage – please do not send any original material.

- We regularly receive a high number of submissions for projects and exhibitions and therefore can only provide feedback on individual submissions that might be taken forward for the exhibition.
- Any work that does not follow the above submission requirements will not be considered for inclusion in the exhibition.
- If you require any support with your submission please contact creativelearning@modernartoxford.org.uk.

The final selection process will take place on Saturday 26 and Sunday 27 June at Modern Art Oxford by our Creative Associate and Modern Art Oxford Volunteers.

Successful submissions

If you are successful, we will need to make arrangements with you for the loan of your work from Monday 16 August – Monday 6 September.

Modern Art Oxford will assume all costs for packing and transportation of the loan to and from the exhibition site, unless agreed otherwise.

Please note: there is no fee for this loan however an agreement to assure you (lenders warranties) of Modern Art Oxford's (borrowers obligations) terms and conditions will be appropriately undertaken to secure all the necessary documentation for the purposes of this participatory project.

Oxford Brookes and Modern Art Oxford will share joint responsibility for the safe storage, installation and return of your work during this time.

Thank you for your interest in *Sign Symbol Sound*. We look forward to receiving your submission and welcome creative ideas from all ages, professions, and disciplines. Please note that due to the ongoing effect of the COVID-19 virus, the creative output of *Sign Symbol Sound* is subject to change. This will not affect the project's ability to take place this September digitally. We will update participants accordingly throughout, as per the UK government's advice.