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Multi-site Exhibition and Cultural Project Valletta 2018, European Capital of Culture

International Call for a Curator or Curatorial Team

0.INTRODUCTION

The Valletta 2018 Foundation is launching an international call for the engagement of a curator or a curatorial team for a high-profile multi-site exhibition and cultural project within Valletta and around Malta and Gozo. The working title of this multi-site exhibition and cultural project shall be 'The Sea – Our Neighbour.'

The project shall be one of the keystones of the Valletta 2018 Cultural Programme and will be the opening exhibition of Valletta's European Capital of Culture year. It shall be inaugurated in January 2018 and run for a period of three to four months.

The Valletta 2018 Foundation is seeking proposals from curators or curatorial teams with an international track record to curate this project. Expressions of interest can be submitted in the form of a concept proposal.

1. VALLETTA 2018

The city of Valletta will hold the title of European Capital of Culture in 2018; it will share this title with the city of Leeuwarden in the Netherlands. The Valletta 2018 Foundation is responsible for the implementation of Valletta's title, and the creation of an exciting, contemporary programme based on empowerment, engagement and participation.

Although the title was awarded to Malta's capital, Valletta, the European Capital of Culture year belongs to all of Malta and Gozo.

2.THE EXHIBITION PROJECT

The chosen theme for this project is the sea which, for the purpose of this exhibition, is understood as Malta's closest neighbour. The project shall explore Malta's multifaceted connections with the sea through the lens of a contemporary curatorial language. It shall also consider inter-disciplinarity within the broadest sense of the word and may include,

but is not limited to, artefacts and heritage objects, contemporary art works and artistic statements in various media. Newly commissioned work is strongly encouraged.

A concept rationale for 'The Sea – Our Neighbour' is attached to this call (Appendix A). This is intended to guide prospective applicants as to the thematic reach of the exhibition, but is intended only as a guide and is not restrictive. The content of the exhibition may also relate thematically to the narrative and themes of the Valletta 2018 programme as a whole, a brief description of which is included in Appendix A.

The project must be located in two or more sites, with one being in the city of Valletta, and it may also include an underwater site. A portfolio of potential venues is attached to this call (see Appendix B), however prospective applicants are encouraged to use outdoor and community spaces as potential venues for the project.

3. CURATORIAL PROFILE AND REQUIREMENTS

This call is open to curators or curatorial teams with a recognised international curatorial track record. The curator or curatorial team shall be answerable to Valletta 2018 and shall work in tandem with a research focus group led by a curatorial advisor appointed by the Foundation to coordinate the research remit of the project. The curatorial team shall, jointly and with the support of Valletta 2018 Foundation, and its designated research focus group:

1. Develop, articulate and define the various themes, content, related events and interventions interpreting the chosen concept including additional curatorial input required for specific components of the project;
2. Select venues, sites and location in Malta and Gozo. At least part of the exhibition must be held in Valletta. A portfolio of potential venues is attached to this call (Appendix B);
3. Assist with the selection of the technical team responsible for logistics, technical requirements and contact

4. Curate the exhibition catalogue, including choice of contributors, and liaise directly with the publishing house with regards to layout and other curatorial requirements as necessary;
5. Liaise with local stakeholders chosen to host specific components and interventions of the project;
6. Assist and support marketing and PR requirements as required;

The budget allocation for this project shall be €400,000 to include all aspects and facets of the project. This amount shall also include curatorial fees. Additional funding may be sourced through third-party sponsorship as required.

The successful applicant shall be engaged on a contract for service by the Valletta 2018 Foundation. Such contract shall define terms of reference and interface, curatorial remit and other requirements, some of which are highlighted in this brief.

4. PROPOSALS

The proposal in response to this brief is to be submitted to the Valletta 2018 Foundation in the form of a concept proposal and shall include the following:

1. An outline of the proposed project in response to this brief. This should include proposed venues and type of intervention or experience as well as a proposed narrative to link artwork selection (maximum 1000 words);
2. The proposed curatorial strategy in response to the proposed project highlighting the ways and means in which all proposed actions shall come together as one coherent, resilient and compact whole;
3. A detailed CV and portfolio highlighting previous experience on similar high-profile projects;
4. A statement (maximum 500 words) detailing the applicant's suitability to the role and the project;

5. Tentative budget breakdown of the proposed project including curatorial fees. If additional budgets are required, the proposal shall also include how these ought to be sourced. This should also include a strong track record on how additional alternative resources for past similar projects were acquired;
6. A tentative work plan highlighting the main milestones between date of engagement and the opening of the exhibition in January 2018;
7. Any other information (maximum 500 words or 10 images) relevant to and required for a better and comprehensive understanding and evaluation of the submitted proposal.

5. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION AND ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Proposals are to be submitted via email to events@valletta2018.org by 12pm CET, on Monday 25th April 2016, indicating 'Valletta 2018 Exhibition Proposal' as subject.

Submitted proposals will be assessed by a panel of experts purposely appointed by the Valletta 2018 Foundation. Shortlisted candidates will be invited to pitch their project and discuss it in greater detail during an interview to be held in Malta between the 7th and 9th of May 2016. The final decision will be announced by end May 2016.

The panel of experts shall be guided by the following criteria throughout the process leading to the final selection:

1. The strengths and merits of the proposed exhibition and cultural project in response to this brief;
2. Participatory content and proposed community interface remit of the proposed project;
3. The profile and track record of the international curator and/or multi-national curatorial team;

4. The logistical and financial viability of the proposed curatorial strategy as presented in the general breakdown of costings and budget allocation for each of the proposed components;
5. Clear proof, preferably a track record, for completing projects on time and on budget.
6. Contribution to the creative sector in Malta

The panel's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into following its decision.

Queries and requests for clarification can be sent to events@valletta2018.org up until Monday 18th April 2016. All queries and responses will be made public on the Valletta 2018 Foundation's website, www.valletta2018.org.

6.TIMELINE

The selection process shall proceed as outlined in the table below:

Opening of call	Monday 28 th March 2016
Deadline for submission of queries	Monday 18 th April 2016, 12 noon CET
Project submission date and time	Monday 25 th April 2016, 12 noon CET
Notification of shortlisted Projects	Friday 29 th April 2016
Pitching sessions	Saturday 7 th to Monday 9 th May 2016
Publication of final decision	Friday 27 th May 2016

7.ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Appendix A

Concept Note

The exhibition and cultural project shall address Malta's relationship with its closest neighbour, the Mediterranean Sea. On an island with less than 316 sq. km, the Mediterranean is an inescapable presence and an influence which has permeated almost all aspects of life.

The project will delve into the narrative of how humanity and the sea are intertwined. It shall look at the marine and maritime elements which have shaped the Maltese Islands, and how they, in turn, have affected the sea around them. It shall examine how Malta's relationship with the sea reflects, by extension, its relationship with the rest of the world. It shall also ask whether the sea acts as an isolating barrier around Malta, or, rather, if it serves as a living link with the outside world.

The exhibition shall be inspired by the character of the Mediterranean Sea itself, as a living organism in its own right.

Valletta 2018 Programme Themes

The theme summaries below are included in this document to provide prospective curators with an overview of the Valletta 2018 Cultural Programme. Further information on the Programme and the Foundation can be found on www.valletta2018.org.

The Curator/curatorial team is free to relate the project to one of or all of the themes below, or to use them in the development of the concept. .

Titles and details are subject to change.

Future Baroque (working title)

Future Baroque is about a way of life; an extravagance and a theatricality in everyday life. It means colour and ornamentation, exaggeration in gestures and actions; ostentation is its central philosophy.

Contemporary life in Valletta happens and thrives within the fabric of a baroque city. The architecture of the city, Baroque at heart, yet layered with successive and diverse stylistic interventions across time, is the permanent scenography for the hustle and bustle of everyday life. Valletta is renowned as a Baroque city, but now it's the people, not the architecture that have taken on the character and philosophy of the Baroque. Communities engage with the fabric of the city in diverse ways and experience historic space conceived, developed and rethought across time. Indeed, Valletta is the stage where life is performed day after day; a fortified stage with breached walls welcoming new ideas to settle, germinate and evolve.

Future Baroque is spiritual, but not in the traditional sense. Its spirituality comes from a belief in ostentation and ritual, rather than in a deity. For Future Baroque, divine presence manifests itself in the glint of a gold necklace and the sparkle of a new car. There is a sound to Future Baroque; it's the chinking of jewellery, the blasting of a loudspeaker, the chanting of a prayer and the hooting of car horns. Future Baroque is also about making yourself heard above all this – shouting from the periphery and vying for attention.

Valletta's architectural scenography is enriched by the necessity of ritual throughout the year. Carnival makes it glaringly coloured, local festas promote it as rich, and community celebrations transform it into a spontaneous soundscape of revelry and joy. All three intermingle and interact as the city's theatre becomes a multisensory experience concerning all the five senses.

Conflict and Exile (Working title)

A city surrounded by thick stone walls, built to celebrate victory while at the same time manifesting a fear of war, Valletta is no stranger to conflict. Centuries later, the city once again stands in the middle of a region marked by growing political instability; bringing with it a surge of violence, exile and migration which has spread into a global phenomenon.

Valletta 2018 is an opportunity to celebrate life and creativity. It also provides space to challenge oppression and injustice, and to extend a hand of friendship to artists and creatives who work under threat. In an age where multiculturalism is becoming the norm, we may all struggle with the need to recreate a sense of belonging, but an openness to different cultures is vital for a healthy community.

A melting pot of different cultures since its birth thanks to its harbours and Malta's geographical position, Valletta is uniquely equipped to become a common ground for interaction, fostering encounters and facilitating debate. With an ancient heritage and Arabic roots, alongside a European past and present, Malta and Valletta can build bridges between cultural cutting edge programs in North African, Middle Eastern, Balkan and European countries, giving migrants a voice and promoting the return of cosmopolitanism in the city.

Cabin Fever (Working title)

Cabin Fever is about living in a tiny, loud, creative, emotional island with people wherever you look and family always just around the corner. It's about living with close family ties all around you and close communities surrounding you. It's about being able to drive around an entire country in a single morning!

Tiny Malta is ranked 9th in the list of smallest countries in the world with a mere 316 sq km of land; at the same time, it is one of the most overpopulated countries in Europe. Community spaces and the open sea play a big part in Cabin Fever; when some private space isn't easy to come by, the Maltese turn to communities for company, and to the sea for some air to breathe.

Appendix B

List of Possible Locations

Please note these locations are given as a guide only and the list is in no way exclusive or exhaustive, nor is it a guarantee of availability of the venue.

Valletta

St James Cavalier

Parliament Building

City Gate

Fort St Elmo

The Break-Water Bridge and Lighthouse

Gozo

Mgarr Ferry Terminal

Mgarr Harbour

Fort Chambray

Ċittadella

Malta

Salini Salt Pans, Xemxija

Lazzaretto Quarantine Hospital and/or Fort Manoel, Manoel Island

Fort St Angelo, Birgu

Selmun Palace, Mellieħa

Underwater

Rozi wreck, Ċirkewwa

HMS Maori, Valletta

Um El Faroud wreck, Wied iz-Żurrieq

More information on cultural spaces in Malta and Gozo is available through Valletta 2018's Cultural Mapping exercise on www.culturemapmalta.com