

ART IN
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OPEN CALL

for Two Artist
Residencies



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The Opportunities

The National Festival of Making invites applications for two paid **artist residencies with manufacturers in Lancashire** as part of *Art in Manufacturing*, its headline commissioning programme. Each residency offers the opportunity to develop new work through research and collaboration within a distinctive manufacturing setting.

The residencies will take place between **January and June 2027**, with completed work presented at the National Festival of Making in **Blackburn** on **25-27 June 2027**, marking ten years since the festival's founding.

Each residency has a commission budget of **£8,000** covering artist fees and the making of the work, plus VAT where applicable, with an additional allowance of up to £600 towards travel and accommodation. Applications are welcome from UK and Ireland based artists and makers working in any art form, as individuals or collectives.

Deadline: 23rd November 2026 at 12 noon
See more detail in the Key Dates section.

Cover photo: *Breathing Colour*, Margo Selby
+ *Standfast & Barracks* - a Co-Commission
with British Textile Biennial

artinmanufacturing.co.uk
festivalofmaking.co.uk

VICKED, Alina Akbar + Awesome GTI & Performance M - a Co-Commission with Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council and the University of Lancashire

Artistic Invitation

Art in Manufacturing invites artists to develop ambitious, contemporary work through encounters with manufacturers and spaces of making. Working alongside skilled workforces, artists can explore materials, processes and lived experiences, opening up unexpected connections and revealing perspectives that are often unseen. With curatorial and producing support, we encourage artists to experiment, take creative risks and extend their practice. We welcome outcomes that may be playful, beautiful, humorous and complex, and which create meaningful opportunities for diverse audiences to encounter contemporary work.

The commissioned artist is invited to spend time in the factory, getting to know the workforce and gaining an understanding of material, process and expertise.

As part of the residency, you will have the possibility of access to materials and/or production hours provided by the manufacturer - the scope of this support is to be agreed between the manufacturer, producing team and artist during the residency period.

Exhibition and Presentation

Resulting artworks are presented as part of the National Festival of Making's programme in venues from Blackburn's grandest, historic spaces to repurposed town centre shops and public realm spaces. In-situ talks with commissioned artists take the shape of informal In-Conversation discussions and provide insight into the residency experience, along with workshops inspired by and complementing new works.

The festival weekend is a joyful and exploratory gathering where families try a skill for the first time, established makers work with artisan crafters, music and performance is enjoyed across the town centre, thousands of people make things with their hands, and audiences experience new and contemporary work in spaces previously unknown to them.

Art in Manufacturing residencies often cultivate unexpected and diverse outcomes and you can explore all previous artistic outcomes from across the residency programme [here](#).



Focus, Abigail Hampsey + Bronzecast, JJ Sandham LTD and Artisan Food Producers - a Co-Commission with Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council and the University of Lancashire



Floral Timekeepers, Morag Myerscough + Crown Paints

About the Partners

Crown Paints, Darwen

Established in 1777 in Darwen as Dob Meadows Printing Shop, Crown Paints have more than 200 years of knowledge and expertise. Today they are made up of over 1100 colleagues, from their head office and manufacturing site in Darwen, Lancashire, to their manufacturing site in Hull, and a growing network of Crown Decorating centres. Under the mantra “It’s not just paint, it’s personal”, Crown Paints are committed to sustainability, delivering on this through Project Possible, an ambitious programme of actions that places sustainability and community at the heart of their work.

crownpaints.com

The Residency Invitation

The National Festival of Making and Crown Paints are both approaching exciting milestones. 2027 marks the tenth founding year of the festival, and a momentous 250 year anniversary for Crown. The Manufacturer has expressed interest in the artist building relationships with the workforce, and can offer a dedicated working space during the course of the residency. Crown is also embarking on an exploration of the archival material it holds, which can be accessed. These are possible starting points, not prescribed themes - there is no expectation that the artist must explore the archive or mark the anniversary, have a mural-based practice, or that the outcome must use paint as its primary medium.

This will be the second Art in Manufacturing collaboration with Crown Paints. In 2024 the internationally acclaimed artist, [Morag Myerscough](#) created [Floral Timekeepers](#), developing a new permanent mural for Blackburn town centre, as well as a temporary urban parklet. Connecting to Myerscough’s large-scale work, the commission was further activated by Bristol-based [Let’s Make Art](#), who designed creative mask making workshops in response to the artwork.

Fox's Burton's Companies UK, Blackpool

Fox's Burton's Companies UK - or FBC UK - encompasses a range of iconic biscuit brands including Fox's Biscuits, known for their cookies and teatime favourites, and Burton's Biscuits brands, famous for products like Jammie Dodgers, Wagon Wheels and Maryland cookies. With a combined heritage dating back as far as 1853, the company makes over 13 billion biscuits each year. Their products are crafted at several locations across the UK, including their site in Blackpool where this residency will take place.

fbc-uk.com

Project Partner - LeftCoast

LeftCoast delivers highly-engaging and socially-useful arts and cultural projects in Blackpool. They discover and celebrate the everyday wisdom found in the lived experience of the town's residents and sensitively elevate collective skills and ideas through creative and purposeful endeavours. Established in 2013, LeftCoast is one of 45 Creative People and Places programmes funded by Arts Council England.

leftcoast.org.uk

The Residency Invitation

Two historic biscuit makers combined into one powerhouse of British baking excellence shares an evocative invitation for an artist. FBC UK in Blackpool, LeftCoast and the National Festival of Making are looking to commission a socially-engaged artist to engage staff members and local residents during the residency. Formerly a Burton's site, the manufacturer sits within a residential area, with many locals across Blackpool having personal or historic connections to the town's biscuit-making heritage. The manufacturing process is an experience for all the senses and archival material is rich in inspiration, though not formally categorised. These are possible starting points and not prescribed themes - we are interested in hearing from artists working in any art form, who are excited to work with people through this commission.

This will be the first Art in Manufacturing residency with FBC UK. There is opportunity for the work to be re-exhibited in Blackpool in partnership with LeftCoast, however this will be determined by the direction the residency takes and the communities it connects to.

This residency is a partnership between the National Festival of Making and LeftCoast.



North Light, Sarah Marsh & Stephanie Jefferies + Herbert Parkinson

“Working in the factory setting has been an eye-opening experience. The factory atmosphere, buzzing with activity and the hum of machinery, is a stark contrast to my usual studio environment. Yet, it is in this setting that I have come to appreciate the synergy between art and industry. I anticipated learning technical skills, but I did not foresee the depth of connection I would develop with the people and the place.”

ARTIST



“Having an Artist in residence will leave a lasting legacy through the work that has been created but also the ideas and questions this experience has evoked.”

MANUFACTURER

Budget and Payment

£8,000 commissioning budget

+ £600 travel & accommodation

- Each residency has a **total commission budget of £8,000**, plus VAT where the appointed artist or collective is VAT registered. This covers both the artist's fee and the costs of developing the work, including materials not provided by the factory, collaborators' fees and other agreed project costs.
- We do not prescribe a fixed split between artist fees and production costs, recognising that each residency will develop differently. We will work with the selected artist to define the scope of the commission and develop a realistic project budget.
- In realising the work there is an additional allocation held in-house to support production costs associated with showing the work including venue preparation, technical support and equipment hire where required.
- An **additional allowance of up to £600 is available towards travel and accommodation** costs where needed.
- Access to manufacturers' in-kind materials, facilities and production time will be agreed individually with each factory partner.
- Please see the Access and Support section for further information on Access budget.
- Payments will be made in installments. The payment schedule and invoicing arrangements will be set out in the artist's contract.

What We Will Provide

Art in Manufacturing offers a supported environment for artists to develop ambitious new work through relationships with spaces of making and project partners. We work with artists at different stages of their careers, tailoring our support to their experience, practice and project. Through ongoing dialogue, we encourage experimentation and creative risk, supporting artists to explore unfamiliar approaches within an agreed scope.

In addition to the budget, programme support includes:

- Producing and budgeting support
- Manufacturing partnership development and facilitation
- Exhibition planning
- Audience engagement
- Technical advice and installation support
- Project documentation
- Marketing and communications
- Co-commission coordination

The support and resources required for each commission will be discussed with the selected artist as the work develops, with responsibilities agreed between the artist, manufacturing partner and festival team.



Canon, Penelope Payne + Haworth Art Gallery - a Co-Commission with Haworth Art Gallery



Within the Wake, Liz Wilson + CNC Robotics

Application Process

Who can Apply

We welcome artists and makers - individuals and collectives - working across contemporary art and making practices who are curious about what can emerge through an encounter with industrial spaces of making, its people and its places.

We are interested in artists whose approaches connect with one or more of the following:

- Developing new work through experimentation and an openness to unexpected directions.
- Building relationships through conversation, collaboration, socially engaged practice or the exchange of skills and knowledge.
- Exploring the lives, experiences, heritage and ideas of people connected to making.
- Engaging imaginatively with materials, processes and technologies.
- Exploring questions of place, identity, labour, belonging and social or environmental change.
- Creating ambitious contemporary artwork that invites diverse audiences to encounter, experience and engage with it.

These are starting points rather than a checklist. We welcome imaginative approaches to creating new work that connects with the diverse audiences who engage with the National Festival of Making.

Residencies are open to artists and makers based in the UK and Ireland who are able to spend time in the factory setting between January - July 2027, working in any art form and at any stage of their career.

The National Festival of Making CIC's aim is that our workforce, contributors and partners are representative of the diverse society we live in and that each individual feels respected, supported and able to give their best. We encourage applications from all backgrounds and communities and welcome discussions about specific individual requirements. If you would like to discuss this further, please contact us by emailing info@festivalofmaking.co.uk.

How to Apply

We aim to avoid the necessity for artists and makers to provide extensive information.

You may apply for more than one residency as you might feel that your practice would suit multiple locations, just make sure this is indicated in your application.

To apply, please email your application to applications@festivalofmaking.co.uk, with the subject line:

“INSERT FACTORY NAME(S) - Art in Manufacturing”

1. Expression of Interest

We suggest a guide of 300 words with reference to:

- What attracts you to your preferred manufacturing partner(s) and this residency.
- What interests, questions or approaches you might explore within that setting.
- How your practice prepares you to work with the manufacturer’s people, materials or processes; and within the festival setting.

We are interested in your practice and approach, not a fully developed artwork proposal, as we expect ideas to evolve through research and collaboration during the residency.

2. Documentation of previous work relevant to this opportunity - up to 20 images, links or video
3. Please provide your anticipated day rate and any significant travel or access considerations.
4. Please provide where you are currently based and your availability during the timeframe.

We welcome expressions of interest in audio or video format as an alternative to a written statement. Please contact info@festivalofmaking.co.uk to discuss submitting in an alternative format or any support you need to apply.

Interviews

Interviews will take place in Lancashire between **9-14 December 2026** (weekdays only).

The venue and arrangements will be shared with shortlisted applicants. Where necessary, we may be able to accommodate online interviews. Travel expenses for attending interviews in person will be reimbursed.

The panel will include Elena Jackson, Co-Director and Programme Curator for Art in Manufacturing, and Daisy Williamson, Programme Manager and Producer, alongside representatives from the manufacturing partner and project partner where relevant.

Interviews will last approximately 30 minutes and will explore your practice, interest in the residency and approach to working within the manufacturing setting.

Please see the [Key Dates](#) section for shortlisting and notification dates.

Access and Support

We want to support artists to do their best work with us. If you have access needs or working preferences you would like to discuss during the application process, interview or residency, please contact info@festivalofmaking.co.uk.

An access support budget is available, separate from the commission budgets. Support will be discussed individually and agreed according to your needs and the funding available. Please get in touch so we can explore what may be possible.

If you have an access rider, you are welcome to share it, but you do not need one to begin a conversation. You can find more information about our approach to [working with artists and access riders](#).



Fabula un Facto, Sam Williams + Cardboard Box Company

Key Dates

Application Process

Deadline:
23 November 2026 at 12 noon

Notification of invitation to interview:
By 2 December 2026

Interviews:
9-14 December 2026 (weekdays only)

Notification of selection:
15 December 2026

Residency Period

The residencies will take place between **January and June 2027**.

Each artist’s working schedule will be agreed with their manufacturing partner and the National Festival of Making’s curatorial and producing team. The schedule will allow for initial research, proposal development and production of new work for presentation at the festival.

Installation and Exhibition

Installation: Within the period **15–24 June 2027**. Each artist’s installation dates will be agreed according to the work and venue.

Festival presentation: A minimum presentation of work between **25–27 June 2027** with some exhibitions having the potential to extend, dependent on venue

De-installation: From **Monday 28 June 2027**. Exact dates will be agreed according to the work and venue.

Unfortunately, we cannot consider proposals from applicants who are unavailable from 21st - 28th June 2027.

Additional Partnership Presentation

The work developed through the FBC UK residency will be presented first at the National Festival of Making in June 2027, with the potential for a second presentation in Blackpool with dates to be confirmed. Applicants for this residency should take both presentations into account when considering their availability - there will be a separate budget in place if the work is re-exhibited.



“For the first time in many years I feel like I have had the room to create something of scale, without a specific brief – it feels like a return to the sort of work that I really want to be making.”

ARTIST

“Manufacturing is often perceived as a process, yet we have creative ideas within that setting, whether they be in how we can improve our operations or how we can encourage people to choose a career in manufacturing. I think having an artist in residence has reminded us that there is creativity and craft in what we do.”

MANUFACTURER



Infinite Hands, Nehal Aamir + Darwen Terracotta
In Partnership with Blackburn Museum & Art Gallery

About Art in Manufacturing and the National Festival of Making

The **National Festival of Making** is a unique celebration of making, from the kitchen table to the factory floor. The participatory, town-centre-wide festival brings together art, manufacturing, performance and making over one celebratory weekend in Blackburn each year - free to access and open to all. The festival welcomes over 40,000 visitors annually and features more than 150 artists and makers across 25+ venues. The programme includes workshops, public realm installations, exhibitions and performances, as well as a Friday industry conference for professionals in arts, design, architecture, placemaking and manufacturing, shining a light on Lancashire as a centre of UK manufacturing and innovation.

The National Festival of Making and Art in Manufacturing are curated and produced by **Festival of Making CIC**, a not-for-profit arts and culture organisation based in Blackburn.

The organisation connects people, place, art and industry through playful and inquisitive artistic commissions and collaborative projects culminating in a large-scale annual public festival and programme. Whether through hands-on workshops, long-term artist residencies, ambitious public commissions or partnerships with schools and colleges, the CIC champions bold, accessible and caring ways of working that are rooted in collaboration.

Art in Manufacturing is the National Festival of Making's headline commissioning programme providing artists with an incomparable platform to make new work in and alongside some of the UK's major manufacturers and making industries.

Each season of Art in Manufacturing sees artists paired with leading manufacturers and unique spaces of making, from artisan producers to industry giants. The residency programme creates collaborations with highly skilled workforces, facilitates access to cutting edge technologies and unearths hidden heritages - all resulting in remarkable contemporary artworks that form an integral part of the National Festival of Making programme.

Art in Manufacturing has previously included residencies with manufacturers working in food, textile, paper, plastic, cardboard, ceramics, wallpaper, textile and metal. Commissioned artists co-create with factory workforces who share skills, craftsmanship and personal histories that often directly inform artistic outcomes that interlace traditional techniques and materials to create astonishing, collaborative work across sculpture, film, dance, sound, print and installation.

We invite you to explore the breadth of Art in Manufacturing residencies to date [here](#).

Further Information

Risk Assessment and Insurance

Selected artists will be required to provide appropriate risk assessments covering the production, installation, public presentation and de-installation of their work, including participatory activity they deliver. Where contractors, such as art technicians or fabricators are engaged, artists will work with them to ensure that relevant risk assessments and method statements are developed for the activities each undertakes.

The National Festival of Making's producing team will support artists in identifying and coordinating these requirements, alongside the manufacturing partner and exhibition venue.

Artists must hold Public Liability Insurance with a minimum cover of £5 million for the activities they undertake as part of the commission. Insurance is available through membership of Artists Now (formerly a-n), among other providers.

Environmental Considerations

Selected artists will be provided with the National Festival of Making's [Environmental Policy](#). We ask artists to give consideration to the environmental impact of their work throughout research, production and presentation, including material sourcing, travel, transport, energy use and waste. Artists should also consider what will happen to the work and its materials after exhibition, exploring opportunities for reuse, repurposing or recycling wherever practical. These considerations will be discussed with the curatorial and producing team as the work develops.

Contact

If you have any questions about the residencies, application process or access requirements, please contact us at info@festivalofmaking.co.uk



We Are Gathered Here Together, Horace Lindezey + The Making Rooms
re-exhibited by Venture Arts at The Fitzrovia Chapel, London



Chromatogram, Lazerian + Cardboard Box Company

Further Reading and Selected Press

[Art in Manufacturing Website](#)

[Art in Manufacturing Films](#)

[National Festival of Making Website](#)

[Radical Pairings -](#)
[Art in Manufacturing Publication](#)

Partners

[Crown Paints](#)

[Fox's Burton's Companies UK](#)

[Leftcoast](#)

Selected Press & Media

[The Independent](#)

[Mag North](#)

[Creative Boom](#)

[Colossal](#)

Photography Credits:

Danny Allison, Gunner Gu, Jules Lister, Rob Harris & Robin Zahler

