

Proposal Support Guide

One World Festival 2026

Ashmolean Museum



Image © Ashmolean Museum



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About One World Festival

The One World Festival at the Ashmolean Museum is an annual free, family-friendly festival that brings together faith-based and local communities across Oxfordshire for a weekend of performances, workshops, crafts, and talks. From traditional dance and storytelling to hands-on making and cultural demonstrations, there's something for everyone. The festival sees thousands of people participate every year, with over 12,000 visitors in 2025.



Image © Ashmolean Museum

We invite you to showcase and share your talents and ideas as part of our 2026 One World Festival. Whether you're an artist, musician, storyteller, have a passion for craft, or you want to share a slice of heritage, we want to hear from you.

Join us in creating a lively celebration that highlights the diverse talents within our local community and forges connection with family audiences. Your contribution could make a big difference in shaping our 2026 festival experience, and we look forward to your ideas.

What audiences said

‘Fully immersive experiences that enabled us to not only enjoy multiple different cultures but to get a taste of those cultures’

‘Essential to have an international and multicultural outlook in a world of growing intolerance. Well set up for the whole family.’

‘Lots of activities, incredible variety, very accessible and inclusive. My daughter, aged four, said that she also loves it because she likes being kept busy’

What contributors said

‘We had a wonderful experience. It is so beautiful to see [...] how many different activities take place. We feel very much at home with the audiences and just loved our time in the space. Thank you thank you!’

‘I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to you and your team for the incredible experience at the One World Festival. It was a privilege to bring the community into such a vibrant celebration. We are immensely grateful for the opportunity you provided for us to showcase our culture. Your dedication to engaging the public with the museum was evident, and it was exhilarating to see the enthusiasm of all the cultural groups participating in the festival.’



Image © Ashmolean Museum

Key Dates

Here are some important dates to remember. Make sure you are available during the festival weekend before applying.

What	When
Proposal deadline	9am on Monday 15th September 2025
All applicants contacted	by Monday 20th October 2025
Walk-through and signed agreements	November 2025 (compulsory)
Rehearsals and detail walk-throughs	by January 2026 (if required)
Festival weekend	Saturday 14th & Sunday 15th February 2026

The 2026 Festival Theme is Nature

Each year, the One World Committee selects a theme to inspire creative responses from our communities. This year's theme is **Nature**, chosen to celebrate and reflect the natural world around us and inspired by the Ashmolean's Spring *Shaped by Nature* events season and the *In Bloom* exhibition, which opens in March 2026.

You could explore the theme of **Nature** through our relationship to the land, cultural traditions, sustainability, stories or objects from museum collections. To spark ideas, you could look at:

- Traditional or contemporary practices rooted in nature.
- Cultural stories, beliefs, or rituals about the land, water, or environment.
- Performances, music, dances or talks focusing on the natural world, environmental awareness, sustainability, and connection to place.
- Hands-on workshops using natural or recycled materials.

We're inviting you to explore, creatively respond to or reimagine our relationship with nature through culture, community, and creativity. We are excited to see how you interpret nature in your proposal.

Let the Ashmolean's collection inspire

To help spark ideas, the Ashmolean's collections team has selected a small number of museum objects that relate to the theme of Nature. Please see the object list at the bottom of this document.

These objects come from different cultures and periods and could be used to help inspire your starting point for your proposal. If you feel inspired by them, we'd love you to reference them in your activity, but this is optional.



Image © Ashmolean Museum

What You Can Propose

Proposals can be traditional or experimental, but the key is to connect with the theme of Nature and inspire family audiences through culture and creativity. Your proposal must be designed for drop-in participation or spectating and accommodate at least 50 visiting families to take part.

Previous examples include laughter yoga, traditional Polish dances, puppet theatre performances, rangoli-making, and paper stained glass workshops.

The sort of thing you could propose:

- Creative workshops - such as hands-on crafts or creative writing
- Performances - including music, dance, spoken word, storytelling or theatre
- Short talks or demonstrations - sharing knowledge, techniques, or stories related to natural materials, practices, or beliefs

We welcome proposals from individuals, community members, artists, educators, performers, and organisations. Whether it's your first time or you've taken part before.

Material Guidelines

What makes One World Festival unique is the opportunity to work in the museum's galleries amongst the Ashmolean collection. However, this comes with some limitations on space and materials.

Working in the Galleries

Our galleries are home to delicate artworks and objects, so we have a few simple guidelines on the types of materials that can be used in them to help keep our audiences and collections safe.

Materials that are welcome in gallery spaces include:

- Dry materials like paper, card, textiles, or clean dried natural items (dried leaves, shells, etc.)
- Dry drawing tools such as pencils or crayons.
- Clean, non-perishable objects (cups, pots, scarves, etc.)

Materials that are not allowed in gallery spaces include:

- Liquids and anything that could spill or stain (including paint, glue, ink, or water)
- Wet clay, soil, or anything damp
- Food preparation or tasting
- Live flames, incense, or aerosol sprays
- Small objects that could pose a choking hazard to young children

What if your proposal involves materials not allowed in the galleries?

Most of the activities will take place inside the museum's gallery spaces. However, we can accommodate some liquids and messy materials, such as clay, ink and paint, in some other rooms around the building, but the space is extremely limited. You should make sure to tell us if you intend to use wet materials in your application.

If you're unsure whether your idea fits, don't worry — we're happy to help you adapt your activity, so it works safely in the space. Please attend one of our online Drop-in Sessions to discuss your idea, or feel free to email us at families@ashmus.ox.ac.uk.

Contributor Agreement

If your application is successful, we'll create a simple agreement outlining:

- The fees and support that have been agreed
- Key rehearsal dates
- What's expected from both you and the Ashmolean

This agreement ensures clarity and helps avoid last-minute surprises. We can only confirm your contribution and issue payment once the agreement is signed. It will be written in collaboration with you.

How to Apply

Please submit your proposal by completing this form: <https://forms.office.com/e/4DRcCcfedQ>

Please complete **one form per activity** proposed. You can submit as many ideas as you wish, but we may only select one.

The form includes simple questions about your ideas, materials, your contact details, and availability. We advise gathering your ideas and information before completing the form. Completing the form shouldn't take longer than 30 minutes, but we recommend you look through the form first and plan your answers ahead of time.

Proposal deadline is 9am on Monday 15th September 2025.

We will carefully review all proposals and notify you if your proposal has been successful by **Monday 20th October 2025.**

Please note that submitting a proposal does not guarantee selection or payment. Our selection process aims to ensure a balanced mix of communities and faiths, and activities that cater to a diverse range of ages. We also want to ensure that we can meaningfully support you as a contributor.

If you have access needs that make it challenging to complete the form, please email us at families@ashmus.ox.ac.uk so that we can provide the questions in an alternative format.



Image © Ashmolean Museum

Support and Contributor Fees

We offer different types of support depending on how you're participating, whether you're applying as a self-employed practitioner, a community organisation/non-profit, or a community member/group. Everyone's contribution is valued, and we aim to make participation as accessible and rewarding as possible.

Below, you'll find an outline of the fees and support we can offer each group, including coverage for materials, refreshments, and artist fees.

These guidelines help us ensure fair contributions towards costs and allow us to thank you for your time. **You're also welcome to volunteer your time as a donation to the museum, helping keep the festival free for everyone.**

If you have questions, feel free to join one of our online Drop-in Sessions or email us at: families@ashmus.ox.ac.uk.

Self-Employed Practitioners and Artist Collectives

(Artists, Musicians, Performers, Facilitators, etc.)

If you are a professional freelance practitioner or workshop leader:

- We offer a half-day fee of £200 and a full-day fee of £375, which includes preparation, meetings, and transport. These rates are informed by guidance from the Artists' Union England and Musicians' Union.
- If you're part of an artist collective, we offer up to £350 for a half-day and £650 for a full-day, total.
- Up to £50 in materials support is available to help with supply costs.
- Refreshments and lunch will be provided on the day.
- We can cover reasonable adjustments and access needs, to be agreed in advance in line with the [University of Oxford's expenses policy](#).

Please note: To receive payment, you must:

- *Have the right to work in the UK as a registered self-employed with HMRC and complete the necessary supplier setup process with the University of Oxford.*

or

- *If you're already employed by the University, we will help you arrange the appropriate payment method.*

or

- *Be an organisation registered with Companies House and complete the University of Oxford's supplier setup process.*

Alternatively, you are welcome to volunteer the time as an organisation as a donation to the museum, helping keep the festival free for everyone.

Registered Community and Non-Profit Organisations

If you're applying on behalf of a registered community or non-profit organisation (*registered with Companies House*):

- We offer £175 for a half-day and £325 for a full-day, payable to the organisation (not individuals). This includes preparation, meetings, and transport.
- Up to £50 in materials support is available.
- Refreshments and lunch will be provided on the day for up to 10 members of your group.
- We can cover reasonable adjustments and access needs, to be agreed in advance in line with the [University of Oxford's expenses policy](#).

Please note: To receive payment, your organisation must be registered with Companies House and complete the University of Oxford's supplier setup process. Alternatively, you are welcome to volunteer the time as an organisation as a donation to the museum, helping keep the festival free for everyone.

Community Contributor or Community Group

If you're contributing as an individual or community group (*not self-employed or part of a registered organisation/non-profit*)

- We cannot offer direct payment, but you can request a £10 gift voucher per group member, up to a total of £100 per group. You may opt-out if you'd prefer to donate your time.
- Up to £50 in materials support is available.
- Refreshments and lunch will be provided on the day for up to 10 group members.
- We can cover reasonable public transport (within Oxfordshire) and access-related costs, where possible and agreed in advance, in line with the [University of Oxford's expenses policy](#).

Alternatively, you are welcome to volunteer the time as an organisation as a donation to the museum, helping keep the festival free for everyone.

Need Help?

We welcome applications from everyone and are happy to offer support, whether you have a question, an access need, or just want to talk through your ideas.

Drop-In Sessions: Let's Talk Ideas

Got an idea but not sure how to shape it? Want to ask questions before submitting your proposal?

We'll be holding two online drop-in sessions where you can:

- Share your idea and get friendly feedback
- Ask questions about the application or festival
- Chat with the team and other potential contributors

These sessions are open to anyone thinking about applying—no need to have a finished idea, just bring your curiosity!

Session times:

Thursday 21st August, 12:30 – 2 pm

Monday 8th September 6 – 7:30 pm

Feel free to join at any point during the session. If you'd like to attend, email us at families@ashmus.ox.ac.uk, and we'll send you the joining details.

Frequently Asked Questions

Do I need experience?

No! We welcome first-time contributors and informal groups, as well as professional artists.

Can I submit more than one idea?

Yes! Just fill out a separate form for each idea. Please note, we may only be able to select one.

Can you arrange parking if I drive in?

Unfortunately, we're not able to arrange parking due to limited availability. However, a travel allowance is included in your contributor fee. We encourage the use of public transport or cycling where possible, in line with our environmental sustainability policy. See [Parking in Oxford – Oxford City Council](#) for more information on parking options in the city.

Can I drop off materials or equipment by car ahead of the event?

The museum has a loading bay to drop off items, however this must be agreed in advance for security reasons.

Can I apply as a group?

Absolutely! Let us know how many people will be involved in your submission.

What if a disability makes it hard for me to complete a form?

No problem. Please email us at families@ashmus.ox.ac.uk and we can provide the questions in an alternative format.

Do I need to be local?

We accept applications from anywhere in the UK, though we prioritise groups and artists based in Oxfordshire where possible.

Can I sell anything?

This is a non-commercial event, so selling items isn't permitted. However, we'll include your organisation's name in our printed programme and online listings, along with a website link if provided.

Can I promote our charity or business?

On the day, we don't allow active promotion (e.g. leaflets, banners, or branded materials). However, we'll include your organisation's name in our printed programme and online listings, along with a website link if provided.

How will the festival be promoted?

The Ashmolean will lead on festival promotion, including posters, social media graphics, and other design assets. These will be shared with contributors, and we warmly encourage you to help spread the word.

To ensure consistency, the Ashmolean team will need final sign-off on any festival-wide content or materials. If you'd like to promote your individual activity, you're welcome to use your own designs, we just ask that you don't use the Ashmolean's logo or branding. **Please note:** *We may ask you to share images or short event descriptions for promotion, with consent from everyone involved.*



Image © Ashmolean Museum




Submission Checklist





This checklist will help ensure you have completed all the steps to submit your proposal. Before you submit, check that you have:





- ☐ Read this support guide, including the FAQs
- ☐ Filled out all sections of the form
- ☐ Confirmed you have a right to work in the UK (if you are applying as a professional freelance practitioner)
- ☐ Confirmed your availability for the festival date(s)
- ☐ Confirmed your commitment to attend walk-throughs, rehearsals and planning meetings in the lead up to the festival (likely October/November 2025)




Ashmolean Objects

The objects featured here have been thoughtfully chosen by our Collections team at the Ashmolean, all inspired by the theme of Nature. We encourage you to use these items as a source of inspiration for your proposal, but this is entirely optional. We would love to hear which one inspired you and how it influenced your ideas.

Object Image	About the Object
	<p>AN1911.608 Octopus Jar Gallery 20 Aegean World</p> <p>This storage jar is decorated with an octopus with six arms and was made around 3500 years ago. It was found at Knossos on the island of Crete and shows how important the sea was to the people who lived there.</p> <p>https://collections.ashmolean.org/object/464723</p>
	<p>AN1921.202 Puzzle Jug Gallery 41 England 400-1600</p> <p>This jug, used to play tricks on unsuspecting drinkers in Oxford, is decorated with a stag's head—linking it to themes of nature and hunting. In the medieval period, deer, hares, and boar were hunted in managed parks enclosed by fences called pales. The ritual butchery of deer, with different cuts going to different ranks, shows how animals shaped both the landscape and social hierarchy.</p> <p>https://www.ashmolean.org/collections-online#/item/ash-object-325601</p>
	<p>AN1885.482 Gold acorn necklace Gallery 16 Greece</p> <p>This gold necklace, found in a rich grave at Nymphaion in Crimea, c. 5th Century BCE, is decorated with pendant acorns—symbols of fertility and abundance in Greek iconography. The chain's rosette and lotus designs may reflect the tastes of the local Scythian peoples, highlighting cultural blending in this region of the Black Sea. Rich in plant symbolism, the necklace speaks to how different societies connected nature to identity, wealth, and belief.</p> <p>https://www.ashmolean.org/collections-online#/item/ash-object-455968</p>

	<p>AN1957.186 The Wint Hill Bowl Gallery 13 Rome</p> <p>This glass bowl, found in Somerset but probably made in Cologne c. CE 350, shows a detailed hunting scene of a man on horseback and dogs chasing a hare into a net. The inscription urges the reader to “live long with your people and drink!” Used in communal banquets, the bowl links nature and social ritual, reflecting how wild animals—and the act of controlling them through hunting—were important to the wealthy inhabitants of Late Roman Britain.</p> <p>https://www.ashmolean.org/collections-online#/item/ash-object-318826</p>
	<p>AN1982.1096 Wittenham Sword Gallery 17 European Prehistory</p> <p>This Late Iron Age sword, 1st Century BCE, found in the River Thames, is decorated with intertwined patterns of animals and plants. Such motifs were widespread across Iron Age Europe, reflecting the close relationship between human communities and the natural world, especially rivers and animals.</p> <p>https://www.ashmolean.org/collections-online#/item/ash-object-319341</p>
	<p>HCR4620 Silver Coin Gallery 8 Money on the north wall</p> <p>This silver coin, struck in Gandhara (present-day Afghanistan–Pakistan) in the first century CE, depicts the Hindu goddess Shri Lakshmi, representing the Earth, standing on a lotus while being sprinkled by two elephants, which symbolise rain-bearing monsoon clouds.</p>
	<p>HCR6595 Gold Coin Gallery 8 Money on the south wall</p> <p>This heavy gold coin from 18th-century Iran features a peacock, associated in Islamic thought with paradise and divine creation. The inscription ‘O Muhammad’ on the bird’s chest connects religious devotion to the natural world, using animal imagery to evoke spiritual beauty.</p>

	<p>HCR6462 Bank Note Gallery 8 Money on the south wall</p> <p>The Egyptian goddess Isis—associated with motherhood, the afterlife, the sky, magic, kingship, and protection—appears on the back of this 20-Egyptian pounds banknote, shown riding a chariot drawn by a horse.</p>
	<p>EA1975.17 Mughal Carpet Gallery 33 Mughal India</p> <p>Mughal carpets from India often included clusters of tiny blossoms and lotus flowers. The lotus, symbolising purity and the creative energy of nature, was central to the decorative style.</p> <p>https://www.ashmolean.org/collections-online#/item/ash-object-240465</p>
	<p>EAX.886 Snuff Bottle Gallery 38 China to AD 80</p> <p>Porcelain snuff bottle in the shape of a Pak choi. This type of white cabbage first cultivated during China's Ming Dynasty, is now eaten across the globe—and even grown on the International Space Station. Its journey from traditional agriculture to space farming highlights the enduring importance of plants in human life and innovation.</p> <p>https://www.ashmolean.org/collections-online#/item/ash-object-361315</p>
	<p>EA2008.65 Satsuma style vase Gallery 36 Japan from 1850</p> <p>This finely decorated vase, made for export in the late 19th century, shows two ducks among lotus plants. In Japanese and Chinese traditions, ducks symbolise happy marriage, while lotus plants—especially in Buddhism—symbolise purity and rebirth. The vase reflects cross-cultural exchange and the enduring use of nature as a source of artistic meaning.</p> <p>https://www.ashmolean.org/collections-online#/item/ash-object-740772</p>

	<p>WA2013.1.81 Cup Gallery 54 Wellby Gallery</p> <p>This 16th-century-style silver-gilt cup, inspired by Nuremberg goldsmith Wenzel Jamnitzer, includes life casts of real insects, snakes, and plants. The stem is shaped as Mother Nature. It reflects how the renaissance celebrated the forms of the natural world, blending science and art.</p> <p>https://www.ashmolean.org/collections-online#/item/ash-object-777198</p>
	<p>WA1940.2.61 Still Life of Fruit and Flowers Clara Peeters Gallery 48 Still Life Paintings</p> <p>This still-life painting shows cut flowers in a vase, surrounded by fruits, with a fly perched on the vase and a grasshopper nearby. It captures the beauty and fragility of nature, with close observation of plants and insects.</p> <p>https://www.ashmolean.org/collections-online#/item/ash-object-373327</p>
	<p>WA1909.1 Cuillin Ridge, Skye, from Sligachan John William Inchbold Gallery 66 Pre-Raphaelites</p> <p>In this view of the Isle of Skye, painted across the Sligachan Burn toward the Cuillin Hills, Inchbold uses the precise technique of the Pre-Raphaelites. This meticulous approach reflects their belief that nature is a true expression of divine creation.</p> <p>https://www.ashmolean.org/collections-online#/item/ash-object-373043</p>