



Open Call: Artist in Residence Talking Forests



A forest path at Forgan Arts Centre. Photo by Kirsten Wilson, 2025.

Introduction

Forgan Arts Centre invites applications for the first in a new series of socially and ecologically engaged artist residencies.

Embedding the concept of **An Arts Centre as a Garden**, we seek artists* looking to develop an ambitious new project in collaboration with our human and more-than-human communities. Supported by Creative Scotland's Multi-Year Fund.

Deadline: **Monday 1 September 2025, 12noon**

**Open to individual artists, as well as duos and collaborative groups of up to four.*



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About Forgan Arts Centre

Forgan Arts Centre is a vibrant hub for artistic creation, experimentation, and learning, located on the edge of Newport-on-Tay in North East Fife. Community-led and rooted in collaboration, we offer a wide range of creative opportunities for people across Fife and beyond.

Our dynamic programme includes art and craft classes, workshops, artist-led projects shaped by community needs, as well as artist commissions, residencies, placements, and public events. We also provide access to allotments, artist studios, and professional making facilities, along with on-site accommodation for residents at The Gardener's Cottage.

Through diverse creative practices, we work closely with artists and listen to our communities to explore both personal and shared challenges—those that resonate locally and on a global scale. As part of the local ecology, we offer a space for creative expression, connection, and furthering our understanding of the natural world.

At Forgan Arts Centre, everyone is met with a warm welcome. Our approach to accessibility and inclusion is flexible and responsive, supporting the unique and fluctuating needs of each individual in our community.



Lughnasadh Music & Art Festival 2025. Photo by Kevin Linnet, 2025.



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History

Forgan Arts Centre was established by members of the local community in 1974 to provide a place for creative learning. It is a membership organisation. We purchased the Leng Home in 2022 via Community Asset Transfer, with enthusiastic support from local people.

The estate is the historic home of the Leng family, radically progressive philanthropists, and advocates of accessible educational reform through creativity. We proudly continue this tradition.

The estate comprises three buildings, the Leng Home, The Gardener's Cottage, and the Kiln House, as well as over three acres of grounds including mature woodland, hedgerows, food growing plots, and accessible lawns.

The site is an invaluable heritage asset, and the team are custodians of the grounds, stewarding the land and buildings for the benefit of our communities. Building on five decades of experience delivering creative education, we have developed our programme in relation to our new context at the Leng Home. We are cultivating a site that has people, place, and the planet at its heart.



Conversations with Plants. Photo by Rowan Lear, 2023.



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The Gardener's Cottage

The Gardener's Cottage is a recently-renovated, two floor cottage on the grounds of Forgan Arts Centre. The ground floor comprises a kitchen, living/dining room, WC and a studio. On the upper floor there are two double bedrooms and a bathroom with bath and shower. Residencies at The Gardener's Cottage are self catered.

The small studio in the cottage has a height adjustable desk, an easel and shelving. The 2 bedrooms each have a double bed, chest of drawers and clothes rail. The living/dining room has a small sofa, dining table and chairs for four. The small kitchen has cooking facilities and a fridge. There are no laundry facilities on site. Telephone signal is good and there is wifi in the cottage and the main building.

Accessibility

The Gardener's Cottage is not suitable for those requiring level access due to the age and nature of the building. Bedrooms are only accessible via stairs and both entrances have one step into the building. Artists are welcome to bring family members or support workers at no extra cost if this enables you to practice and participate in the residency. There is an access budget available, separate to the project budget. Please include in your application any access requirements that we may be able to support you with.



The studio at The Gardener's Cottage.

Photo by Kevin Linnett.



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An Arts Centre as a Garden

In 2024, Forgan Arts Centre developed a strategic plan to guide us from 2025 to 2028. At the heart of this plan is a new way of thinking: **An Arts Centre as a Garden**.

This is a creative experiment – imagining the centre not just as a venue, but as a living, breathing ecosystem. Like a garden, it's a place where people, plants, and other creatures coexist, connect, and support one another through mutual care, reciprocity and creativity.

An Arts Centre as a Garden is inspired by the principles of social permaculture, which takes cues from nature to shape healthier, more collaborative human systems. In addition, we are committed to embedding climate-conscious practices and environmental sustainability in everything we do.

Grounded in local consultation and these values, we've identified three key themes to guide our work over the next three years. Each theme connects our programme to community needs, wider social issues, our commitments to equality, diversity and inclusion, and our environmental sustainability goals.

The theme for 2025 is **Talking Forests**.



The allotments at Forgan Arts Centre.



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Talking Forests

In North East Fife, the youngest and oldest people in our communities lack opportunities and miss out on chances to thrive. Like any flourishing ecosystem, we believe communities are at their best when all ages are valued and connected.

Around the world, ageing populations are reshaping how we live. Closer to home, older people are facing isolation, while younger generations are up against shrinking opportunities. When these age groups drift apart, we lose the stories, skills, and shared learning that help communities grow.

At Forgan Arts Centre, we're learning from our more-than-human kin. In forests, mature trees use underground fungal networks to support young saplings with nutrients and wisdom. As forest ecologist Suzanne Simard writes, elder trees take responsibility for 'sharing the knowledge of what helps and what harms, who is friend or foe, and how to adapt and survive in an everchanging landscape'. Inspired by these systems of exchange, we're building creative spaces where generations meet, share, and learn from each other.

Through the theme of **Talking Forests**, and led by our artists and communities, we will connect curiosity with experience—supporting young people to grow, and older people to stay active, included, and valued. It's local work with global relevance: shaping a future that's more creative, connected and nourishing.



Woodland activities at Forgan Arts Centre. Photo by Teri Laing.



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About the Residency

Forgan Arts Centre invites applications for a funded artist residency, offering time, space, and support to artists working with communities in meaningful and imaginative ways.

Taking place over 40 days between October 2025 – March 2026, the residency is rooted in **Talking Forests**, exploring intergenerational and interspecies exchange.

We invite proposals that connect with our neighbours, classes, allotments, garden activities and wider programme. We are interested in projects which can become part of the living fabric of Forgan Arts Centre.

The residency offers:

- Accommodation and studio on site in The Gardener's Cottage
- £15,000 fee (pro-rata £42,400) for minimum 40 days work
- £10,000 project budget
- Separate access budget
- Access to staff, classrooms, garden, tools, and tutor support
- Opportunity to contribute an artwork to The Gardener's Cottage and/or Garden

We're seeking artists with:

- A collaborative and socially engaged practice
- Experience working creatively with communities
- Interest in environmental and ecological themes

This residency marks a new chapter in imagining Forgan Arts Centre as a garden – a shared, sentient ecology of people, plants, and ideas.



Art activities at Lughnasadh 2024. Photo by Kevin Linnett.



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Key Details

Please find below key details about the position:

Role title:	Artist in Residence (Talking Forests)
Status:	This is a self-employed / freelance role
Fee:	The total fee is £15,000. This is a fixed flat fee, whether you apply as a group or individual. The fee is equivalent to 40 days of work at Scottish Artist Union advised rates of pay.
Budget:	This position includes a project budget of up to £10,000, to encompass all material, delivery and engagement activities. This budget is prioritised for socially engaged activities, such as working with groups and hiring collaborators, rather than paying for personal equipment and materials. The budget will be managed and agreed by the Curator and Artist(s). This budget is fixed and must include all project expenditure. There is a separate access budget.
Hours:	We anticipate this will be a minimum of 40 days' work. Depending on the nature of the proposed project, this could include evening and weekend working.
Duration:	40 days, to be completed between October 2025 - March 2026. This can be divided across several visits and periods of residence.
Flexibility:	Dates and hours of work are flexible according to the project's needs and the artist's other commitments; however, the project must be completed by end of March 2026.
Location:	The Gardener's Cottage, at Forgan Art Centre. This residency is place based so you must be able and willing to work on site.
Facilities:	By agreement and arrangement, artist(s) are welcome to use the centre's facilities including our open-plan administrative office, studio classrooms, ceramics studio, garden and grounds.
Deadline:	Deadline for applications: Monday 1 September, 12noon
Eligibility:	Artists must be based in the UK and be outside of full-time education



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Application Process

Selection for this residency is by assessment of a proposal, followed by interviews with shortlisted candidates. Alternative formats for application are detailed below.

If you're interested in this role and would like more information, or would like to apply but feel there are barriers limiting your ability to do so, please get in touch with Rowan Lear, Curator, curator@forganartscentre.co.uk. Conversations about your application will not impact how it is assessed and will be confidential.

How to apply

To apply, please send the following via email to curator@forganartscentre.co.uk:

Compiled into one PDF:

- An **Artist Proposal** (of up to 1000 words), which answers the following questions:
 - a) What is your proposed residency project, and how does it connect with the theme of **Talking Forests**?
 - b) What is your background as an artist (or collective)?
 - c) What is your approach to developing work in community and place?
 - d) What attracts you to this residency opportunity?
- **Budget:** a preliminary budget detailing anticipated costs (indicative is fine)
- **Access budget & requirements:** indication of access provisions and costs required to support your residency.
- **Dates:** a proposed timeline for your time in residence (approximate is fine)
- **Portfolio / documentation of previous work:** ideally 10-20 images or links to up to 10 minutes of video.
- **CV:** detailing previous exhibitions, collaborations, projects, community activities and relevant experience.

Please submit documents as a single PDF, max 25mb. You are welcome to write your application in a style and format that works for you.

Equalities monitoring form: please also complete [this online form](#) to help us check the accessibility of our opportunities. It is anonymous and will not be assessed.



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Video applications

If you prefer, you are welcome to submit a video application. A video application should include all the elements of the proposal. A written CV, budget, and portfolio would still be required, as a PDF. We recommend a five-minute-long recording using your phone, webcam or platform such as Zoom. Recording in a quiet space will ensure good sound quality. Upload your video to Vimeo or YouTube as 'unlisted' but viewable by anyone with the link. Include the link to your video in your application.

Selection Process

Applications will be assessed by a panel including Forgan Arts Centre's Director, Curator, and an independent artist or curator. Shortlisted applicants will be invited to present their proposal to the panel and asked questions about their project idea, practice, and motivation for applying for the role. Informal interviews will be held online or at Forgan Arts Centre. Financial support for local travel will be provided.

Key Dates

Applications open:	Thursday 7 August 2025
Online Q&A:	Monday 18 August, 2-3pm & Saturday 23 August, 10-11am
Deadline:	Monday 1 September, 12noon
Invitation to interview:	Monday 15 September
Interviews:	w/b 22 September

There are two opportunities to join an online Q&A about the residency:

Online Q&A	Online Q&A
Monday 18 August, 2-3pm	Saturday 23 August, 10-11am
Teams meeting link: Join here	Teams meeting link: Join here
Meeting ID: 317 965 072 064 1	Meeting ID: 341 439 041 609 3
Passcode: Nu7RM3WY	Passcode: ta9Db2pQ



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Equal Opportunities

It is our policy that there shall be no discrimination on the grounds of gender, race, ethnic origin, marital status, religious belief, sexual orientation, disability, age, nationality or national origin.

Further Information

Website

You can find out more about Forgan Arts Centre via our website. Key pages are:

[Who we are](#) will tell you more about the team.

[Art programme](#) will tell you more about our projects, commissions, residencies, and some of the artists we've worked with.

[What's on](#) will show you some of our classes, workshops, and events.

[What we do](#) shares more about our history as well as our annual accounts and current vision, mission and aims.

Social Media

Our website doesn't capture everything we do. You can find out more on our social media sites:

Facebook: facebook.com/forganartscentre

Instagram: instagram.com/forgan_arts_centre

Email

The main point of contact for this opportunity is Rowan Lear, Curator. Please email curator@forganartscentre.co.uk if you have a question which is not answered in this Residency Pack.