Artist Residencies at Castell Coch

Two six-week residencies April/May 2015

Bursary/Fee: £3,000 per residency

Deadline for applications – Monday 2 March 2015 at 5pm

Interviews – Thursday 19 March 2015 at Castell Coch

Information for artists

Background

Cadw, the historic environment service for the Welsh Government, supported by the Arts Council of Wales, invites applications from artists to respond to the magnificent Castell Coch, on the outskirts of Cardiff.

Castell Coch is a remarkable blend of High Victorian Gothic fantasy and solid medieval masonry. It was originally built during the eleventh and twelfth centuries when the native Welsh rulers were in conflict with the Norman invaders. By the middle of the thirteenth century the powerful Clare family, as lords of Glamorgan, had taken control of much of the area, along with nearby Caerphilly Castle. Castell Coch soon suffered the ravages of attack and seems to have fallen out of use after the Welsh rebellions of the early fourteenth century.

More than 550 years later, the immensely wealthy third marquess of Bute, who had inherited a fortune derived from the industrial growth of south Wales, commissioned the eccentric genius, William Burges, to recreate a fabulous vision of the Middle Ages and raise a new fortress on the ruinous foundations of the Clare castle, which is what we see today. Patron and architect had already worked together on Cardiff Castle and in the summer of 1875 work began in earnest at Castell Coch. Burges died unexpectedly in 1881 and it was left to his team of assistants and craftsmen to interpret his ideas and complete the fabulous decoration and fitting out of the castle using local medieval precedents, such as
Caerphilly, and restoration projects by the **French architect and antiquarian, Eugéne Viollet-le-Duc**.

Lord Bute died in 1900 and although the family used Castell Coch intermittently it was something of an exotic folly. In 1950, the fifth marquess of Bute placed the site in State care and it is now cared for by Cadw, the historic environment service for the Welsh Government.

**The Artist in Residence Programme**

The Arts Council of Wales and Cadw have agreed to partner and implement a programme of residencies over a period of three years; 2015/16 marks the third year of this programme. The programme aims to develop artists’ practice and engage audiences and communities in the creative process. The programme promotes excellence and innovation within art in the public realm, and places quality at the core of its delivery and outcomes, as well as to embody sustainability.

Over the next year a further series of complementary residencies will take place at Tintern Abbey. These residencies will focus on the history of heritage and the ways in which contemporary art offers new ways of interpreting and presenting heritage to the public.

**Residencies, April/May 2015: Invitation to Apply**

Cadw, the historic environment for the Welsh Government, supported by the Arts Council of Wales, invite applications for residencies at Castell Coch, near Cardiff to be undertaken between April and May 2015.

The residencies are open to visual and applied artists working in the UK or internationally. We are looking for practitioners who wish to work with Cadw’s staff and the Castell Coch site. We would like the artists to respond to Castell Coch as a whole — its physical site, but also the people that have been instrumental to its development over time, the architecture and the eccentric decoration and furniture collection within it.

The successful artists could work across different themes at the site and use different media to present this historic monument to the public. Thematic approaches could involve:

- an exploration of the history of heritage at Castell Coch that focuses on the original medieval ruins, or on how Burges and Bute created the Victorian fantasy castle
• a philosophical examination of how antiquarians viewed the past or how we view the past in the twenty-first century
• an exploration of the theme of ‘time, people and place’.

If you would like to visit Castell Coch to get a better understanding of the site and to discuss possible ideas, Dr Ffion Reynolds and a Castell Coch custodian will be available on Wednesday 18 February and Thursday 19 February 2015. Please email CadwPublicProgrammes@wales.gsi.gov.uk to make an appointment, or with any questions you may have about the residency.

The artists will be asked to spend a minimum of fifteen days at the monument. They will be expected to share their work in progress with staff.

The creative process is more important to us than a final, finished product. This might include: different and new ways of working, innovative ideas, creative responses to the site and engagement with staff. An exhibition of work is not necessarily expected. We would encourage and support the artists to share their practice and process of working both with their peers and with the public through an online presence.

**Studio**
A shared studio space will be available at Castell Coch. No accommodation is provided.

**Payment**
Artists will be paid £3,000 for fifteen days' work (or equivalent over a two/three month period) supported by the Arts Council of Wales. There is separate funding available for materials, supported by Cadw.

**How to Apply**
Please email the following to CadwPublicProgrammes@wales.gsi.gov.uk

A proposal (no more than 800 words) detailing what aspects of Castell Coch and why you would like to focus on as part of the residency and how it will be informed by your current practice.

• An artist CV
Examples of your work which should include no more than eight images (no larger than 1600 x 1200 pixels) or four video links. When sending large files, please provide hyperlinks to online files or a Dropbox containing the files. Information submitted in other formats will not be accepted.

Deadline for applications is 2 March 2015 at 5pm
Interviews will be held at Castell Coch on the 19 March 2015