

Creative Connections 2026 - 2027



The Art Workers' Guild

The Art Workers' Guild is launching the *Creative Connections* programme for 2026/27. The purpose of the programme is to create a space for creative people - who are in the early stages of establishing themselves professionally - to build supportive networks, develop their professional practice and get to know the Guild.

Successful applicants to *Creative Connections* will join a small cohort for the year-long programme. The programme will include hands-on workshops, talks, discussions and social events - all opportunities to exchange insights and ideas, encourage each other and navigate the challenges of sustaining a career.

The programme starts in September 2026.

Who can apply?

The programme is for any creative people* who:

- are between 0-5 years post-graduation (BA or MA) or
- are between 0-5 years post-apprenticeship / training or
- have set up their own professional practice or business in the past 5 years (this includes those who are self taught or have developed their practice outside of traditional education or training courses)

And who:

- demonstrate a commitment to developing their practice / career and
- have a strong interest in forging supportive connections with people in other creative fields.

Please note: there is no age limit to participate in this programme.

* Our definition of creative people includes (but is not limited to): makers, architects, designers, art historians, curators, craftspeople, artists. Please take a look at the Guild's membership page to get a sense of the very wide variety of disciplines within our membership; you'll see the Guild takes a broad approach to creativity.

What *Creative Connections* offers to participants:

Creative Connections is a one-year programme of events that will introduce you to other emerging creatives and to more established practitioners. The events will be a chance to learn new skills, discuss professional knowledge and experience, and develop a supportive, friendly network.

The Guild has around 400 members from a very wide range of disciplines and professional fields, many of whom will contribute to the programme in some way. However, this programme is not about matching you with a mentor in the same field – it is about finding common ground and unexpected connections with people in other disciplines. It is this kind of exciting cross-pollination that makes the Guild a unique place and it is why we are inviting emerging makers to join the conversation.

The programme begins in September 2026 and will conclude in September 2027. Events will be spread across the year, usually on weekday evenings or Saturday mornings.

The programme will include:

Hands-on creative workshops: The workshops will offer a convivial chance to learn a new skill or to find parallels and connections with other people's ways of working.

Discussion evenings: These informal events will invite programme participants and Guild members to get together to discuss different aspects of establishing and sustaining a creative professional practice or to share projects and work in progress. Some discussions may be quite practical (commissions, residencies, studios etc) while others might explore more creative or ethical questions.

Studio Visit days: These days will offer a peek into the working spaces of Guild members and insights into how they've developed their creative practice.

Access to the Guild's Ordinary meetings in 2026 and 2027: Guild meetings take place every other Thursday evening. Each meeting includes a talk from an invited guest followed by drinks and sandwiches. Guild meetings offer informal opportunities to get to know Guild members and become part of a friendly, creative community. To see a list of speakers at upcoming Guild meetings – you can view the meeting programme on the Guild website. Guild Ordinary meetings can be attended in-person and via YouTube.

Participation in a showcase at the end of the programme: *Creative Connections* participants will be invited to share their work in a showcase event at the

Art Workers' Guild in September 2027 during Open House weekend. This will be an opportunity to celebrate the conclusion of the programme and present your work to the public and invited guests.

Programme Location:

Most *Creative Connections* events will take place in-person at our central London space at 6 Queen Square, with a few taking place off-site. *Creative Connections* participants will also have access to the Guild's Ordinary meetings (see above) - these can be attended in-person and on YouTube.

Programme fee:

There is a fee of £30 to participate in the year-long programme. This will be payable only if you are offered a place.

If you'd like to participate in the programme but travel costs or other expenses will make it difficult for you to take part, please let us know; we may be able to help with some of those costs. This will be managed on a case-by-case basis by Guild administrative staff and will not have a bearing on the selection process.

The *Creative Connection* programme is subsidised by the Art Workers' Guild and through funds raised to support the Guild's public engagement activities.

What is expected of participants:

Places on *Creative Connections* are limited so participants are asked to commit to attending as many programme events as possible; the aim is to build supportive networks (that we hope will extend beyond the year of the programme itself) and to get to know each other's work and ambitions.

We hope that taking part will benefit your professional development and that your skills, insights and perspective will enrich other participants' experience too. By participating in *Creative Connections* you will become part of a peer group of creative people from a wide range of disciplines who are interested in building supportive networks and sharing their perspectives.

Please note, *Creative Connections* is not a mentoring scheme or a business advice course.

Making an application:

Key dates:

Friday 17 April: Applications open

Monday 25 May: Deadline for applications (midnight)

June: Informal interviews and selection of *Creative Connections* cohort

September 2026: Programme begins

September 2027: Programme concludes

How to apply:

The deadline for submission is midnight on **Monday 25 May 2026**.

Please complete the following and email to catriona@artworkersguild.org :

- **A completed application form** - [download here](#)
- **PDF:** please provide a PDF with images / examples of your work and short captions or commentary where appropriate (no longer than 10 pages)
- **Statement of support:** please include a short testimonial, statement of support or reference with your application email. This could be from a tutor; someone you've trained or apprenticed with; a Guild member; a professional in your field; or someone who has commissioned your work or collaborated with you. The statement of support should include their contact details.
- **A diversity and inclusion monitoring form** - [download here](#)

Access needs: If you would prefer to submit your application in an alternative format that is a better fit for your access needs please do get in touch with us so that we can discuss the options.

Using AI: The purpose of the *Creative Connections* application process is to learn about you and your practice - we want to hear from you about how you hope to build your career and what you'd bring to a creative community. If you are considering using AI in your application, please think about what value it adds. Applications written by AI tools tend to lack the insights and authenticity we value and are unlikely to be shortlisted.

We encourage you to share your unique perspective and practice using your own voice. Your application will be confidential and will only be viewed by the selection panel and the Art Workers' Guild's small administrative team so we encourage you to be as open about your work and ambitions as is comfortable for you. The selection panel is more interested in you and your work than the style of your writing, spelling or grammar.

Application process:

There is an open call and an application process to join the *Creative Connections* programme.

Applications will be reviewed by a panel of Guild members. The panel will select a shortlist of applicants in June. If you are shortlisted you may be invited to have an informal conversation with someone from the selection panel (either in person or online). The panel may also contact the person who has provided your statement of support.

The criteria for selection will be:

- a demonstrated commitment to developing your creative work
- a demonstrated commitment to establishing your career / professional practice
- a strong interest in connecting with people beyond your particular field
- a sense of where you want to take your work (though this may, of course, change over time)

Incomplete applications will not be considered so please check carefully that you have submitted everything required:

- a completed application form - [download here](#)
- a PDF with images / examples of your work and short captions or commentary where appropriate
- a short testimonial, statement of support or reference
- A diversity and inclusion monitoring form - [download here](#)

If these links do not work for you, you can download all necessary forms from our website - www.artworkersguild.org