

Job Description

Live-In Artist Residency & Commission Opportunity

Location: IOU Hostel, Hebden Bridge, UK

Residency Length: 6 months (live-in)

Dates: April 2026 – September 2026 (flexible start date)

Overview

IOU invites applications from interdisciplinary artists working in any medium for a unique 6-month live-in residency at IOU Hostel, Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire, UK.

This fully funded residency provides:

- space and time to develop your creative practice and ideas that respond to the IOU at 50 archive
- an opportunity to make an artwork or production presented as part of IOU's celebration of IOU at 50 in 2026
- access to IOU's Creation Centre studios and workshops
- creative mentorship
- £3,000 production budget to develop a new commission
- live-in private accommodation, rent and bill-free at IOU's vegetarian hostel
- additional paid work to become embedded in the IOU Hostel experience

Artists are invited to respond to the IOU Archive — a 50-year record of pioneering experimental and site-specific performance — and to create a new work that reflects IOU's innovative approach to art, engineering, technology, and the environment.

The residency forms part of IOU's 50th Anniversary celebrations in 2026, culminating in a public presentation of the commissioned artwork.

The opportunity is open to UK and international artists at any career stage.

About IOU

IOU is a UK-based arts organisation with a 50-year history of creating experimental, interdisciplinary work that blends performance, visual art, engineering, and technology.

Based at Dean Clough Mills, Halifax, the IOU Creation Centre supports artists to take creative risks and collaborate across disciplines, developing new work that connects communities, landscapes, and ideas. IOU's long-term vision is to establish Calderdale as a vibrant hub for experimental art and rural innovation, linking local creativity to a global stage.

Why Hebden Bridge

Located in the South Pennines of West Yorkshire, Hebden Bridge is a renowned creative community surrounded by wild moorlands, historic mills, and a thriving independent arts scene. The IOU Hostel is a not-for-profit subsidiary of IOU Creation Centre and welcomes visitors, travellers to the region, as well as providing space for creative retreats. For our artists in residence, the hostel provides a peaceful live-work base within walking distance of woodland trails, rivers, and the town's lively cultural centre — just 40 minutes from Manchester or Leeds.

What the Residency Offers

Accommodation and Living

- 6-month live-in residency at IOU Hostel, Hebden Bridge.
- Private self-contained space with kitchenette (vegetarian only), shower, toilet, and both double and single beds.
- Shared vegetarian kitchen, dining, and laundry facilities (IOU Hostel is the region's only fully vegetarian hostel).
- Access to gardens, woodlands, and desk space for reflection and research.
- On-site parking and transport links to Manchester, Leeds, and Halifax.

Creative Resources and Mentorship

- Full access to IOU's Creation Centre in Halifax – including studio, gallery, and workshop facilities.
- Use of IOU tools, rehearsal, and making spaces, by arrangement.
- Creative mentorship from IOU's artistic team, connecting you with specialists in interdisciplinary practice, engineering, and digital arts.
- Professional development support, including guidance on fundraising and production planning.
- IOU will support you to apply for match funding if you wish to extend your project.

Financial Package

- Paid role: up to 10 hours per week supporting hostel operations and events (paid at the UK Real Living Wage).
- £3,000 production budget to develop and present your artistic project.
- Flexible working patterns to accommodate creative practice and other commitments.

Profile and Engagement Opportunities

- Public presentation or sharing of your commissioned work at IOU Hostel and/or IOU Creation Centre as part of the IOU at 50 anniversary celebrations from September 2026.
- One paid skill-sharing workshop at IOU Creation Centre for up to 25 participants.
- Opportunity to contribute to IOU's digital platforms (social media, interviews, documentation).
- Engagement with at least two community groups connected to your practice, including local and international.

Artist Commitments

- Live full-time at IOU Hostel for the residency period (with pre-agreed holiday exceptions).
- Develop a new artwork inspired by the IOU Archive, connecting heritage, experimentation, and future thinking.
- Deliver one creative workshop at IOU Creation Centre.
- Support hostel operations for up to 10 hours/week (paid).
- Present your final project publicly in September 2026.

Essential Artistic Criteria

Your application should:

- Demonstrate an interest in or alignment with IOU's interdisciplinary approach.
- Be inspired by and engage with the IOU Archive.
- Be original, ambitious, and experimental.
- Contribute to IOU's 50th Anniversary by connecting past creative practice with future-facing ideas.

Who Can Apply

We welcome applications from:

- Artists working in any discipline (visual arts, performance, digital media, sound, design, installation, interdisciplinary practice, etc).
- UK and international artists at any career stage.
- Artists who are curious, adaptable, and experimental, and open to engaging with

- IOU's archive and ethos.
- Individuals with strong organisational and self-management skills
- Artists who are confident using digital tools and social media (for hostel communications and potential content takeovers).
- People with former hospitality or customer-service experience
- Underrepresented artists, including those from diverse ethnicities, low socio-economic backgrounds, LGBTQ+ communities, and artists with disabilities.

Please note:

Travel to and from the residency is not funded.

The IOU Hostel is fully vegetarian

What You'll Receive

- Space and time to develop a creative project for IOU at 50
- £3,000 production budget
- Access to studio, tools, and mentorship at IOU Creation Centre
- live in private accommodation, rent and bill free.
- Paid part-time role supporting hostel operations
- Public platform to share your work as part of IOU's anniversary programme

As part of the commission, IOU will support you to apply for match funding from Arts Council England or other sources. However, success in securing this funding is not essential for your project to be realised.

To Apply

Fill out an online application form [HERE](#)

If you have access requirements and wish to apply by another method, please contact lydia.murray@ioutheatre.org

Timeline

- **20 Oct – 16 Nov:** Call for submissions open
- **Mon 17 Nov (10am):** Deadline for submissions
- **W/C 17 Nov:** Shortlisting
- **W/C 1 Dec:** Interviews
- **Jan - March 2026:** Additional fundraising support
- **April - Sept 2026:** Residency period (exact dates agreed with selected artist)

FAQs

Is this opportunity open internationally?

Yes. However, travel costs to/from the residency are not covered.

Do I need to use the IOU Archive?

Yes – proposals must be inspired or reference IOU's Archive.

Link to digital timeline - <https://ioutheatre.org/timeline/>

What kind of work can I make?

We welcome all disciplines – performance, digital, movement, sculpture, sound, light, text, installation, outdoor interventions, or combinations. The key is originality and inspiration from IOU's interdisciplinary approach.

Do I need to complete a finished artwork?

Yes. We expect the work to be complete by the end of the 6-month residency period.

Will IOU help me apply for extra funding?

Yes, we will support ACE project funding or other matched sources, but successful receipt of additional funding is not essential, should it not come through.

Can I leave the hostel during the residency?

Yes, but this is a full-time live-in role. Absences (excluding holidays) must be agreed in advance.

Webinar

We will host an online information webinar on **Monday 27th October 12pm** ahead of the deadline to answer questions about the residency and application process.

[REGISTER HERE](#)

Contact

For further information, contact: lydia.murray@ioutheatre.org

ioutheatre.org

hebdenbridgehostel.org

IOU is committed to equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace. We welcome applications from people of all backgrounds, identities and lived experiences.

IOU Charity no 273527. Company no 130367

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