

Manchester City of Literature

Bring Your Own Utopia – Residency for Tartu European Capital of Culture 2024

Manchester City of Literature is seeking expressions of interest from Manchester writers to represent the city in an international residency programme that will culminate in 2024 when Tartu becomes European Capital of Culture. A Manchester writer will be paired with an Estonian artist in a different creative field - and via online collaboration and a short residency in late 2022 or 2023 will develop a collaborative project on the theme of utopia/dystopia. The Manchester writer will then return to Tartu in May 2024 for the presentation of the output of the collaboration as part of the Capital of Culture programme. Travel, accommodation and a fee are provided.



Theme

The project is part of the programme for the 2024 Prima Vista International Literary Festival 'Futures Better and Worse', a literary festival of utopias and dystopias.

"We've inherited the reality of our ancestors' imagination. Many visionary utopias have become true dystopias. In the former Eastern bloc, we survived a totalitarian nightmare spawned by a dream of equality. In the whole world, we're inhabiting a dystopia of the climate crisis resulting from industrialist and colonialist utopias. Is our virtual reality a lived utopia of free information or a dystopia of surveillance capitalism? Aren't we already living in the reality of our children's imagination rushing out of control, losing touch with the lessons of the past?"

Having been exposed to those and other real and imagined utopias and dystopias in different degrees, Europe today speaks of them in a Babel of different languages, with varying fears, hopes and beliefs. In cooperation between Science Fiction Research Association, UNESCO Cities of Literature network, University of Tartu and many other important partners we bring those languages together from Europe and beyond – to find some human common ground in them and to search for new utopian futures in past and present dystopian realities.

In unexpected, participatory and performative forms, as well as in the presence of some of the best-known science fiction authors in the world, we will thoroughly explore many dystopian and utopian themes that define the current state of our world. We seek to invent experimental and participatory forms for literary events; to establish collaborations between writers, artists, and scientists; and to



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catalyse critical discussions between people from different walks of life about futures better and worse. We will investigate the role of literature and art in imagining the future and serve this investigation as a memorable and thought-provoking cultural experience”.

Project Timeline

13 May 2022: deadline for Manchester writers to apply; one writer will be selected to join the project by end of May.

June 2022: the team in Tartu analyses the author profiles, communicates with them, explores their initial ideas and suggests local partners from other fields of art to collaborate with them. Virtual collaboration with the artists in Tartu can start as soon as a potential partnership is confirmed.

August 2022-December 2023: short-term residencies in Tartu take place, the detailed schedule will be developed according to the plans and availability of the participants.

Autumn 2022-Spring 2024: virtual communication between the creative partners, discussion of their ideas and, if necessary, (post-residency) virtual collaboration to finalize their creative project.

May 2024: presentation of the results of the project in Tartu

Fees

Travel and accommodation to the short residency to be scheduled in late 2022 or in 2023 will be covered by Tartu City of Literature. There will be a fee of 2000 euros for this phase.

Travel and accommodation to the project culmination event in May 2024 will be covered by Manchester City of Literature. There will be a fee of 600 euros for this phase.

Criteria and How To Apply

What we are looking for in the participating authors:

- Writers in any literary form with a strong connection to Manchester
- Experience in collaboration with artists from other fields
- Good communication skills and flexibility
- Willingness to relate to the theme of the project and openness to new ways of creative work
- Willingness to travel and work internationally and cross-culturally

If you are interested in applying, please send a written application by email to mrcityoflit@gmail.com by the deadline of 13 May 2022. In your application please include responses to the following prompts:

- Tell us about yourself, addressing the criteria above
- Tell us about your writing and provide a link to your website if you have one.
- Tell us why you would like to be considered for this residency and what you hope to get from it.
- Tell us about your interest in utopias/dystopias or in speculative fiction.



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- Tell us if you have applied for a residency at any other UNESCO City of Literature in 2022

Please also include a CV including publication record and a sample of your writing (no more than 3 A4 pages in total).

Applications will be assessed by a panel made up from the Manchester City of Literature executive team, Board and Partnership Network.

Relevant websites:

<https://tartu.kirjandus.ee/>

<https://tartu2024.ee/>

<https://kirjandusfestival.tartu.ee/>

<http://www.manchestercityofliterature.com>

Manchester City of Literature

Manchester was successful in its bid to join UNESCO's worldwide Creative Cities network as a City of Literature in 2017. Joining 38 other Cities of Literature, a consortium including Manchester City Council, the Universities, Manchester Literature Festival plus a range of the city's writers, publishers and literary organisations has formed to enable this to happen. Manchester City of Literature is a charity that manages the UNESCO designation on behalf of over thirty partner organisations. Our vision is to create an innovative, distinctive, equitable, globally connected city of reading and writing. We want Manchester to be a city where diverse voices are celebrated, creative talent and industries are nurtured and where literary activity changes lives.

<https://www.manchestercityofliterature.com/>

'Introducing Manchester City of Literature': 8 minute film <https://youtu.be/CX0xamVdoCg>



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