



LEEDS
ART
GALLERY



ACCELERATOR BURSARY



Works by 2026 Accelerator Bursary artists, L-R: Elrick Boldy, Iona Ogilvy Stuart, Ewan Summerton

The Accelerator Bursary is open to 2026 Fine Art, Design and Photography BA and MA graduates of Leeds Beckett University, Leeds Arts University, and the University of Leeds

ABOUT THE SCHEME

The Accelerator Bursary is a scheme funded by Leeds Art Fund and delivered by Leeds Art Gallery in partnership with Assembly House. It is designed to support highly motivated students who have a clear intention to develop their practice, build towards a sustainable career in the arts, and who are interested in collaboration. The three students will share the studio to experiment, explore and develop their practices at a critical juncture in their career development, just after leaving formal education. The scheme will run from **January to December 2027**, and the chosen artists will also benefit from a three-year membership to Leeds Art Fund.

WHAT DOES LEEDS ART GALLERY PROVIDE AS PART OF THE SCHEME?

As part of the scheme, Leeds Art Gallery provides Accelerator Bursary artists with monthly mentoring sessions with its team of curators and any other relevant team members. It also connects artists with relevant practice-specific mentors to help contextualise their work and support its development, drawing on its extensive network of contacts. Participants will also have the opportunity to present work at the Gallery, as part of a sharing event in the Central Court, Leeds Art Gallery.

WHAT COMES WITH THE STUDIO AT ASSEMBLY HOUSE?

The three participants in the 2027 Accelerator will become members of Assembly House and receive a dedicated shared large studio, that comes with a range of desks and storage and access to a paint sink in the adjoining space. The space can be configured in different ways, and also has its own private, heated room in the building's turret. The building has Wi-Fi, access to a kitchen and on site parking. We pride ourselves on being a welcoming and community-focussed organisation. This type of studio would suit an artist who wants to learn about collaboration and is keen to be part of a supportive peer group, rather than working completely alone.

The three participants will have a group exhibition at Assembly House towards the end of 2027. This exhibition will be supported by Assembly House's in-house technician, curatorial and producing staff and will form part of the core programme in the project space. The Accelerator participants will also receive continued support from the Assembly House staff team, for example having check-in / mentoring sessions, practice specific support and more.

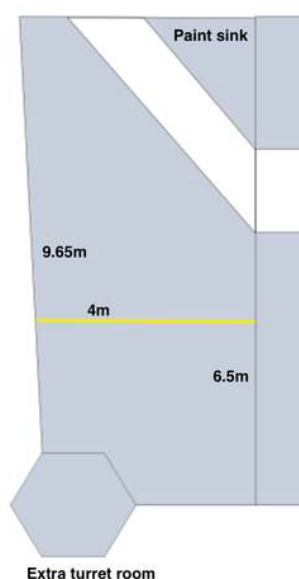
All of Assembly House's members receive the same support and benefits, which includes:

- Funding bid and application writing support
- Joinery and technical support, with access to our tools and other equipment
- Free hire of our large project space
- Opportunity to apply to our core yearly programme
- Paid opportunities to work on our projects, such as our weekly life drawing class, Armley Festival, event shifts and community projects
- Inclusion in our annual group exhibition
- Access to our regular crit programme
- Invitations to our regular social events and trips
- Invitations to our quarterly members meetings, to be involved in decision making for the organisation

Access information:

Assembly House is accessed by a set of large stone stairs and is on the first and second floors of the building. There is unfortunately no lift access. Our toilets are all for any gender and are on the first floor. It is an old Victorian industrial building, so it can be cold in the winter months. Many of our members choose to have a small heater, heated clothing or other options to warm themselves up during winter. Sometimes the space can be noisy due to power tools being used. The studio assigned to the Accelerator Bursary is on the second floor. You can park close to Assembly House in one of our two carparks.

You can see some images and a floor plan of the studio here:



PROVISION OF ACCESS SUPPORT

We are aware that the lack of step-free access at Assembly House is a barrier to entry for artists who require it. We are actively evaluating options for adapting the Bursary to accommodate artists who require step-free access, and encourage all eligible artists to apply.

A Personal Access Cost element is available as part of the Bursary payment scheme, towards any relevant Access requirements (e.g. a BSL interpreter, a notetaker, specialist mentor for admin support, or other).

WHAT HAVE THE 2025 & 2026 COHORTS ACHIEVED SO FAR?



Installation shots of the exhibition 'Catching Forty Winks' at Assembly House, October 2025, with works by Alegria Repila Smith, Reece Kelly and Hannah Guy (clockwise from top)

In 2025, the three artists selected for the Accelerator Bursary delivered a joint exhibition at Assembly House, titled Catching Forty Winks. They also benefited from presentations of their work at Leeds Art Gallery, with a review of one of the presentation available here: 'Surface Tension' at Leeds Art Gallery – Review - The State Of The Arts. One of the artists has stayed on as a studio holder at Assembly House, one currently has a studio at Patrick Studios, Leeds, and another participated in Ones to Watch at Sunnybank Mills.

The 2026 artists are currently half way through their Bursary year, and have completed mentoring sessions with staff from both Leeds Art Gallery and Assembly House. They will soon be benefiting from mentoring sessions with their chosen artistic mentors, and are working towards their group exhibition at Assembly House in October 2026.

Application Questions

1. Tell us about yourself and your artistic practice (max 500 words)
2. Tell us about your aims for the graduate scheme and what you'd hope to achieve from taking part (max 300 words)
3. Tell us about your commitment to being present in the studio throughout 2027, and collaborating with other bursary holders. What are your current plans for the year and where will you be based in the country? (max 200 words)

Please submit up to 5 examples of your work. We accept Instagram links, links to websites, online portfolios, links to Google Drive or Dropbox files, and PDF or Word attachments. We will also accept applications as video or audio recordings (5 mins max), in MP4 format sent via WeTransfer or Google Drive.

Make all submissions to Elizaveta Butakova, Curator of Exhibitions at Leeds Art Gallery at elizaveta.butakova-grimshaw@leeds.gov.uk with the Subject Title 'Accelerator Bursary Application'.

Please also include details of the course and university you have graduated from, as well as your personal email address.

Interviews will take place in the week commencing 21st September 2026.

The deadline for applications is 23:59, Sunday 2nd August 2026.

HOW TO APPLY

The Accelerator Bursary is open to 2026 graduates of Fine Art, Design or Photography at both BA or MA levels, from Leeds Beckett University, Leeds Arts University, and the University of Leeds. To apply, please answer the questions above and submit examples of your artwork.

If you'd like to ask any questions before you apply, or If you'd like this Open Call in any other format, please contact Elizaveta Butakova, Curator of Exhibitions at Leeds Art Gallery (elizaveta.butakova-grimshaw@leeds.gov.uk) and a member of the team will get back to you.

We are committed to removing barriers to access for those who have been historically or currently marginalised from the creative industries. We strongly encourage applications from disabled artists, LGBTQIA+ artists, global majority artists, working class artists, those with caring responsibilities, care and prison leavers and any other artists with varied lived experiences.

ABOUT LEEDS ART GALLERY

Founded in 1888 as a civic art gallery, Leeds Art Gallery has strong collections of 19th and 20th century British painting and sculpture, widely considered to be one of the best outside national collections. Alongside an extensive painting and sculpture collection, the gallery holds a significant collection of moving-image work. To accompany the collection, Leeds Art Gallery presents a dynamic and diverse programme comprising exhibitions, commissions, acquisitions and projects by artists whose work is globally significant and locally relevant. In recent years, Leeds Art Gallery has launched British Art Show 8, co-founded Yorkshire Sculpture International, presented Sonia Boyce's award-winning *Feeling Her Way* from the Venice Biennale and commissioned new works by Yorkshire-based artists in partnership with the British Library.

Website: artgallery.leeds.gov.uk

Instagram: @leedsartgallery

Facebook: @leedsartgallery

ABOUT LEEDS ART FUND

Leeds Art Fund was founded in 1912 by a group of art enthusiasts and philanthropists who recognised the importance of supporting the arts in Leeds. Their vision was to create a fund that would enable the acquisition of artworks for public display to enrich the cultural life of the city, following the opening of a purpose built gallery for the city of Leeds in 1888. They are a membership organisation and as well as supporting the arts in the city, they run a regular programme of talks, events and visits. Accelerator Bursary artists will benefit from a three-year membership to Leeds Art Fund.

Website: Leeds Art Fund

ABOUT ASSEMBLY HOUSE

Assembly House is an artist-led project space, studios and community arts organisation in Armley, in Leeds. Our commitment to professional development, for early career artists, alongside a wide-ranging programme from creatives who are the next generation of changemakers, and model of co-creation with local communities makes us unique. We're passionate about supporting cross-disciplinary practices, and creating vital opportunities that remove barriers to arts engagement.

Beginning as a small collective, in 2013, Assembly House has grown into an organisation with a small staff team, a volunteer team, 68 members, a weekly life drawing class and yearly engagement with 3000 people.

You can read about our past programme and projects on our website - www.assemblyhouse.art