

CVAN EM's Bigger Bursary in partnership with QUAD

for emerging lens-based artists living in the East Midlands

Deadline: Monday 29 June 2026, 10am

Responses: Friday 10 July 2026, 5pm

Opportunity (summary):

- £2,500 CVAN EM bursary (artist fee & production fee)
- £2,000 QUAD support (incl. travel, accommodation & curatorial support)
- Solo exhibition as part of QUAD's Montage Gallery programme

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About CVAN EM

[CVAN EM](#) is the free-to-access Contemporary Visual Arts Networks for the East Midlands, working as part of the national CVAN network. We advocate for contemporary visual arts in the regions by supporting artists, arts workers, and organisations through paid opportunities, critical programming, and partnership working, while driving policy change to ensure a sustainable and vibrant sector.

CVAN EM is hosted by [New Art Exchange \(NAE\)](#), a ground-breaking creative space in Nottingham and the UK's largest gallery dedicated to contemporary visual arts from the Global Majority.

About QUAD

[QUAD](#) is Derby city's cultural hub. QUAD has been at the heart of Derby's cultural scene since it opened in September in 2008 and is internationally recognised for providing quality and excellence in

the Arts. QUAD delivers an exciting, innovative and diverse programme which is popular with visitors of all ages, with a reputation in Photography, digital innovation & family friendly events. The venue organises FORMAT International Photography Festival and Derby Film Festival. QUAD is a partnership between Derby City Council and Arts Council England.

About QUAD's Montage Gallery

Montage Gallery is dedicated to supporting local and national talent, with a special focus on young and emerging artists working in lens-based media. We provide an inviting space where creativity can flourish. Our mission is to nurture the next generation of artists by offering opportunities to showcase their work, connect with audiences, and become part of Derby's growing cultural story.

Through exhibitions, collaborations, and community engagement, Montage Gallery celebrates fresh perspectives and innovative practices, ensuring that art remains open, inspiring, and rooted in the community we serve.

[Click here to view a PDF](#) of documentation from current and previous exhibitions presented in Montage Gallery. Please use this material to help inform your application.

Project Overview

CVAN EM's Bigger Bursary, delivered in partnership with QUAD, builds on the success of last year's round and responds directly to feedback gathered from our 2024/25 & 2025/26 bursary recipients. This next iteration reflects a commitment to strengthening support for artists and arts workers in the region.

This exciting partnership with QUAD has been developed to align with and support the organisation's evolving Montage Gallery programme. By working collaboratively, CVAN EM and QUAD aim to create a more visible and professionally supported pathway for emerging artists to develop work and share it publicly.

New Opportunity: Exhibition Outcome

A key development for this round is the introduction of an exhibition opportunity. In partnership with QUAD, as part of their Montage Gallery programme, the selected bursary recipient will present a small-scale solo exhibition, developed during the bursary period. The exhibition can include existing work.

This addition aims to:

- Provide a tangible outcome and platform for experimentation and new work/ideas
- Support artists in developing exhibition-making experience
- Support public engagement with contemporary visual arts practices in the region

What the selected artist will receive

The selected artist will receive a package of financial, production, and professional support to develop and present their work:

£2,500 bursary (CVAN EM)

- **Artist fee.** Please consider the limitations of the bursary funds available and [fair pay](#) when developing your project outline.
- **Production fee.** This can include but is not limited to collaborator/participant fees, R&D, equipment, materials, subscriptions and software.

Exhibition at QUAD (Montage Gallery)

- Opportunity to develop and present work in dialogue with QUAD's curatorial team.
- Solo exhibition presented **November 2026 – February 2027** including an afternoon exhibition launch event on Saturday 21 November.
 - The selected artist will deliver an artist talk during the launch event programme.

£2,000 production and support package (QUAD)

This includes both direct and in-kind support:

- Technical installation by QUAD's team
- Access to equipment and production resources
- Curatorial support and development time
- Documentation, marketing and promotion of the exhibition
- Travel and accommodation for:
 - Site visits
 - Exhibition launch

(Detailed allocation of this budget will be agreed with the selected artist and QUAD team.)

Public engagement opportunities

- Opportunity to develop additional public programme activity (e.g. workshops, including young people's programmes), with additional fees available through QUAD's education programme.

Professional development support

- 1–2–1 mentoring with CVAN EM's Director
- Ongoing support from QUAD's curatorial and technical team
- Experience of developing work for a gallery exhibition

Who can apply?

We are looking for applicants that meet **all** the following criteria:

- **East Midlands-based artists:** Applicants must live in the East Midlands (Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire or Rutland).
- **Emerging or early-career artists:** This opportunity is focused on supporting artists at an early or developing stage in their career as defined by the applicant. There are no set parameters regarding years of practice.

- **Artists working in lens-based or new media practices:** This opportunity is focused on supporting artists working in everything from traditional photography and archives to mobile phone imagery, film, AI-generated images, and immersive installations.
- **Practitioners committed to contemporary visual arts:** Applicants must demonstrate an active engagement with contemporary practice.

Additional notes on eligibility:

- Applicants can apply as an individual or collective.
- Applicants can be PhD candidates.
- Applicants who have applied for previous CVAN EM bursary rounds can apply.

Who cannot apply?

- Applicants currently completing an undergraduate or postgraduate course are ineligible.
- Applicants under the age of 18 are ineligible.
- Organisations are ineligible.

Selection

The selection panel will comprise of Colette Griffin (CVAN EM Director), Jodi Kwok (QUAD/FORMAT Curator) and Niamh Treacy (QUAD/FORMAT Producer).

Your application

When applying for this opportunity please include:

- **A completed application form** (.doc, .docx or PDF). We accept alternative means of application e.g., in the body of an email, via Google Drive, video or audio recording. All applications must still address all sections of the application form in their responses.
- **Up to 5 images** (jpeg, max 2MB each, or PDF) or website link(s). If using Google Drive all content must be accessible to the panel and not invite protected.
- **A completed [Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form](#)**. Forms will be collected and data used by CVAN EM and QUAD at the point of evaluation.

Applications should be returned via email to colette@cvaneastmidlands.co.uk by Monday 29 June 2026, 10am. The email subject line should read **CVAN EM_QUAD Bigger Bursary**.

If you have any questions or require this information in a different format, please email colette@cvaneastmidlands.co.uk.

Application Form

Personal Details	
Name:	Address:

Email:	
Telephone:	
Website or social media:	
Artwork links (Google Drive, Vimeo or YouTube):	Post code:

<p>Application</p> <p>An introduction to your practice and details of current projects (200 words/1 mins max.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We want to know what ideas and interests underpin the work you make. Any achievements, projects, exhibitions or commissions you would like to share. What are you working on? <p>Exhibition proposal outlining the themes/concepts you will explore and an overview of the work content. Please also include a general breakdown of development activity. A budget is not required (350 words/2 mins max.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider the opportunity's focus and remit of QUAD's Montage Gallery programme, alongside the funds, resources and space available. The exhibition can include existing work. Click here to view a PDF of documentation from current and previous exhibitions in Montage Gallery. You might want to use subheadings or bullet points to outline development activity clearly and concisely. <p>How will this opportunity support the development of your practice? (150 words/1 mins max.)</p>
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- Please consider and share why you are applying and how the complete support package provided will support you at this point in your creative and professional development.

Evaluation

Bursary recipients are asked to complete a short survey to feedback on the impact and/or limitations of the Bigger Bursary opportunity on their creative and professional practice. This is vital in helping us to develop CVAN EM’s Bursaries scheme and future activity focused on celebrating and supporting visual arts and culture in the region.

Glossary

- 1) **Lens-based or new media:** An expansive, evolving field covering everything from traditional photography and archives to mobile phone or screen-based imagery, film, and immersive installations.
- 2) **Contemporary art:** Reflects the complex issues that shape our changing world. Through their work contemporary artists might explore personal or cultural identity or offer critiques of social and institutional structures. In the process, they often raise difficult or thought-provoking questions.
- 3) **Contemporary art practice:** Artistic practice goes beyond the physical activities of making art ‘products’ and refers to the ways in which an artist goes about their work.