



RELAY is Bricks' project space for artists to explore new work & develop ideas.

The project space is on the ground floor of St Anne's House. It's a large, flexible area which can be used as a gallery, a studio or an events space.

Our first RELAY programme offers artists the time & space to work on ambitious ideas, & bring their diverse artistic perspectives to our communities through exhibitions, talks & events.

We're supporting artists in Bristol by providing a place for research & development, making, sharing work with new audiences, providing a space for exchange & collaboration.

Artists need varied development opportunities. Some need a project space, or might really benefit from the feedback and exchange they get from giving a talk. For others, an intimate exchange might create unexpected connections. We run ad hoc events and partner with other organisations to try and offer a range of development opportunities.

A bit about how it works

Artist Programme Producer, Jessica Akerman aims to make the workings of RELAY transparent.

"I thought it useful to share some of the behind-the-scenes bits of running a project space, and why Bricks decided to open up a space as an opportunity in itself for artist development.

So many artist-led spaces come and go, often because the administration of these exciting projects comes at the cost of the artists' own practices and energy levels, requiring a lot of unpaid labour, often in temporary, insecure buildings.'

Time & space to make and expand

Our funding from Arts Council England pays for the administrative time it takes to run the programme. We ask RELAY artists to seek funding from different sources to pay a fee for their time. We support our artists in doing this when required, and we offer in-kind support through a combination of the space, promotion, event organisation and producer time.

We want our community in St Anne's and Bristol to be able to see what our artists are working on, and in each project, there's a different way for audiences to engage with the work.

How is it an opportunity if you don't pay a fee?

Good question – the payment of artists is an issue many of us feel keenly. So much of what artists and arts workers do and are expected to do requires working for no fee, below the living wage, or hours of unpaid emotional labour.

But we also recognise that having a large space to try things out is a thing of great value for artists at particular points in their careers. For the month in the space artists are part of our growing community at St Anne's House, offering opportunities for connection and the possibility to share their work with an audience.

We have specific funding to pay artists fees to give talks, deliver workshops and for small commissions, including our [Bricks Podcast](#).

How do you select artists?

In spring 2021 we asked for conversation starters or proposals for projects that required a dedicated space for a month in order to make them happen.

We had 45 proposals – all high quality, which made it very hard to decide on which to take forward.

We had several proposals from brilliant collectives who wanted to use the large space to make side by side and experiment. As the 2021 Turner Prize nominations show, collaboration and collective working are vital to contemporary practice.

In the end, alongside our Arts Action Group, we selected artists whose proposals had very clear but unexpected ideas, unusual or engaging references, or a lateral perspective on materials & social practice.

Our decision to go for proposals that had a definite shape instead of a looser approach also felt like a good way to engage our local communities – for whom St Anne's House is a valuable cultural & community centre.