

I Am Festival 2021

Call for Proposals

A New Direction are looking for proposals from creative practitioners, artist(s) and arts organisations to develop and deliver activity with our SEND Network. We are particularly interested in hearing from those who identify as D/deaf, disabled and/or neurodiverse, or disabled-led arts organisations. This work will be developed with teachers and pupils in SEND settings and showcased at our online *I Am Festival* in June 2021. Within the following brief there is a call out for proposals in four key areas identified and developed by the SEND Network festival working group:

- [Portraiture](#)
- [Love Letters](#)
- [Collaborative Commissions](#)
- [Live Event\(s\)](#)

Any proposals from artists, practitioners or organisations should be approached with a collaborative spirit, and an approach that can tailor the work to the wide range of educational settings represented in our network.

If you are asked for an interview you will receive an access audit so we can ensure any access requirements are met.

For each strand there is a budget of up to £2000 for practitioner time, with additional budget available for materials and resources.

We suggest that proposals include:

- your creative/artistic statement or approach to this work
- your interest in the *I Am Festival* and its theme of love
- an example of your creative work or a previous project you've delivered
- a rough breakdown of budget and additional resources needed

and be no more than 2 sides of A4 or 5 minutes audio/video (for a single strand)

If you have questions about this brief, and would like to have an informal conversation about our work, please email us to arrange a time.

Please send proposals by 6pm on Sunday 14 March with a proposed budget (practitioner fees, materials, and applicable VAT) to schools@anewdirection.org.uk

Please note that the successful candidate for this post will be required to complete a Disclosure and Barring Check, must be eligible to work in the UK and registered to pay their own taxes.

About the SEND Network

A New Direction's SEND Network is a free professional development programme for London special school teachers and mainstream SENDCos, coordinated by A New Direction. The Network meets twice a term over the academic year, working together to improve creative and cultural opportunities for children and young people who are D/deaf, disabled and neurodiverse.

Being a creative subject teacher in a special school or a SENDCo in a mainstream school can be isolating. You are often a department of one person. Opportunities to share practice, seek advice, and develop relationships with other creative subject teachers can be quite limited. A New Direction's SEND network provides a way of sharing good practice with other teachers who are working in a huge range of SEND settings across London. It also provides an opportunity to meet and share strategies and ideas for bringing the curriculum to life in ways that meet students' needs.

About I Am Festival

Since 2015, the I Am At Tate Exchange Festival has provided a platform for young people to showcase their talents, leadership, ideas and opinions. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we took the festival online in 2020, sharing content from the teachers, artists and young people who were due to be joining us at the Tate. [Our online celebration of creativity](#) with SEND settings and disabled-led organisations included blogs written by artists and SEN teachers, virtual events with disabled-led cultural organisations, along with videos, resources and more.

SEND Network and I Am Festival 2020-21

For the 2020-21 academic year, the SEND network continues to meet virtually with an emphasis on networking, practice sharing, connecting network members to creative opportunities and partners across the cultural sector. A New Direction holds regular network meetings which are organised to support professional practice during what continues to be a challenging and changing time for children and young people who are D/deaf, disabled and neurodiverse.

The theme for the 2021 festival is 'Love' which we will explore through a lens that looks at fostering empathy and understanding, through the work we deliver and through the activity we share with wider audiences and the public.

SEND schools, specialist schools and SEND units within mainstream schools are hubs of specialist knowledge, creativity, talent and passion that comes from pupils, carers, teachers and support staff. These units are in themselves communities of love, and we hope that the festival will celebrate this talent and passion and build bridges that extend it out through local communities and cultural partners.

SEND Network membership

The SEND Network is made up of educators from a range of schools across London, with about 30 members currently active in the 2020-21 academic year. Our network includes schools that provide for a broad range of needs including

- Autism, sometimes alongside learning difficulties and other needs-
- Speech, language and communication difficulties-
- Profound and multiple learning difficulties (can include sensory impairments, physical and/or medical needs
- Severe learning difficulties
- Moderate learning difficulties
- Developmental delay

Some of our network schools are engaged in outreach, working with other agencies and/or offering progression routes post-19. A large number offer 'all-through' provision from 3-19; there is a small number of primary schools, some secondary and some hubs or bridges that support a range of settings. One has a performing arts specialism.

Provision is often described as student-led, holistic, personalised, sensory, creative and caring. Working together with families is always an important element in the young people's education plans. Some of our network teachers are, or have been, arts professionals and bring their expertise to creative partnership working.

Working with the SEND Network

A New Direction's mission is to support the capacity of all children and young people to shape culture and be creative. We champion the voices of D/deaf, disabled and neurodiverse children and young people, by working with the educators who support them and building a festival which combines creativity and advocacy.

A New Direction and the SEND Network will support artists and arts organisations to develop work that puts the needs of children and young people first, this includes support around best practice, pedagogy and safeguarding when working in SEND settings and contexts. Our work is informed by the social model of disability, and we are looking for expressions of interest from artists and arts organisations who are interested in bringing a learner-centred, ability-based approach to their work; putting the insights of SEND educators and the abilities of D/deaf, disabled and neurodiverse children and young people first.

Festival Format

The festival will take place in SEND settings and online during the week of 14 June 2021. This will include sharing work online via A New Direction's website and social media channels, delivering digital events that bring the festival to life in schools and SEND settings, alongside content that shares this work with wider audiences. Where possible, projects will be delivered in-school with teachers and pupils but plans will need to be adaptable and workable around COVID restrictions, including virtual visits and workshops where required.

Festival Strands

We invite expressions of interests in the following strands:

Strand #1 - Portraiture

Creative: Artist led, devised with input from pilot school and network

Format: can be any format, with a focus on visual sharing in an online gallery (images of work, digital work, or moving image)

Summary: An artist will propose a programme of activity that explores portraiture, which will be developed and tested with a pilot teacher and group of pupils. Following this pilot the artist will work with A New Direction to develop a portraiture resource that can be used by teachers in all settings across the SEND Network. The resource will be shared so that schools can create and contribute work to an online gallery during the festival and shared widely as a resource for any schools to use during and after the festival.

Although 'portraiture' is the frame for this strand, the work will need to be mindful of safeguarding practice around privacy and permissions when it comes to the identities of children and young people. We will support the artist(s) involved to deliver a programme that takes this into consideration and explores portraiture outputs in the broadest possible sense.

Key Timings: Pilot and resource editing 19 April to 15 May, festival preparation in late May/early June.

Objectives:

- C&YP look at portraiture and how images communicate
- C&YP select materials and consider how to present portraits, including self portraits
- Portraits serve as an accessible representation of C&YP to the wider public, forming a part of a gallery, installation or wider piece of artwork

Strand #2 - Love Letters

Creative: Artist-Led, with input from network

Format: can be any media, with digital output in mind

Summary: An artist will propose a programme of activity that invites schools to record/write/create love letters to artists and community members. Resources or live events need to be developed to be accessible to teachers, so that the work can be developed and delivered in schools but pulled together into a suitable format for online sharing. Additionally or alternatively, love letters could be written and exchanged between schools.

We are interested in exploring the possibility of film as a medium for this strand, either as the primary medium for capturing love letters or as a commission that documents the creative process. The artist(s) does not need to be a filmmaker, but should consider how the process could be captured and documented through film.

Key Timings: Resource creation and editing late April, editing and creation of output late May to early June.

Objectives:

- Network teachers are supported to create artworks that record C&YP's expressions of love to artists, artworks and role models
- C&YP learn about a piece of work or creative figure they are drawn to, and record an expression of their love for that work/person
- Collect love letters across a range of mediums, to carry the stories, aspirations and relationships of C&YP

Strand #3 – Collaborative Commissions

Creative: Collaboration between artists and teacher (pairings)

Format: Any format, mindful of sharing process and/or outcome online

Summary: Tailored collaborations between teachers and artists/organisations, exploring the theme of love, with a focus on developing something to be shared, performed or celebrated during the festival. Artists will propose an area of their practice they would like to bring to the collaboration and will be paired with educators who will then work with the artists to develop something that can be delivered with their chosen class(es).

Key Timings: Propose and agree plans in late early April, work delivered in schools in April or May, with finished work delivered by early June.

Objectives:

- Teachers and Artists share practice and collaborate, with teachers gaining new skills and ideas and artists deepening their understanding of learning in SEND contexts
- C&YP learn from the practice of a contemporary artist and create new artistic expressions connected to the theme of love
- Artistic outputs are shared digitally with the wider public, both as creative works of artistic merit and works that invite audience to consider the experience of D/deaf, disabled and neurodiverse young people.

Strand #4 - Live Event(s)

Creative: Delivered by artist/artistic partner, but shaped by festival working group

Format: Digital event(s) or recording(s), that brings festival 'to life' for teachers and C&YP in schools and SEND settings.

Key timings: Format proposed and taken to network meeting the week of 3 May, then developed as deliverable for festival mid-June.

Summary: An artist or artistic partner creates an inclusive and 'live' event, that can be Something shared with schools to mark the festival and celebrate the work. The event needs to feel live but does not necessarily need to be live-streamed simultaneously to all schools. The emphasis will be on creating something that is engaging and stimulating to children and young people, sparking a moment of celebration within their classroom. The event could connect to other aspects of the festival, including the opening of care packages that will be created and exchanged as a part of the festival.

Objectives:

- C&YP take part in a 'live' event, that connects and draws together festival activity
- The live event has interactive elements that connect with activity happening in school/there is interaction across digital lines
- The live event explores the feelings of love and celebration