



WILLIAM GRANT  
FOUNDATION



# SSW x COUNTERFLOWS CAREGIVERS RESIDENCY

## Application Pack

**Deadline for applications:  
Friday 12 June 2026 at 12 midday.**

### OVERVIEW

2026 is the 6th year of the SSW and Counterflows collaboration, offering vital residency opportunities to Scotland based artists who are also caregivers.

We are delighted to offer 4 Fully Funded Residencies in 2026/27, thanks to generous support of the William Grant Foundation and Creative Scotland.

The SSW x Counterflows Caregivers Residency offers:

- A 4 week fully-funded residency at SSW bespoke to your caregiving needs and schedule
- £3000 artist fee
- £300 travel budget
- £300 materials budget
- £1000 to support access and care costs to enable the artist to take part in the residency.
- Weekend pass and travel to Counterflows Festival in April 2027

This residency recognises that the care of others is central to the collective survival of our world yet is deeply undervalued within our society. This is often mirrored in the structures of support created for artists.

The SSW x Counterflows Caregivers residency is shaped to support artists who undertake this essential care work. It is set up to provide a nourishing, open and flexible residency structure to serve their diverse needs.

Caring for family (bio or chosen), community and/or kin, either professionally or informally can form and create artistic practices as well as disrupt them. We recognise how difficult it is for artists with caring responsibilities to grasp time, energy, resources and focus for their practices. This is particularly the case when support networks are disrupted, home and work have become tangled up and funding is systemically diverted away from caregivers infrastructures of support.

The SSW x Counterflows Caregivers residency offers artists funding, flexibility, respite and space for self-care, to focus on their own needs and support their continued learning and development.

For an insight into what can happen whilst on this residency you can read blogs from our past Caregivers Residents; [Laura Bradshaw](#) (2021), [Chris Dooks](#) (2021), [Hang Linton](#) (2021), [Rabindranath X Bhose](#) (2022), [Norma D Hunter](#) (2022), [Keng Keng Tang](#) (2023), [Bobbi Cameron](#) (2023), [Morven Mulgrew](#) (2024), [Julianna Capes](#) (2024) and [Alicia Matthews](#) (2025) as well as an essay by writer, journalist and caregiver [Claire Sawyer](#).

## PACK CONTENTS

This pack is also available in large print and as audio recordings on the SSW website.

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### 1. DETAILS

To support residency activity, the four selected artists will each receive:

- A 4 week fully-funded residency at SSW bespoke to your caregiving needs and schedule
- Accommodation at SSW or in the house 100 meters from the SSW site, depending on availability and your needs.
- £3000 artist fee
- £300 travel budget
- £300 materials budget
- £1000 to support access and care costs to enable the artist to take part in the residency.
- Weekend pass and travel to Counterflows Festival in April 2027.

As a caregivers' residency, we understand the need for flexibility for everyone involved. Here is what the residency can offer:

- 4 weeks funded residency at Scottish Sculpture Workshop in Lumsden, Aberdeenshire. The timeline for when and how this happens is flexible. It can be considered as one longer stay or several shorter visits depending on your (and those who you care for) schedule and needs. The residency should take place between **November 2026** and by the end **April 2027**.
- No outcome from the residency is required. It is an opportunity to dedicate time to your practice and fulfil your own needs.
- Following the residency period both organisations, SSW and Counterflows, will continue to advocate for your practice and are available to offer support.

## *2. ELIGIBILITY*

To apply for the SSW x Counterflows Caregiver's Residency you must:

- Identify as a caregiver - see FAQs on our website for more detail
- Make work supported by SSW and Counterflows i.e. visual arts, sound and contemporary performance
- Be based in Scotland
- Be willing/ able to travel to SSW and participate in the residency with the support outlined in Section 1.
- Not be in formal education during the residency period, November 2026 - April 2027.

## *3. APPLICATION PROCESS & RESOURCES*

To support you to apply, we have:

- This year we have introduced a number of online one-to-one 'application surgeries' with a member of the SSW team. The SSW team member hosting the surgeries will not be involved in the selection process of the open call and information discussed in the surgeries will not be used in the open call decision making.  
The surgeries are available on **Friday 15 and Tuesday 26 May** and offer artists time to ask questions and/or receive practical support to fill in or submit their application in a one-to-one setting. These surgeries are to support access and are not a mandatory part of the application process. Application surgeries will be allocated on a first come first served basis and once all slots are filled we will create a waiting list and look to add additional dates if required.  
Get in touch by emailing [arts@ssw.org.uk](mailto:arts@ssw.org.uk) to request a one-to-one application surgery.
- Built a more inclusive applications process, with no requirement for CVs and the choice to submit in various formats
- Created a range of additional resources to support you in making an application, such as FAQs and audio recordings
- Introduced artists to the selection panel, by inviting the previous years Caregivers Residency artists to join members of the SSW and Counterflows team.

## 4. IMPORTANT DATES

Open Call live	Thursday 30 April 2026
Deadline for applications	Friday 12 June 2026, midday
Applicants notified	Mid July 2026

## 5. HOW TO APPLY

The following section is intended to support you to make a strong application, by giving us the information we need.

- Read this carefully before completing your application.
- Submit your application before the deadline. Get in touch with us by emailing [arts@ssw.org.uk](mailto:arts@ssw.org.uk) if you are having problems submitting on time.
- When you finish submitting your application you will receive a confirmation message.

[Please contact us at SSW](#) if you have any questions about this residency, if you have technical difficulties or you have any access requirements that we can support you with in the application process.

Please apply using the format that feels most comfortable for you, either text, audio or video. We have no preference and will only evaluate the content of each application, not its production.

We want to hear about your work, ideas and research in your own words. Try to tell us about these without using jargon or complicated words.

### *The application form*

- We accept applications via this online form:  
[SSW x Counterflows Caregivers Residency application form](#)

If, for access reasons, you would prefer to not submit through the online form, there is a .doc and .pdf copy of the questions available via the website. Once complete, email the completed application to [arts@ssw.org.uk](mailto:arts@ssw.org.uk) with "Caregivers Residency Application" in the subject, before the deadline.

- Unfortunately the online form does not save as you are filling it in, so we advise you write and save your answers separately, then copy and paste your answers or recording links into the form in case you lose your connection or refresh the page while you are filling it in.
- The application form allows you to include links and any related passwords for recorded applications, such as voice notes or video.
- In each section there is an indicated word count or recording duration. This is to give you an idea of how much to say and how in depth we expect your answer to be. Please try and tell us everything that is relevant within the word /duration count.

- If there is another format that would support you to do your best application then please get in touch via [arts@ssw.org.uk](mailto:arts@ssw.org.uk) and we will work with you to try and make it possible.

## *The Questions*

### **1. Tell us about what interests and excites you in your practice.**

- we want to hear about what you are thinking about and exploring through your work.
- please use clear and simple language
- we are not looking for a CV or exhibition/performance history here, rather to understand what you are doing and what drives your practice forward
- If you are submitting a recording, please paste the link and any related passwords in the box.

*(Approx. 400 words / 2 minute recording)*

### **2. What would you like to do on residency at SSW and why can't you access this elsewhere in Scotland?**

- we do not need you to tell us about a 'final work' you want to make on residency. Instead please tell us what you would like to learn and work through while you are here.
- how will you use the facilities and technical knowledge at SSW (our large communal studio, ceramics workshop and metal fabrication workshop).
- look at the SSW and Counterflows websites to understand what is available to you through the residency and what we can support with our facilities, programmes, location and expertise.
- try to be realistic with what you propose
- let us know why you can only do what you want to do through this residency specifically
- if you are submitting an audio or video recording please paste a link to this and any passwords in the box

*(Approx. 400 words / 2 minute recording)*

### **3. How would the residency be useful for you? How would it support the continued development of your practice?**

- try to be as specific as possible
- tell us how the residency will support your continued development as an artist

- we are aware that many artists will need the funds, time, space and facilities available through residencies. As such please explain your specific needs at this time (personal and professional) and how these can be met through the residency and what you would like to do on residency.
- if you are submitting an audio/video recording please paste a link to this in the box with any passwords.

*(Approx. 300 words / 1:30 minute recording)*

### **Finally we will ask for some examples of your work to support your application.**

- This does not need to be recent work if you have had a break from your practice, but it will give us an opportunity to understand your practice better.
- This can be provided in whatever format is most convenient for you.
- Please be mindful that the panel has a limited time allocated to each application and will not be able to watch whole films or listen to complete audio recordings if they are longer than 2 minutes.
- Please provide a maximum of 6 images, 3 pieces of text or 2 links to external media or websites. Please compile any images and text into a single file (pdf, word doc, etc). We will not be able to look at all pages on a website so direct us to the content you want the panel to see.
- If you would like to share a link to your artist website or social media then there is space to do so.

Before you make your application we would advise reading or listening to our FAQs. We can also answer questions directly via email or phone. Contact [arts@ssw.org.uk](mailto:arts@ssw.org.uk) or phone 01464 861372 and we can make a suitable time.

## **6. SELECTION PROCESS**

### **Shortlisting**

Staff members from SSW and Counterflows will make an initial shortlist of applications to be put forward to the panel. While assessing applications we will consider:

- The artist's clear need for this residency (in relation to caring responsibilities and their practice)
- Articulation of how this residency specifically would support the artists ongoing development

- Links and connections between residency proposal in relation to the artist's existing work and interests
- Clearly outline what the artist wants to do on residency and how they will use the workshops and technical knowledge at SSW
- Evidence of how the proposal has an understanding of SSW and Counterflows facilities, location and/or existing areas of programming

## *Panel*

The panel will then read through/ listen to/ view the shortlisted applications and review them against the assessment criteria.

The panel will be made up of previous Caregivers Residency artists alongside staff of SSW and Counterflows Festival.

SSW and Counterflows will make the final decision from the shortlisted artists if the full panel can not make a unanimous decision.

## *Feedback*

All applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application in mid July. Please note that due to our small team we can only offer feedback on the shortlisted applications, this will consist of an overview of the panel's decision making.

## *7. ABOUT SCOTTISH SCULPTURE WORKSHOP (SSW)*

SSW is an arts organisation based in Lumsden, Aberdeenshire. SSW expands the possibilities of what sculpture can be – continuously working towards positive social and environmental change.

SSW is embedded in our rural location, with a global outlook and reach. Our artist residencies and locally focussed programmes are set up to rethink and push material and skills based learning, prioritising process and opening up our workshop space as a site where community, creativity and nourishment are a driving force in all that we do.

[Read more about SSW on our website](#)

## *8. ABOUT COUNTERFLOWS*

Counterflows is a contemporary music festival produced by AC Projects.

The festival features a wide array of artists bound together by their questioning spirit and refusal of easy categorisation. Whether born out of the likes of so-called DIY scenes, the internet or geographically remote communities, we believe that the underground belongs to a myriad of voices and is best engaged with when we come together, share ideas, break down borders, challenge hierarchies and push boundaries.

[Read more about Counterflows on their website](#)