Art commission for £18,300 for pedestrian entrance archway or features at the southern entrance of The Level (St Peter's Place, Brighton, BN1 4SA)

1. Project Summary
An £18,300.00 Art Commission to create a bespoke archway or features for the southern pedestrian entrance of The Level. The commission includes the design, production and installation of the arch or features. Installation of the commission is expected to be in January 2017.

2. The Site
2.1
The Level southern entrance (see image 1)
2.2
The location of the commission

Images 2, 3 and 4 show where the commission is to be installed. It should be mounted on or near the existing piers which are approx 5 metres apart, span the pathway (if appropriate), and take into account the existing infrastructure (such as walls, piers and flora). Assessment of feasibility is within the remit of the artist and should factor into the Expression of Interest.
2.3 Background

The long history of The Level goes back as far as the 1700s, when it was open grassland set within an agricultural landscape. Since then its use has been continuous and varied—it has served as a cricket ground for the Prince of Wales, a venue for livestock fairs, a pony racing course, and a place to celebrate events such as the overthrow of Napoleon Bonaparte and the coronation of both George IV and Queen Victoria. For a short time from 1944 it even served as a base for the Royal Engineers regiment of the British army.

No matter what its specific use at the time, The Level has always remained an important community venue. A huge regeneration project began in 2013, which has brought about both a brand new skate park and overhaul of the children’s playground. It is also becoming home to a spectacularly eclectic range of flora and fauna, including rare butterflies and elm trees. The park has multi-award-winning high conservation and sustainability credentials (see Appendix 1) and active, ongoing community engagement project through the volunteer-led Activity Plan.

In addition, the surrounding area continues to go through an ongoing regeneration. Beginning with the refit of the ever-popular Open Market, the area is constantly evolving, with new developments, coffee shops, and much more opening month-by-month. One such development is the new college being built on the corner of Ditchling Road and Oxford Place. Due to open in April 2017, Kings Brighton will be a Sixth Form College for both international and domestic students with an on-site residence for boarders. It will bring both a wealth of new business and a multicultural feel to the local area. It is this development which is funding this art commission.

Reference:

See Appendix 2 (Level timeline)

www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/thelevel

www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/joinusonthellevel (community engagement and Activity Plan)

www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/lcf (the Level Communities Forum)

www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/thelevelhistory

www.biospherehere.org.uk (the Biosphere site)

3.

3.1 The Aims

The aim of this commission is to make an attractive archway or features suitable for pedestrian access to the south end of The Level.

The commission should be original, site specific and help to establish a sense of place and identity. It should appeal to the users of the park and other interested parties, such as community groups, environmentalists and local residents.

The commission should be in keeping with the surrounds, historical context, current use and environmental credentials/outreach of the park. Note that the existing walls and columns at the south entrance date from the 1920s. You should show an understanding of the existing art commissions within the park and how this will complement them. You are encouraged to contact the Level Communities Forum for their further thoughts and opinions (see link above).

Although not an essential element, you might wish to consider how the words ‘The Level/Welcome to The Level’ or similar could be worked into your submission.

Note that due to the overhang of the trees, the location of the commission will often be darker than the surrounding areas.

Allowance should be made in the budget for a plaque to be installed (possible locations shown on image 31) which will reference the contribution from external funders to the park (including their logos), the install date of the commission and artist name, plus the names of the development whose contribution made the construction possible. Details to be determined later and will need to be factored into the planning application.
3.2 Role of the artist
The selected artist will be required to:

- Design, manage and implement the installation of the commission and will liaise directly with the contractor
- Provide a detailed budget
- Ensure and demonstrate that the materials are fit for purpose
- Provide a maintenance plan for the structure
- Liaise with the Cityparks Department of BHCC to agree on installation methods and management
- Provide risks assessments and method statements for installation
- Provide application for planning consent. Planning application fee (£195), any required planning consultancy fees, and all materials for the submission will need to be factored into the budget
- Be available for any press activity
- The artist should have public liability insurance to the value of £2 million
- The anticipated lifespan of the structure should be 10 years.

4. Process and Timescale:
If you would like to be considered for the above commission please send us an expression of interest in writing with supporting material that demonstrates your suitability for the commission in the form of:

- CV, with evidence of previous comparable work and relevant referee of comparable work
- An artist’s statement of how you would approach the design. With some initial outline sketches.
- If sending a physical submission by post, please enclose a stamped addressed envelope for any materials, slides or pictures that you wish to be returned to you.

Expressions of interest to be submitted no later than 5pm on Monday 20th June 2016, and sent by email (preferred) or post to:

David Dalton
dadalton@btinternet.com
Zise Ltd., Curtis House, 34 Third Avenue, Hove. BN3 2PD

Deadline for artists’ expression of interest Monday 20 June 2016
Shortlisting Wednesday 22 June 2016
Interviews Monday 18 July 2016

The interview panel will most likely be made up of:
- Economic Development Officer (Arts & Creative Industries), BHCC
- Representative from the BHCC Parks Design Team
- Conservation Planning Officer, BHCC
- Developer representative(s)
- Representative from the The Level Communities Forum
Appendix 1

Environmental credentials

THE LEVEL – WILDLIFE AND CONSERVATION

The Level has won awards for its excellent conservation and gardening practices.

- The gardens are designed and carefully managed and maintained to support insects and pollinators such as bees and butterflies
- The Level is a pesticide-free zone
- We have a ‘Bee Bed’ on the park’s north-west corner
- A weekly volunteer garden club helps people learn and develop skills around sustainable horticulture
- The onsite Garden Manager produces regular conservation and garden newsletters
- The park’s plants are being databased to help people learn plant identification and suitability for certain conditions
- We are creating a butterfly garden near the café
- The park’s herb garden supplies the café
- The café’s coffee grounds, and ash from its pizza oven, go into the garden compost
- 95% of garden waste produced onsite is recycled

Find out more at
www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/thelevel

The Level is within the Brighton and Lewes Downs Biosphere - www.biospherehere.org.uk

Email parksprojects@brighton-hove.gov.uk
Tel 01273 292929
www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/joinusonthelevel
www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/

Brighton & Hove City Council
LOTTERY FUNDED
The Level was open grassland set within an agricultural landscape. The two streams which ran down the valleys of London Road and Lewes Road converged here and The Level was marshy and prone to flooding.

Cricket was played on The Level from at least the mid-eighteenth century. The northern part of The Level was laid out as a cricket ground for the Prince of Wales in 1791.

Brighton Toy Fair was held at The Level. Pony racing took place on The Level and a sheep fair selling South Down Sheep was held.

The Great Peace Festival to mark the overthrow of Napoleon Bonaparte took place.

The Level was now the only recreational area in the town. The coronation of George IV was celebrated by the roasting of two bullocks at a public dinner on The Level.

The present area of The Level was formally laid out by A.H. Wilds and Henry Phillips. Union Road was constructed to link the Ditchling and Lewes Roads. The land to the north was sold to James Ireland who laid out the Royal Gardens.

The coronation of Queen Victoria was celebrated by a large public dinner with the roasting of an ox and some sheep.

An avenue of elm trees, a gift of the Earl of Chichester, was planted.

A public celebration to commemorate peace with Russia was held.

The building at the southern entrance to The Level was a branch police station from about 1865 until 1919. Following use as a police building it was used as main offices for the Brighton Parks Department.

The Level was enclosed by railings and planted with shrubs.

Between 1921 and 1926, the Open Market was held on Rose Walk.

The children’s playground designed by Bertie Hubbard MacLaren was laid out with a boating pool, bridges and pergola. MacLaren, the Superintendent for the Brighton Parks Department. MacLaren previously designed Preston Park in Brighton.

Part of The Level was occupied by Royal Engineers and the northern section taken over by Nissen huts. The army stayed on The Level until 1955.

The skate park was built.

Brighton Peace Camp, intended as a protest at the arrest of 44 women at the Greenham Common, remained on The Level for over two months.

Many of the elms on The Level destroyed by The Great Storm. Replacement trees were subsequently planted, of different ages and species to avoid a repeat of such wholesale loss.

New playground equipment was installed.

The columns and pergolas were taken down.

Parks for People.