



UNIVERSITY
OF HULL

ENERGY AND
ENVIRONMENT INSTITUTE

Risky Cities: Flow of Words

Artist Commission Information Pack September-October 2022



Arts and
Humanities
Research Council



Natural
Environment
Research Council



In this callout we are looking for artists to pitch creative responses to work made by communities in a series of writing workshops that we facilitated in Hull this summer.

WHAT IS THE *RISKY CITIES* PROJECT?

The *Risky Cities* project uses innovative arts and humanities approaches to build climate awareness and help communities become more flood resilient, today and for the future.

The project recovers Hull's long histories of living with water and flooding and the 'fictions of flooding' (poetry, prose, drama) that have emerged in response and uses these histories and stories to build climate awareness and flood resilience.

We are particularly interested in exploring the ways that art and culture can uncover and celebrate stories of community and resilience whilst acknowledging the serious impact that flooding has on people's lives.

Previously, we have worked with Absolutely Cultured and Living with Water on *Floodlights*, a collection of large-scale projection and light shows. We have also worked with the National Youth Theatre to perform *Melt* as part of COP26, an outdoor spectacle on environmental themes involving a cast of hundreds of young people. Currently, we are touring a textile exhibition that has been created with local communities in Boothferry and Cottingham.

You can learn more about *Risky Cities* on our [website](#).

ABOUT THE WORKSHOPS

Throughout August 2022, we ran creative writing workshops with three different community groups around Preston Road and writer Maureen Lennon. In the workshops we explored the histories of flooding in Hull, and how we might use these stories to build resilience for the future. Together each group used a range of different genres to explore archival source material about histories of flooding in Hull. We hope that these pieces will be the basis of inspiration for your artistic responses.

We heard about people's experiences of flooding, exploring people's hopes and fears for the future, and creatively reimagined what might be possible in our communities. One group developed a creative map of Hull, using people's memories of floods from the 1950s through to the present day to map the streets of our city. People had both fond and frightening memories of Hull's history of flooding, including:

- A bar man diving through a flooded cellar to change a barrel.
- A man waking up on his sofa and finding it was floating through the living room.
- A rabbit hutch raft floating through the house.

The group also came together to write a piece about Hull's relationship to water, and how it might change in the future.

It was clear from discussions that there was both distress at some of the ways flooding has impacted the people of Hull, but also pragmatism and a wealth of practical knowledge. As one participant noted:

“There’s always the same amount of water in the world. It’s just we’ve got it in the wrong places. Or we’re in the wrong places I suppose.”

Another group had less direct experience of flooding themselves, largely having been too young to have memories of the last major floods in Hull. But between them they created fantastical and creative re-imaginings of Hull’s future relationship with water and how we might find new and inventive ways to handle it. These offerings included:

- A cloud city.
- A yoga teaching canoeing dog.
- A woman who is able to turn her long Rapunzel-like hair into a lifesaving raft.
- A house that glimmered after its weekly ‘flood shower’.

There was a sense in this group not only of the impact that flooding might have in the future, but also of the creative ways of thinking that will be required to combat it, and a sense of joy and possibility which those creative responses might unleash.

The final group had a wealth of personal experiences and memories of flooding, as well as several creative and practical responses about what is needed for the future.

The focus in these responses was often on the power of community, and how this has been frequently harnessed in Hull’s floods, and how it perhaps holds the key to saving Hull’s communities in the future. There was a sense not only of the destruction of these events, but also the connection they can bring, one woman entitled her story about her own flood experience:

‘The Night I Became Proud Of My Children’.

If you are interested in making an application, you can email your expression of interest to our Creative Producer Jack Chamberlain at jack.chamberlain@hull.ac.uk and we will share the pieces with you directly in our *Flow of Words: Community Writing Pack*.

WHAT ARE WE LOOKING FOR?

We are looking to commission five different artists to respond creatively to the work written by these communities and produce a piece of art based around their themes, stories and ideas.

We anticipate that responses might encompass visual arts, theatre, poetry, music and dance but are open to a wide range of forms. We are specifically interested in hearing from artists from multiple art forms including those who might not normally feel like these sorts of commissions are for them.

We are looking for any artistic response which has a live performance element and/or would be able to be exhibited live in some way at a sharing. For example, an illustrator might be able to present their work/s and talk about the inspiration and process or a costume designer might choose to exhibit and talk about a costume that they have designed.

You may choose to focus on specific stories or memories generated by the community pieces, or you may choose to respond to the broader themes which reoccur throughout the overall body of work. However, we would like responses to feel deeply rooted in the community writing.

For this callout and the time and the fee available, we are not expecting fully fledged productions or extensive pieces of work. We are interested in your artistic response and we invite you to be clear about what you will be able to offer in the time frame given.

We hope this callout is an opportunity to transform and respond to current narratives of flooding and community voices within the city. The overall focus of *Risky Cities* is to help build resilience for the future and explore the crucial role that arts, culture and heritage have to play in achieving this.

We are excited to hear imaginative and bold pitches which will help to shape new narratives around flooding in Hull.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

We are looking to commission artists who work within any artistic discipline and have an 'HU' postcode.

The artistic response must have a live performance element and/or would be able to be exhibited live in some way at a sharing.

HOW WILL THE COMMUNITY BE INVOLVED?

Community participants from our workshops will be part of the commission selection process and will attend one round table event with the selected artists and one open rehearsal/sharing event, as well as being invited to join us for the sharing events.

WHAT WILL SUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS RECEIVE?

- £1750 commissioning fee.
- Space to work and/or rehearse on The University of Hull Campus.
- Lighting support during technical rehearsal and sharings.
- A round table discussion about Hull's history of flooding with Risky Cities academics and community participants.
- BSL interpretation during sharings.

HOW WILL WE ASSESS APPLICATIONS?

The selection panel will consist of Risky Cities team members, an independent freelance artist and members of the communities that we have worked with. We will shortlist a number of applications and invite these artists/organisations to interview. We will provide every applicant with a response before Monday 17th October at 5pm at the latest.

Unsuccessful applicants will be given bespoke feedback that explains the reasoning behind our final decisions and any constructive feedback that the panel find to be appropriate.

IMPORTANT DATES

Please find below a list of dates for the process. Ideally, applicants will be available for all the dates listed but, to encourage flexibility, all the essential dates are separately highlighted. If you have any questions regarding dates, please contact jack.chamberlain@hull.ac.uk

EVENT	DATE	LOCATION
Application submission deadline	On or before noon Friday 7 th October	Online
All applicants informed of the results	Monday 17 th October before 5pm	Online
Round table meeting between commissioned artists, community participants and Risky Cities team	Thursday 20 th October 2022	The University of Hull Campus
Work in progress sharing with participants and Risky Cities team (essential)	Friday 28 th October 2022	The University of Hull Campus
Dress and Technical rehearsal (essential)	Weds 9 th November 2022	Gulbenkian Centre, The University of Hull Campus
Sharing 1 (essential)	Thursday 10 th November 2022	Gulbenkian Centre, The University of Hull Campus
Sharing 2 (essential)	Friday 11 th November 2022	The Freedom Centre, Preston Road
Half day evaluation session	Thursday 17 th November 2022	The University of Hull Campus

To apply, please download the *Flow of Words Application Form* which can be found [here](#). Please email your expression of interest to jack.chamberlain@hull.ac.uk to receive access to the *Flow of Words Community Pack*.

If you have any questions about the application process, please get in touch with Jack on jack.chamberlain@hull.ac.uk.

We look forward to reading your application,
The Risky Cities Team