



Studio 12 Backwater Artists Group Exhibition/Project Space

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS 2026

About

Backwater Artists Group are committed to cultivating a supportive, artist-led environment which encourages and empowers visual artists, enabling them to further their ambitions and produce innovative, ambitious and high-quality work.

Studio 12 Objectives

Studio 12 supports artists to produce new and innovative work and operates as a public testing ground for new artworks and ideas. The space is programmed with the aim of engaging new and diverse audiences and facilitating a thoughtful and flexible approach to exhibition making.

EXHIBITIONS

Backwater Artists Group are looking for exhibition proposals from members for the following available slots in Studio 12:

- 3-4 x available 4-5 week exhibition slots in 2026

PROJECT PROPOSALS

Backwater Artists Group are looking for submissions from members for project use of Studio 12 in 2025 and 2026. Slots are available to our members, for pre-booked 2 - 3 week project use of our Studio 12 exhibition space. Please see list of potential uses of the space below.

We have 2 x 2 - 3-week slots available in 2025 and 3 x 2-3 weeks slots in 2026.

Scope for 'Project Use' of Studio 12 can include:

- 'Closed-door' project use: 2 - 3 weeks with 1 public event minimum.
- Use as a short-term residency space: 2 – 3 weeks
- Screenings/Performances: e.g. evening, monthly, bi-monthly. Flexibility dependent on other programmed use of space.
- Talks: 30min – 1 day symposium
- Art sales: 2-3 days (sales orientated art display promoted by artist). BAG commission 35%.

WHO CAN APPLY

- All current members are eligible to apply. Members are defined as: studio members, network members, darkroom members, short term members, new graduate members.

ELIGIBLE EXHIBITION PROPOSALS

- Proposals can be for solo or group exhibitions.
- Group shows can include non-members. The application should be submitted by a member of Backwater Artists Group.
- Members can submit an application to curate an exhibition themselves, which could include both members and non-members.

COSTS AND FEES

- The successful candidates will be provided with an artist fee and production budget (amount tbc) and technical (exhibitions only) and PR support (exhibitions only).
- Candidates who want to work with a curator as part of the exhibition can include costs for the curator in their proposal.

- Travel and accommodation costs will be provided if the applicant is travelling from outside Cork County. You must include a rough estimate of your costs in the proposal budget.

Submission Process

All aspects of the submission process and the Terms and Conditions are specifically designed to contribute towards the continued professional development of studio members and to provide a useful testing ground for ideas. The submission process is designed to best reflect the requirements of galleries and funding bodies to whom artists may be submitting or applying respectively. The compilation of written content and requested / suggested images and documents for this submission process is intended to be of benefit to the submitting artists in developing their professional profile. Similarly, the request for links and addresses to web content is designed to motivate members to keep their online content up to date.

Please read the Terms and Conditions below and fill in the attached submission form adhering to word count instructions and document and image submission guidelines.

The Space

- In its current form Studio 12 is 5.23m x 6.63m in plan with a ceiling height of 2.25m.
- The primary exhibiting walls are the north wall, straight ahead of you (5.23m) and the east wall to your right (c.6m). The west wall is of rubble stone construction, and already interrupted by three windows and the invigilation desk. It is therefore recommended that this wall remain relatively free of artwork, but the two spaces between the windows can be used if necessary. The south wall is not suitable for exhibiting due to the presence of electricity boxes.
- The room is equipped with track lighting with 3000K warm white LED bulbs.
- The space can be darkened by the installation of painted white boards on the interior of the windows.

Assessment of Proposals

Proposals will be assessed and scored by Backwater Staff, Backwater Board and one invited external panel member and will be based on the following criteria:

- 50% Concept, Reasoning, Motive
- 20% Alignment with the objectives of the Space (includes engagement event, reaching new audiences)
- 10% Suitability and feasibility for the space (scale, number of pieces/artists, budget)
- 10% Supporting documentation (letters/emails, cv, portfolio material),
- 10% Overall quality of proposal including adherence to submission guidelines

How to submit

Please submit proposals by email to **elize@backwaterartists.ie** by **Wednesday the 16th October 2024 at 5.00pm**. If you have any queries about the submission process, please contact Elize by email on elize@backwaterartists.ie

Guidelines for Application

Questions 1-4 are standard personal information. The following guidelines are provided for the remaining questions.

5. Artist Biography

Please keep to a maximum of 200 words. Your answer should be in paragraph form, not a list of dates. Group submissions can be added as extra documents.

The artist biography should contain the following information:

- Education
- Key exhibitions and collections
- Awards
- Teaching
- Representation
- Affiliation or membership where relevant

A version of this will be used for PR purposes and in the printed press release made available to visitors.

6. Artist Statement

Please keep to a maximum of 300 words. For a group proposal, artist statements can be provided in an additional document but the same word count per artist applies.

The artist statement should contain the following information:

- Methodologies
- Mediums utilised
- Themes/context of your work

A version of this will be used for PR purposes and in the printed press release made available to visitors.

7. Title of proposed exhibition/project

This can be a working title but if so, this must be stated.

8. Exhibition/Project Proposal

Please keep to a maximum of 600 words. Your answer should provide a full outline of the project proposed for Studio 12. Please state whether you are applying for an Exhibition or Project use of Studio 12.

The proposal should contain the following:

- Your fully developed concept for the exhibition/project
- Your personal motive for pursuing this concept
- Your reasoning for delivering this concept to a public audience. Please include details of public events (This will strengthen your application)
- Why you need this space in particular to deliver your concept
- Whether this work has been exhibited previously and if so, your reason for showing it again

9. Budget

Provide details of costs involved. Please research these costs in advance. You do not need to include the artists fee, photography fee, exhibition review fee, technical fee here. However, if you would like to engage a writer who is not based in Cork (who will need to travel to the exhibition) for example, you could include a cost for this in your budget.

Costs to be included in the budget could be but are not limited to the following:

- Curator Costs
- Production Costs (materials, installation costs, equipment hire costs etc)
- Travel & accommodation costs for artists travelling from outside of Cork, for curators, speakers, writers reviewing the exhibition etc.

10. Suitability of Space

Please keep to a maximum of 100 words. Use the floor plan provided to indicate a provisional use of space as you envision it. The statement should contain the following information:

- Why would you like to use Studio 12 in particular?
- Details about the number and dimensions of proposed works, materials etc.
- Consider the style of installation/event set-up ie. dark space, sparse hang, floor-based works, seating, screen location.

11. List of supporting images / videos including title, date, medium, dimensions (if relevant and/or known)

- Please ensure that you provide high resolution images and video (min. 1MB)
- Videos can be included as video links (YouTube) or sent via online file transfer (WeTransfer).

12. List of supporting documents

This can include:

- An up-to-date full artist CV should be submitted. This should be more comprehensive than your biography. No more than two pages.
- A portfolio in the form of labeled images and project descriptions/press releases, where applicable.
- If you are proposing to exhibit existing work, please submit images of that work in addition to your portfolio or make it clear which work from your portfolio is being exhibited.
- Letters of support or evidence of communications regarding collaboration where relevant. Please note that the latter stage of the scoring process is relative so artists who do submit relevant supporting documentation will score higher than those who do not.

Additional Information

- Do not exceed the specified word count.

- Read the guidelines and the Terms and Conditions to see if your proposal takes everything into account.
- It is recommended that each submission (excluding videos) be submitted as a single PDF document.

Studio 12 Terms and Conditions

Context

The following Terms and Conditions are intended to provide transparency for all involved. If at any time you have suggestions or concerns bring them to Backwater Artist Group administration.

What We Cover

Please note the following is subject to available funding:

- Artists & Production Fees: We are committed to supporting artists and ensuring that they receive fair and equitable remuneration for participating in our programmes. Our Paying the Artist Policy and Fee Guidelines are reviewed annually, in January and published on our website. The budget for each exhibition will be communicated to the participating artists, up to three months prior to the exhibition. Half of these fees will be paid up to 3 months in advance of the exhibition and the remaining half on the installation.
- Production fees will vary according to each individual exhibition/project and will be agreed at the initial meeting between the artist and Studio Director.
- In some instances, the organisation may need to purchase the equipment or materials required to produce the exhibition. In this instance and depending on the cost of such materials or equipment, the full production fee will not be paid to the artist.
- For solo exhibitions, the Backwater technician will install the exhibition, and the artist and/or curator should be on hand to direct and assist him. The installation plan should be submitted 4 weeks prior to the install and should communicate the approximate amount of time the install will take.
- Group exhibitions will be installed by the Backwater technician.
- Please see our Paying the Artists Policy and Fee Guidelines for more details.
- Backwater will enlist a professional photographer to document the exhibition.
- Backwater will enlist an art writer to write a text/critique on the exhibition.

- Artists will be paid for their participation in an Engagement Event.
- For solo exhibitions, artists will be paid if they must install their own work without the help of our technician.
- Refreshments for opening events.
- Marketing & PR Support (see below).

What Is Not Covered

- Artist transport costs to deliver work for install or collect work at the de-install.
- Artist installation costs (for individual pieces) for group exhibitions.
- Backwater Staff are not available to make the exhibiting artists work for exhibition.

Access

- Studio 12 can only be accessed for installation a maximum of two days prior to the exhibition. Access to the space prior to this installation period can be during normal exhibition hours (Tuesday-Friday 10am-5pm) or prearranged during regular office hours (Monday-Friday 10am-5pm). If you require more time for the installation, please arrange this with the Studio Director.
- A key to Studio 12 will be provided in advance of install/use.
- It is the responsibility of the artist to return the key to Backwater Artists Group administrative staff on the evening of the opening reception.
- If a member has been awarded an opportunity to exhibit and has since ceased to be a member, access to the building will be restricted to normal office hours (Monday-Friday 10am-5pm excluding bank holidays).
- If a non-member is exhibiting, access to Studio 12 should be arranged during staff hours, as we cannot provide non-members with keys to the building.
- If the Studio 12 key is lost the exhibitor/user will be charged for the replacement of the key.

Invigilation

- Exhibitions which require invigilation will be invigilated either by Backwater Artist Group staff, members, or the exhibiting artist.
- The public should be welcomed into the space, directed towards any written material and offered additional information and insight if requested. There will also be a comments book, and an e-newsletter sign-up list made available.
- Please record the number of visitors using the clicker on the desk.
- Volunteer invigilators can use their own computers to do their own work whilst invigilating. In some cases, the invigilation desk will be moved to the first-floor studios corridor.
- Studio 12 will be closed on Mondays and at weekends.
- When contributions towards invigilation are needed from members, everyone will be notified by email.
- A full invigilation schedule will be agreed on once a proposal has been accepted and scheduled.
- If there is no invigilator to cover lunchtime, a sign will be put on the door, to say that the exhibition is closed for lunch.

Engagement Programme

- Exhibiting artists will be required to participate in one or two engagement events, during the exhibition. These could include but are not limited to an artist talk, a workshop, a screening, a performance.

Installing/De-installing

- The installation plan for an exhibition must be discussed in detail with the Studio Director in advance, to ensure that the means of installation and the items to be installed are safe and that there will not be unnecessary damage caused to the space and its walls and fittings.
- A meeting will be scheduled in Studio 12 to discuss the installation. A written summary of the installation plan provided by the artist will be included in the contract prior to signing.

- A Studio 12 installation equipment box will be provided at this stage.
- Installation will be undertaken by the technician available with direction from the exhibiting artist. The artist will not be allowed to get help from friends or family regarding the installation.
- The wooden beams cannot be drilled or altered in any way. Backwater Artists Group would like to be flexible with all installation proposals but are obligated to observe restrictions relating to the historic fabric of the building (Protected Structure) and relating to the governance of Wandesford Quay CLG. The Technical Assistant will bring any requests outside of these parameters to the Studio Director, and subsequently to the building caretaker to see if an agreement can be reached.
- Nothing can be stuck or screwed onto the floor or ceiling without prior approval by the Studio Director. Any such design should be included in the initial written proposal if possible or at the pre-installation meeting. Appropriate fixings must be approved by the Studio Director prior to installation.
- Studio 12 has plasterboard walls but no plaster skim. There is plywood backing. In most eventualities wall-based work can be hung with nails that offer a secure weight-bearing hold but can be easily removed with minimal damage to the wall. Some nails can be supplied by Backwater Artists Group but the artist may have to source additional nails. In some cases, plaster board screws or something more substantial could be used depending on the weight of the items. A hanging strategy can be discussed in advance at the pre-installation meeting.
- Only members and staff can carry out installation work in the space.
- Studio 12 must be left in the condition in which it was handed over. Appropriate filler, paint and equipment will be supplied by Backwater Artists Group. Instructions will be relayed by the Studio Director at the pre-installation meeting and subsequently if necessary. All holes must be filled with Polyfilla, left to dry, sanded and touched up with paint. The space must be vacuumed

at a minimum and mopped if necessary. A vacuum cleaner, mop, bucket and floor cleaner will be provided by Backwater Artists Group.

Opening reception

- All exhibition openings in Studio 12 are scheduled for a Thursday evening at 6pm.
- Two Backwater Artists Group members will be scheduled to serve drinks and wash-up at the opening of exhibitions in Studio 12.

Submission process

- Individual scores for each of the assessment criteria are available upon request in addition to more detailed feedback.
- Exhibition/project proposals, event documentation and/or promotional material may be used by Backwater Artists Group in applications to Cork City Council and/or Arts Council for project grants. These resources, if awarded, will be used for the programming of the space and the payment of artist fees in accordance with Arts Council and VAI guidelines.

Health & Safety

- The exhibitor/user are responsible for their own health and safety within Studio 12 and should not use equipment without taking proper precautions which includes use of guards and/or protective wear where necessary.
- All Backwater Artists Group members and visitors must sign in/out on the sheet provided in the lobby.
- Please discuss any proposed use of toxic paints, sprays or substances during the installation in advance with the Studio Director. A suitable time of day and adequate means of ventilation will be agreed. Please use low solvents where possible.
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Sales

- A commission of 35% will be retained by Backwater Artists Group for all sales.
- The titles and price list must be submitted a minimum of 2 days before the opening event.
- Sales will be recorded by the invigilator (red dot applied to wall, receipt issued) and deposits or full payment taken by Backwater Artists Group administrative staff in the office on the second floor.

Marketing / PR

- Two or three representative press-ready image minimum (1-5MB, 300dpi min, jpg) and final text content/press release information must be submitted by the exhibitor/user no later than 5 weeks before the opening of the exhibition or event. These images and text will be used in the following:
 1. The Backwater Artists Group website 5 weeks before event
 2. In a Facebook event 5 weeks before event
 3. The VAI website and selected press websites 4 weeks before event
 4. Emailed to selected press and arts contacts 4 weeks before event
 5. The Backwater Artists Group e-newsletter invitation 2 weeks before the event
 6. In a gallery document that will made available to the visiting public - changes to the text in this gallery document are acceptable 1 week before the event.
- It is recommended that a second version of the image (similar but in portrait format) is provided to facilitate poster design or that the main image choice offers some flexibility for poster design. This can be discussed with the Studio Director.
- All exhibitions, events and projects will be promoted on the Backwater Artists Group website and social media outlets (Twitter, Instagram, Facebook).
- A limited run of posters will be produced by the Backwater Artists Group for use in the building.

- In addition to the promotion carried out by Backwater Artists Group (see above) it is recommended that the exhibitor/user is proactive in promoting their own event by forwarding the e-invite to their own contacts and sharing the event on social media where applicable. All promotion carried out by the exhibitor/user should acknowledge Studio 12 and Backwater Artists Group by name and the Backwater logo (and funding body logos) should be used where appropriate. Logos will be provided upon request.
- A meeting will be held with the exhibitor/user 6 weeks before the exhibition / event to discuss a PR strategy (and to review the contract and terms and conditions).

Contract

- The exhibitor/user who submitted the proposal must return a signed contract 5 weeks prior to the exhibition opening or event. This contract confirms that the artist/curator who submitted the proposal understands and agrees to the terms and conditions.

Studio 12 Plan

