



Kendal Pride 2026

Artist Open Call

About the Project

Kendal Pride, in partnership with Abbot Hall, are looking to commission two artists to exhibit as part of our 2026 programming. This project aims to platform LGBTQIA+ voices, celebrate queer art and creativity, and offer diverse cultural experiences within Kendal and the wider South Lakeland area.

The commissioned work will be publicly presented at Abbot Hall Art Gallery, aligning with both Kendal Pride's values and Abbot Hall's commitment to inclusive, engaging and high-quality arts programming.

About the Partners

Kendal Pride

Kendal Pride is a community-led organisation celebrating LGBTQIA+ lives, culture, and creativity. The festival has an ethos of 'pride done differently,' with a focus on celebrating our natural environment, putting the queer community at the centre of what we do, and increasing the visibility of queer people living in the South Lakes.

Abbot Hall Art Gallery / Lakeland Arts

Abbot Hall Art Gallery is a major art gallery run by Lakeland Arts, housed in a beautifully restored Grade I-listed Georgian building on the banks of the River Kent in Kendal. One of Britain's most outstanding small galleries, it showcases an exceptional collection of historic to contemporary British art — from J.M.W. Turner watercolours and George Romney portraits to modern works by artists such as Barbara Hepworth, Lucian Freud and Bridget Riley — alongside imaginative temporary exhibitions, creative events and family-friendly activities.

Kendal Pride 2026 Theme	<i>This is Home</i>
--------------------------------	----------------------------

For 2026, Kendal Pride's theme is "*This is Home*". We invite artists to consider this theme in relation to their work and reasons for applying.

This is a fantastic opportunity to have your work exhibited in a leading Art Gallery alongside other historical, modern, and contemporary art.





The theme is intentionally open-ended and not limited to ideas of physical place or location. Proposals might explore, but might refuse binary suggestions:

- 'Home' as resistance, care, survival, celebration, self-made.
- Everyday spaces or relationships that create belonging
- Chosen family, kinship, or collective shelter
- Rural, transient, digital, or imagined forms of home
- Home that sits alongside displacement, grief, transition, becoming, joy.
- Home as domestic, of routine or ritual, and or pilgrimage.

Alongside this, Kendal Pride's ethos is often described as **"pride done differently"**. We are interested in work that reflects this ethos – for example, projects that are thoughtful, unexpected, gentle, relationally or locally rooted, or that move away from commercial or mainstream Pride aesthetics.

We are interested in proposals that:

- Celebrate queer lives, histories, or futures
- Respond to place, community, belonging, or shared context
- Are thoughtful about accessibility and audience experience
- Can be safely and practically delivered within the project timeline and budget.

Who Can Apply

You do not need prior experience exhibiting in galleries and museums to apply. We are open to a wide range of artistic approaches, including (but not limited to):

- Visual, Applied Arts & Crafts
- Installation
- Sculpture & Mixed Media
- Sound and moving image
- Live Art, Performance, Spoken Word
- Curatorial & Archival response.

This opportunity is open to:

- LGBTQIA+ artists and collectives
- Artists at any career stage, in or out of mainstream education.
- Artists must be based in the UK.

At its heart, this theme recognises that for many LGBTQIA+ people, home is not always inherited — but built, found, or made together.

We particularly welcome applications from artists who are currently underrepresented within the arts sector, including trans, non-binary and gender non-conforming artists; Black and Global Majority artists; Disabled, neurodivergent and/or chronically ill artists; and working-class or rurally based artists.

Artists based in Cumbria, the North, or with a strong connection to the area are especially encouraged to apply.



How to Apply

Please submit:

An Artist Statement/Bio (up to 500 words)
Short proposal about your new or existing artwork, and why this opportunity speaks to you. (up to 500 words)
Up to 5 examples of previous work or proposed work. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Including Title, Medium, Date, Dimensions, Year.
Technical installation requirements. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>How is it installed, performed, presented?</i> <i>Do you have what is required to fit and install it?</i> <i>Will you need specific technical support?</i>
Any access requirements (if applicable) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Current access information for Abbot Hall can be found here https://lakelandarts.org.uk/abbot-hall/facilities-access/
We are happy to accept applications in written, audio or video formats. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Written format should be within a single PDF document including all requested materials. Audio files in .mp4 or .mp3 Video files should be uploaded to online platforms (such as Vimeo) with links and passwords shared with us. Please keep Audio and Video files under 5 minutes.
Send applications to: commissions@kendalpride.co.uk

Budget and Fees

We are seeking to commission **Two Artists**. Each will be awarded:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> £1,000 	Artist Fee. Paid directly to the artist.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Up to £250 	In support of production, installing, transporting and or shipping. (Managed by Kendal Pride).

Artist fees are intended to cover time, labour and materials. This may include new work developments, a continuation of an ongoing series, or repositioning and presenting existing work/s. We are committed to paying artists fairly. Artists should consider what is reasonable and achievable in budget.

Artists must be UK-based and able to provide evidence of their responsibility for their own Tax and National Insurance contributions, including appropriate tax reference details for invoicing paid commissions.



IMPORTANT NOTE:
Commissioned artworks must...

Be able to fit within or respond to a maximum scale of 5ft in diameter and height.

Artists whose approach to the brief is more live art and performance-based should ask us in advance of submitting to ensure any specific technical needs can be met ahead of completing their application.

We see this as less of a restriction and more of an intention to include LGBTQIA+ artists within Abbot Hall's existing Historical, Modern and Contemporary Art Exhibitions and Collections Galleries.

Timeline

Open call launches	Monday 2nd March 2026.
Application deadline	Midday, Friday 20th March
Shortlisting and selection	Week commencing 23rd March
Selected Artists will be informed by	Friday 27th March
Installation of Artworks	1st June
Kendal Pride Festival dates	Friday 12th - Sunday 14th June
Exhibited works remain on display	End of June

Selection Process

Artists will be selected by a panel including:

- Garth Gratrix, Queer Contemporary Artist.
- Josh Simpson, Director at Kendal Pride.
- Astrid Mohr, Creative Producer for Communities at Abbot Hall and Lakeland Arts.
- Ben Haigh, Exhibitions Manager at Abbot Hall and Lakeland Arts.

The panel will consider:

- Artistic quality, authenticity and clarity of proposal
- Relevance to the project and partners
- Impact and benefit for the artist's portfolio and career.
- Feasibility within budget and timeline

Contact and Support

If you have questions about the brief, application process, or space itself to help inform your planning before you apply, you can email us: commissions@kendalpride.co.uk