

ART NOISE

WHAT IS A COMMISSION?

A commission is when you as an artist are asked to create a new project to work for a public space. But a commission can cover a range of opportunities or services such as:

- Producing a finished object or artwork
- Producing a community project
- Producing an event or activity
- Producing an exhibition of new work
- Further development of an evolving project or process
- Research and development
- A collaborative process within an institution/organisation

It is important to understand that there will be different approaches to management and support depending on the type of commissioner who has commissioned you.

The commissioners

The term commissioner can refer to arrange of people or organisations from an independent or freelance curator, a gallery or arts organisation, a local authority or a private client or collector.

They (the commissioners) provide you with the opportunity and funding. It is important to get the artist/commissioner relationship right from the start:

- It is your responsibility, as artist, to deliver something of quality that is true to your practice and responds to the brief.
- Maintain artistic vision.
- Plan regular meetings with the commissioner
- Consider time and budget and practicalities- plan ahead and plan a contingency
- It is reasonable to ask to be paid a proportion of the fee at the start of the commission to cover expenses (materials, travel etc).
- Develop publicity and press strategy with the commissioner - incorporate your project/work into the press work they are already doing - their website, newsletters, other events, etc.

The nature of a commission is always to develop something from a concept or idea into reality. It is important to maintain your vision, practice and integrity for the work, but at the same time, remember that a good plan today is better than a perfect plan tomorrow.

Briefs and contracts

Brief = what the commissioner wants from the project

Contract = what the artist and commissioner have agreed to deliver

A Commissioner will:

- Create an opportunity for an artist to produce something new AND specific which will be detailed in the brief
- Will agree with the artist that they can deliver the brief
- Will agree to work in collaboration with the artist
- Provide an opportunity to bring criticality to an artist's practice

A commission for an Artist provides the following:

- An agreement to work in collaboration and partnership with the commissioner from conception to completion
- An agreement to work within the budget and timeline

Taken from: <http://www.artquest.org.uk/articles/view/how-to-work-with-commissioners>

