

River Park Artist in Residence Research Brief

Background

As part of the Leven Programme, Icecream Architecture is leading the development of Interpretation and Public Art for the River Park in Levenmouth, funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and managed by Green Action Trust. To support this work, we are seeking an Artist in Residence to contribute a creative, materiality-focused perspective to the interpretation and public art development process

The residency is an opportunity for a locally-based or locally-connected artist to spend dedicated time within the River Park, exploring its landscape, ecologies, communities, past industries and stories through material research and community engagement. The artist should focus on a mix of the materials found in the natural environment and historic infrastructure of the surrounding park.

This should result in a body of research and ideas considering potential material uses, colours, patterns, textures, shapes or processes that could be incorporated into interpretation and public art for the River Park.

Later in the project, there will be a further opportunity for an artist to be involved in the development and delivery of public art for the River Park.

Purpose of the Residency

The Artist in Residence will bring a unique perspective to the interpretation and public art process, helping to reveal overlooked stories, environmental connections and community experiences within River Park.

The residency is intended to:

- Develop creative research responses informed by direct engagement with the Park and its users.
- Explore social and environmental themes connected to the River Leven, River Park and wider Levenmouth area.
- Contribute ideas, insights, and creative outputs to inform and enhance the interpretation programme.

- Explore materiality and colour to inform the design of future interpretation, wayfinding and public art installations across the park.
- Encourage new ways of seeing and understanding the Park and its evolving role within the community.
- Highlight the area's value, potential and unique qualities.
- Help foster civic pride and positive connections to the ongoing environmental and community-led changes taking place across the River Park.

Line of Questioning

How can the use of materials reveal the hidden industrial heritage of the River Park while reflecting its transformation into a thriving natural landscape?

The Artist in Residence will explore how materials associated with the Park's industrial and natural heritage can be reinterpreted to create a distinctive material language for public art and interpretation installations across the site.

Through testing, prototyping and experimentation, consider how materials can be incorporated, detailed and shaped to tell stories, evoke emotion and encourage discovery in the River Park. Throughout the research, consideration should be given to:

- How visitors and locals might respond to and interact with materials, colours, processes or forms in the park.
- How materials might interact with the natural environment, eg. through weathering, planting and ecological processes, to express the relationship between the park's industrial past and its present day landscape.
- Longevity and robustness of materials, with a view to how they could be incorporated into permanent installations in the River Park. For example, the Artist could explore how materials that otherwise aren't immediately durable, could be strengthened or referenced visually using more durable materials.

The outcomes of this material research will inform icecream architecture's development of the wider interpretation strategy for the River Park. This includes permanent public art and a family of physical interpretation elements, which will range from Information points at key gateways to the park, to smaller interventions that encourage visitors to discover the park's hidden stories, to interpretation installations that tell stories about the park's industrial past, community heritage, ecology and river restoration.

Existing materials and references

The Artist will be provided with background information on the park's natural and industrial heritage, archaeology and key stories as a foundation for the residency. This should be used as a starting point for further research, interpretation and creative exploration.

There is also potential to use found materials (boulders, bricks, carved stone, glass bottles, red clay pantiles) recovered during the archaeological dig at the Methil Mill site in the park.

The table below provides a starting point for exploration, listing materials that are closely connected to the park's heritage and landscape.

It is not expected that the Artist in Residence will explore all of these materials; a suggested approach is to choose one or a small number to explore, combine and develop ideas for during the residency:

Materials	Relevance to River Park
Steel	Industrial Heritage (National Steel Foundry)
Iron	Industrial Heritage (Durie Foundry)
Materials and colours associated with railway heritage	Industrial Heritage (Old railway lines and nearby Fife Heritage Railway) and recently reintroduced railway running through the park
Stone including boulders, sandstone and coal	Archaeology, Mills and Heritage buildings, mining heritage
Clay and Ceramics	Ashgrove Burial Site, historically imported red clay roof tiles, flint mills
Bricks	Methil Brickworks and bricks of varying colours
Glass	Industrial heritage (distillery)
Timber	Saw Mills, Woodland

Linen and Traditional/Natural Dye Techniques	Kirkland Mills (Sail Cloths and textile dying e.g Woad dye made from boiling leaves of the plant), natural dyes historically made from local plants, roots and minerals.
Natural materials (Flax, Willow, Moss, Wildflowers, Plants, Trees, Berries)	The River Park transformation included planting trees, fruiting hedgerows, and wildflower meadows. There are also local community environmental and planting works improving biodiversity throughout the area.

The following images show materials and existing designed features in the River Park. These will be shared in more detail with the Artist for reference.



Existing stone Monoliths



Corten Steel River Park Archway



Corten Steel Archway



Methil Mill Archaeology Site



Methil Brick



Brick and Stone from Methil Mill Dig



Kirkland Iron Bridge



Railway Line running through the River Park, reintroduced following community campaign



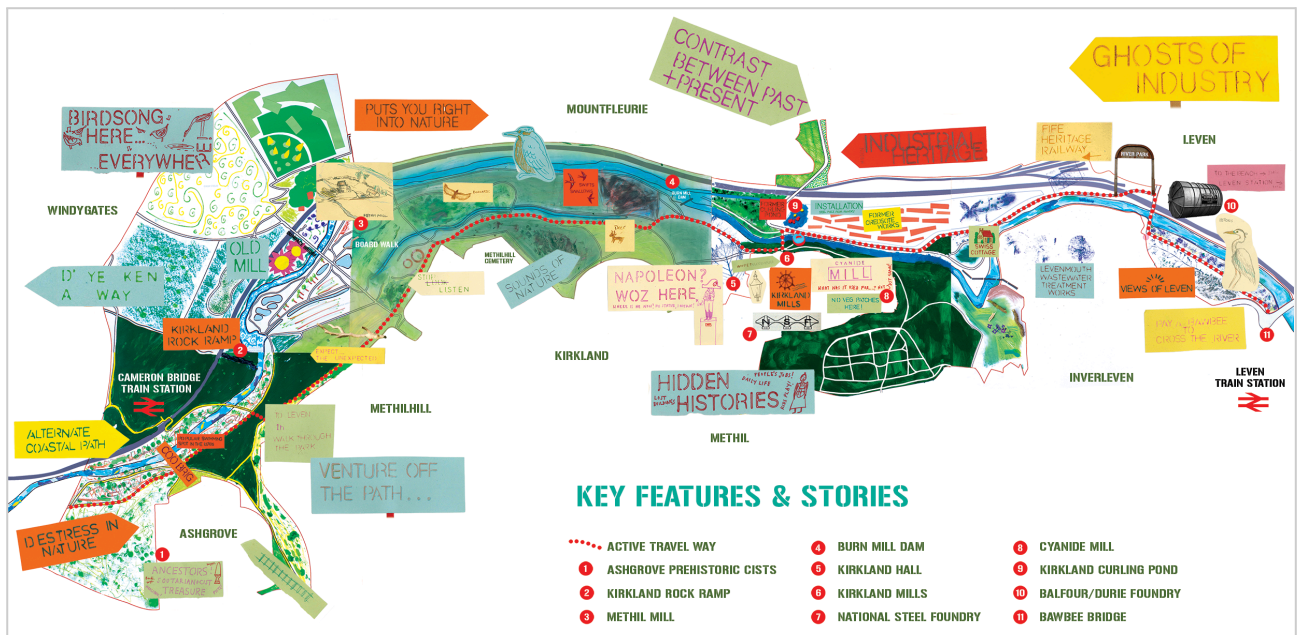
Wooden Play Structures



Artistic Panel design. This and similar panels will be manufactured from Corten Steel and installed as barriers/railings along the River Park path



Bench with artistic panel at the Park



Collaborative map, created with a school group and community members considering the textures, patterns, stories and hidden histories in the River Park. This map will be further developed by icecream architecture during the project.



Natural materials and prints gathered during workshops with school pupils in the River Park.

Scope

The selected artist will undertake a period of focused research, observation and creative development within River Park.

The residency should be responsive to place and should include engagement with local communities, as well as environmental observation, documentation, making, testing ideas or producing creative outputs that contribute to the interpretation process.

The artist will work in partnership with the project team, sharing findings and developing research to inform the interpretation concepts, narratives, and visitor experiences which will be delivered after the residency.

The artist will meet with the project team at regular intervals and at key milestones throughout the residency, aligned to the three creative engagements.

Outputs

The residency should result in:

- **A body of research and creative exploration** informed by community engagement and time spent researching and testing materials within the River Park. This should consider their importance to the River Park's story and the local community.
- **Creative research outputs, interventions or proposals** exploring the design and use of materials and colours, to support development of interpretation and public art for the River Park.
 - These outputs/proposals are not expected or intended to be polished or fully resolved artworks; For example, the outputs/proposals could suggest material uses, colours, patterns, textures, shapes or processes that could be incorporated into interpretation and public art, which will be delivered after the residency.
 - Recently installed features (archways, artistic railings) in the River Park are primarily made from Corten steel, inspired by the park's industrial heritage. The Artist's outputs/proposals should suggest ways that the future interpretation and public art can complement and enliven these existing features by incorporating other relevant materials, colours etc.

- **Delivery of at least three creative engagements** with local community members to inform the residency and nurture relationships between the park and its local community. These engagements could take the form of public drop-in sessions, creative workshops, guided material-led walks or other forms of engagement suggested by the Artist:
 - The first two engagements should inform the Artist's body of research and creatively engage local community members in the River Park's natural or industrial heritage.
 - The final engagement should celebrate and publicly share the outcomes of the residency with community members and the project team at the conclusion of the residency.
 - These engagements could be held with the general local public as organised sessions or drop-in activities, or could be held with local schools or groups.
 - Icecream Architecture and Green Action Trust will support the Artist in Residence by facilitating introductions, promoting engagement sessions through local networks and social media sharing, and support with logistics and communications. They can also provide support with the planning and delivery of engagement activities.
- **Documentation** of the residency process and findings provided in a digital format.

The format of outputs is intentionally open and will be agreed with the selected artist, so please include any potential exploration that you feel will support your delivery of the residency.

Budget

The residency budget is:

- Artist Fee: £4,200 (eg breakdown 12 days at £350 per day, Scottish Artist Union sessional rates)
- Residency Expenses: £500 (materials, travel and associated costs)

Total Budget: £4,700

Timescale

The residency will be delivered between August - November 2026.

Exact dates will be agreed with the selected artist and Icecream Architecture.

Eligibility

We welcome applications from artists who are based in, work within, or have a strong connection to the Levenmouth or Kirkcaldy, Glenrothes/Central Fife area and surrounding communities. Artists working across visual arts, socially engaged practice, environmental arts, craft, interdisciplinary practice and other relevant disciplines are encouraged to apply.

We are particularly interested in artists whose work demonstrates a sensitivity to place, community, ecology and the potential of creative practice to support positive social and environmental change.

Submission Criteria

Responses should be sent to opportunities@icecreamarchitecture.com by 9am on Tues 18th August and include:

- Your approach to the residency exploration and delivery (Max 1000 words) and any supporting images.
- A plan of your proposed key milestones within the residency, including a breakdown of the proposed number of days you will undertake.
- Your CV/Portfolio showing relevant experience.
- Commitment to provide Liability Insurance cover (eg through [Scottish Artists Union](#)).

An Interview will be arranged with a shortlist of candidates, before confirming the successful artist in late August.

