



## **Wysing Studio Holders Policy**

September 2022

### **1. Background:**

Wysing Arts Centre provides affordable, subsidised studios for visual artists who find affinity with Wysing's values and programme.

Studios are leased for up to five years. Through open application, Wysing selects artists who want to make use of this time to move their practice forward through active enquiry and experimentation. Wysing welcomes artists who would benefit from development opportunities that may be available, including annual review sessions with Wysing's curatorial team, and who are open to collaborating with to develop and deliver aspects of Wysing's public programme. To secure and maintain a studio at Wysing, artists must demonstrate commitment to being an active contributor to Wysing's artistic ecology and the artistic ecology of the region. Wysing has a Code of Conduct which everyone at the centre is committed to upholding.

**The reason that studios are licensed for up to five years** is to enable as many artists as possible to benefit from time spent at Wysing. Wysing is committed to ensuring that studio artists are from a diversity of backgrounds and actively encourages applications from artists who identify as being from marginalised backgrounds based on any protected characteristic including age, racialisation, gender identity or sexuality, disability or long-term health condition, pregnancy, maternity or marital status, religion or belief, and class background or class identity.

### **Subsidised studios at Wysing are for visual artists who/ are:**

- Approach studio tenancy at Wysing as a developmental opportunity;
- Committed to critically engaged contemporary visual art practice;
- Establishing/ have established a career as a professional artist;
- Committed to at least two days/ 16 hours per week to using their studio. We understand that artists may sometimes need to be away from studios to undertake commissions and residencies, or for personal reasons, but ask that Wysing is kept informed of long absences of more than one month;
- Exhibiting or engaging in opportunities (exhibitions, projects, events, residencies) regularly, nationally and internationally;
- Committed to constructively participating in the active community at Wysing;
- Open to collaborating with Wysing's team to propose, develop and deliver new strands of programme appropriate for Wysing (potentially resulting in a paid opportunity for the artist);
- Keen to allow visitors access to their studio as part of pre-arranged events such as Wysing's annual Open Studios programme;
- Willing to participate in opportunities to promote Wysing and its activities, when appropriate;

- Committed to Wysing's Code of Conduct in addition to the organisation's policies and practices including those covering equality, diversity and inclusion;
- Committed to Wysing's environmental policies including waste reduction, re-use, recycling and avoiding materials that are toxic to the planet.

Wysing subsidises artist studios through its Arts Council England funding, to enable rents to remain low.

Wysing is an educational charity and a not-for-profit organisation, meaning that studio artists are currently exempt from paying business rates. Studios cannot be used as a registered business address or to undertake solely commercial activity.

## **2. Lease period:**

**Leases are reviewed annually** at review meetings with a member of Wysing's team. Studios leases will remain secure when artists can demonstrate their usage of the studio, their commitment to Wysing's values and objectives, and to the cultural ecology of Wysing and the wider region. This is in addition to standard leaseholder terms including the termination of lease for non-payment of rent.

Wysing wants to avoid having inactive subsidised studios. If an artist does not adhere to the studio policy as set out in this document, their lease will be terminated with one month's notice. If an artist wishes to leave their studio before the end of the term of their lease, they are required to give one month's notice. At the end of their lease, artists have one month to vacate their studio if it is not extended (see below 'Studio Associates', point 8). Detailed information on notice periods can be found in the Lease Agreement.

Some artists may wish to apply to extend their leases under the Studio Associates programme, outlined in this document under point 8.

## **3. Studio meetings:**

Wysing's curatorial team will provide artists with one review meeting per year. This is an opportunity for critical feedback, professional development and mentoring. The meeting will also include a conversation about how the studio is being used, in line with this policy. Wysing's team may also be available for further support and advice, on a case-by-case basis, subject to availability.

## **4. Facilities and support:**

Wysing offers access to facilities and equipment including ceramics and recording studios through a low-cost subscription service, the opportunity to build networks, the potential for paid work opportunities (for example, leading workshops on our education programmes) and sometimes through Test Space, a bursary for selected studio artists to develop their practice further, in conversation with one of Wysing's curatorial team. Further information about Test Space can be found in point 9 below.

## **5. Wysing's culture:**

All artists who spend time at Wysing are encouraged to push their practice and take creative risks. Network and ecology building happens through formal and informal encounters, including film clubs, lunches, chance meetings in the kitchen, chats at openings and events. We encourage this, alongside generosity, openness and transparency, collaboration, discourse and enquiry.

If an artist breaks Wysing's Code of Conduct, their lease is subject to immediate termination.

## **6. Studio Artist Forum:**

Wysing holds a quarterly Studio Artist Forum, which provides an opportunity for Wysing's team and studio artists to mutually discuss constructive feedback. This is timed in advance of Wysing's Trustee meeting, so that any feedback can be provided to the Board. Feedback will then be shared back to the Studio Artist Forum representatives, after the Board meeting takes place.

## **7. Sub-letting:**

Because studio holders are selected through a competitive application process, sub-letting to other artists is prohibited. If studio artists are found to be sub-letting their studios, this will result in immediate termination of their lease.

## **8. Studio Associates:**

In recognition of active membership and the lack of studio provision in the area, Wysing offers the opportunity to apply to be part of the Studio Associates programme, which extends the tenancy for a further three years. Studio artists are advised to apply for the Associates programme at least six months in advance of their initial tenancy coming to an end, so that they have the chance to find alternative studio space.

Studio Associates is aimed at artists who have reached their five-year licence period. Only a small number of artists will become Studio Associates. Associates may then re-apply for a further three-year term at the end of their second year as an Associate, using the same process.

Applying to become a Studio Associate, and thereafter applying to extend the Associate lease, is competitive, and it is expected that most artists will leave their studios at the end of their lease periods, in line with Wysing's Studio Policy.

In order to apply to be a Studio Associate, artists must demonstrate that:

- They are regular attendees at Wysing events, and have made a positive contribution to Wysing's public programmes;
- Have a regular presence at Wysing through working in their studios;
- Engage in ongoing dialogues with Wysing staff through reviews;
- Are committed to critically engaged contemporary visual art practices;
- Make a positive contribution to the artistic community at Wysing and in the region;
- Committed to the process of constructive feedback, attending at least two Studio Artist Forums annually;
- Committed to Wysing's Code of Conduct in addition to the organisation's policies and practices including those covering equality, diversity and inclusion;
- Committed to Wysing's environmental policies including waste reduction, re-use, recycling and avoiding materials that are toxic to the planet.

They should also be:

- Willing to participate in up to three public studio events per year;
- Willing to continue attending at least two Studio Artist Forums annually;
- Willing to participate in other opportunities to promote Wysing and its activities, when appropriate.

- Willing to support Wysing's activities, for approximately 15 hours each year. We can work with you to define the terms of this contribution and would anticipate that this contribution would also be an opportunity build your own skills and professional practice.

**To apply to become an Associate Artist**, artists must submit a one-page document that answers the following questions:

1. Describe how your practice is developing.
2. How are you planning to make use of the studio during your extended Studio Associates period?
3. How do you propose supporting Wysing's activities through your committed hours?
4. How you make a positive impact on the community at Wysing / in the region.

Decisions will be made by reviewing the application document in addition to the criteria outlined above.

We will also consider:

- How many studios are allocated to Studio Associates (up to 25%) and how many studios are being made available to new artists who need the opportunity of subsidised workspace at Wysing in order to develop their practice.
- The representation of protected characteristics within the studio artist community to ensure there is a diverse mix of studio holders.

There is no maximum length of tenure for a Studio Associate, but it is important that Wysing can conduct reviews to ensure balance of representation, opportunity and engagement. The team at Wysing will be considering these factors when Associates have their studio reviews.

Artists invited to join the Studio Associates will meet Wysing staff annually for review.

### **9. Test Space Bursary:**

Wysing offers two cash bursaries a year to support professional practice. Each is worth £1,500. The bursary can be used for professional development (e.g. travel, mentoring – working with the team at Wysing to build a bespoke support programme) or to develop a new work that will push the artist's practice forward in a productive way, supported by the curatorial team.

Test Space could be developed one of two ways:

a) by application

b) by invitation based on ongoing conversations with the curatorial team which includes Wysing's annual studio review.

Bursaries will be made available in January each year.

Wysing's Studio and Studio Programme Associates Policy

*Adopted by Wysing Arts Charity's Board of Trustees:*

*Version:*

*Date of Review:*

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