



Four Corners of Europe: Call for artists

Intercult, the Scottish Arts Council, Aberdeen City Council and Umeå European Capital of Culture 2014 announce an international research and development opportunity for Scottish-based artists from across disciplines to participate in the **Four Corners of Europe** to develop proposals for international co-productions for European touring and presentation in 2011 onwards.

Background

Intercult (www.intercult.se) is an independent cultural, production and education organisation based in Stockholm, Sweden, which builds partnerships and develops projects that reach out to the European cultural scene. It is the executive producer of Black/North SEAS (www.seas.se), an international and interdisciplinary arts project which has commissioned artists from the Black and North Sea regions to create new works that tour to coastal towns and cities around Europe, supported by the European Union's Cultural Programme. In 2010-2014, SEAS will develop a new wave of commissions and presentations involving artists from countries on the coasts of the Black, North, Baltic and Mediterranean Seas entitled **The Four Corners of Europe**, working with partners such as Aberdeen City Council, Scottish Arts Council, Marseille-Provence European Capital of Culture 2013 and Umeå European Capital of Culture 2014.

The Research and Development Opportunity

Intercult together with the Umeå European Capital of Culture 2014, the Scottish Arts Council and Aberdeen City Council are calling for applications from artists and organisations across Scotland to participate in a first-step research and development process of the project, facilitated by Intercult and its 'dating' methodology, with the aim to develop proposals for new international co-productions.

The call is looking for Scottish-based artists who are interested in researching and responding artistically to the social, urban or historic realities of a particular "place", specifically sea harbours/towns and resorts on one of the four seas, and working interdisciplinary. Aberdeen and the Swedish town of Umeå are participating as hosts of the research visits with other venues to be confirmed shortly.

Applications for the research period will be accepted from practitioners in any art form (for example musicians, dance artists, theatre makers, writers, crafts makers, film-makers/video-makers, digital artists, actors, animators).

Approach – "the artistic blind date"

Intercult's methodology aims to develop intercultural competences and internationalism through a research and development process called "dating". All works in the SEAS project were inspired by the artists having an artistic "blind date" in a number of European coastal towns and resorts. The artists documented their research trips and developed proposals for

new works with their international colleague. Intercult, as the executive producer of SEAS, and its international co-producers commissioned a selection of the works and toured them back to the places that inspired them as a kind of moving festival. The programme of works includes opera, theatre performance, contemporary dance, visual and sound installations and music, and deals with themes of isolation, migration, reinvention, ageing, identity and memory. Information on the works can be found on www.seas.se.

The research period is April-September 2010. The participating Scottish artists will be matched by Chris Torch, artistic director of Intercult, with an international artist selected by the project. Their international artist colleague and research itinerary will be confirmed with the chosen applicants after selection. The international artist is likely to be from a different artistic discipline. The two artists or artists groups will make a joint visit to Umeå, Aberdeen or one of the other chosen host venues for an intensive 5-day artistic "blind date". During their time together they will document their visit, research the place and imagine a joint project inspired by the experience. The focus of this exercise is on the creative exchange of the artists working interculturally and across artistic disciplines and their interaction with the venue. (During the research period there will also be the opportunity to visit other European coastal cities and resorts including Stockholm, subject to the agreement of Intercult and its partners).

Presentation of Co-production Proposals

In September/October 2010, the artists and their international partner/s will be invited to present their co-production proposals to *The Four Corners of Europe* platform and if successful will be invited to co-produce their new piece from 2011 onwards as part of a touring programme. The touring programme will involve a number of coastal cities and resorts (including Aberdeen, Stockholm, Umeå) on the North, Baltic, Black and Mediterranean Sea coasts. The proposals will be judged on their creativity and the extent to which they reflect, comment on or are inspired by the life of a European port, harbour, sea resort or coastal area. They should include a fully developed and original artistic concept, an indication of budget and possible sources of funding, and address practical questions concerning the touring and presentation of the project, audience, local participants etc.

Please note that if artists and their proposed projects progress to the second phase and are commissioned, all projects will need to seek or demonstrate co-financing through their own fundraising activities locally or nationally. Intercult's and its partners' co-financing will be subject to the nature of the proposed project and be covered by an agreement at the point of commissioning.

Regardless of whether a commissioned project emerges from the dating experience, the artists' jointly-produced documentation of the research will be published online.

Who are we looking for?

Successful applicants will demonstrate:

- A creative, high-quality contemporary practice
- Previous examples of co-producing and touring, nationally or internationally
- Demonstration of producing capacity
- A track record and innovative approach to working in the public space/unconventional spaces
- Openness/interest or experience in working across art forms

- A track record or interest in reflecting the social and cultural life of a particular place or region, working with communities or within regeneration programmes
- An interest in or a willingness to extend their international networks, collaborations and their own intercultural competences

Timescale

- Visit to Stockholm to meet the Intercult artistic team lead by Chris Torch, artistic director, and meet the other project partners and participating international artists for initial orientation and induction in the programme (**18-20 March 2010**)
- Visit to Aberdeen **15/16 April 2010** for an international cultural seminar and a SEAS's production as part of the launch of Aberdeen's Cultural Strategy and a further meeting with Intercult and partners.
- Research visits to Umeå and other coastal places to be confirmed (in the period **May-September 2010**) to work for 5 days with international partner artist/s.
- Presentation of co-production proposals to The Four Corners partnership in September/October 2010 which will include potential co-producers such as Intercult and potential funders of the commissioned works such as Umeå European Capital of Culture 2014 and Scottish Arts Council.

Applicants must be available for the induction meeting in Stockholm **18-20 March 2010** and are expected to visit Aberdeen for in the international seminar and SEAS' performance on **15/16 April 2010**. Other key dates will be agreed after selection.

Application and Selection Information

Applicants should submit a letter expressing their interest and motivation (max. 2 sides of A4), and send together with a CV/company resume and examples of their previous works, reviews etc., **by email** to Mark Bremner at Aberdeen City Council:

markbremner@aberdeencity.gov.uk

If you wish to submit any supporting material (ie DVD/visual material) please post three copies to:*

Four Corners - Call For Artists
 Arts Development
 Aberdeen City Council
 WhiteSpace
 60 Frederick Street
 Aberdeen
 AB24 5HY

* Please be aware that supporting material cannot be returned

For further information in relation to your submission please contact Mark Bremer at Aberdeen City Council on **01224 523640** (White Space's main office)

For further information about the project please contact Adam Jeanes (SEAS/Intercult) on adam.jeanes@intercult.se

The deadline for applications is Monday 5pm, 25 January 2010.

A shortlist of applicants will be made by Intercult, Aberdeen City Council, Scottish Arts Council and Umeå European Capital of Culture 2014. Shortlisted applicants will be invited for an interview in Edinburgh on **17/18 February 2010**.

Additional Information on Intercult and Black/North SEAS

Intercult is an independent cultural, production and education organisation based in Stockholm, Sweden, which builds partnerships and develops projects that reach out to the European cultural scene. Since 2002, one of its major platforms for international cultural exchange and collaboration is the on-going SEAS project which has commissioned over 60 European artists to create new touring works since its inception. In 2007 it achieved multi-annual support from the European Union's Cultural Programme to focus on collaborations between the Black and North Sea region – Black/North SEAS (2007-2010).

The works span performance, visual arts, digital media and music. Intercult's methodology aims to develop intercultural competences and internationalism through a research and development process called "dating". All works in the Black/North SEAS project were inspired by the artists having an artistic "blind date" in unfamiliar towns and resorts on the Black or North Sea coast. The artists documented their research trips and developed their new works with their international partner. Intercult, as the executive producer of Black/North SEAS, and its international co-producers commissioned a selection of the works and toured them back to the places that inspired them as a kind of moving festival.

In May-June 2008 18 new contemporary pieces were toured in Ukraine, Romania, and Bulgaria, in March 2009 in Istanbul, Turkey and in August-September 2009 in Denmark, Sweden, Norway and finally in the UK in Skegness. All the pieces are designed to be presented in the public space or in unconventional spaces with direct connection to the resident populations and the urban landscape. Local artists are also invited to present their work in a mixed programme of events at each venue. Information on the SEAS events and the commissioned projects can be found on the SEAS website.

Theatre scholar and European cultural commentator Dr Dragan Klaic, who has followed and documented the SEAS project, describes it as follows:

"I am a veteran of SEAS events, but even for me it is not so easy to say what SEAS actually is. It is *not* a travelling circus, although at some moments it might look like one. And it is not really a festival, although it might be perceived as such. It is actually a prolonged, very strategic cultural action, connecting a number of European coastal cities and resorts.

"SEAS descends with a large number of experts, producers and artists who connect with the local artistic scene, decision-makers, urban planners, architects and civic leaders, and create an informal network across Europe of cities that face the same or similar challenges of de-industrialisation, the exit from the industrial epoch, that seek to find in culture the inspiration, the energy, the binding force to identify some plausible alternatives for the future. Since 2003, this is what SEAS has been doing in the Baltic Sea, in the area of the Adriatic Sea, along the Black Sea shore, and in the Northern European space.

"It is a unique action that has created a nomadic tribe of associated artists, experts, critics, producers and a growing number of local urban partners who see SEAS as a way to bring new energy, new ideas, new inspiration to the debates in their own cities about the future."

In the UK Intercult worked with the local partners, Arts Council England and East Lindsey District Council to present the final SEAS event of the tour SEAS Skegness in September 2009. Skegness was first chosen as a venue for SEAS in 2006, and inspired the SEAS multimedia theatre piece *Glorious Death* and visual arts installation *Fantomat* by Swedish director Dritero Kasapi and Bulgarian visual artist Venelin Shurelov. Representatives of the Scottish Arts Council and Aberdeen City Council attended the Skegness event.

The next phase of the SEAS platform is ***The Four Corners of Europe***, a programme of work building on the networks and connections which were made during SEAS in partnership with key festivals and initiatives on the coasts of the North, Black, Baltic and

Mediterranean Seas to link “the four corners” of Europe through exchange and presentations. Aberdeen on Scotland’s North Sea coast is a partner and future venue for *The Four Corners of Europe* programme