

Society of Authors

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Public funding for screenwriters

- ▶ What to think about ?
- ▶ Where to access funds ?

My work.

- ▶ Writer (script, non-fiction books, film journalism)
- ▶ Currently developing feature film with an animation studio.
- ▶ BAFTA longlisted producer, Best Short Film category (2001)
- ▶ Script reader for the BFI (2022-2024)
- ▶ Visiting Lecturer: MA Feature Film Development BCU, MA Writing for Script and Screen, Falmouth University, MA Screenwriting London Film School.
- ▶ Recently shortlisted with a feature film project application to the BFI's Early Development Fund.
- ▶ Currently applying to the Arts Council for theatre project (but not film).
- ▶ Worked in community media

Concepts: What to consider ?

- ▶ Text
- ▶ Context

Emphasis on...

- ▶ Key: the theme of the piece.
- ▶ What is the big idea ?
- ▶ If you secure a meeting further to an application, discussion of theme is key
- ▶ Screenwriting ...character/theme dynamic
- ▶ In applying for public funding, issues beyond the story are vital
- ▶ Acknowledge specifics of your circumstance. / situation (neurodivergence , for example)

Zeitgeist

- ▶ Why is your proposed project timely ?
- ▶ Is it 'zeitgeisty' ?
- ▶ Why does it need to be made / supported ?

Brevity

- ▶ Can you condense your feature film story into a 300 word synopsis (300 words)

Authenticity

- ▶ Clarity about why the piece that you are submitting for consideration excites you ?
- ▶ What is particular about the story ?
- ▶ Important: sometimes you are permitted to submit a video recording of your proposed project: you addressing camera and talking it through in terms of story.

Type of specific question / requirement for a project

- ▶ Does a given project for script support relate to one or all of these ?
- ▶ 1.1 Children and young people are empowered to develop their own relationships with a wider range of screen culture, including through education
- 1.2 People across the UK can access a wider choice of film and the moving image including stories that reflect their lives
- 2.1 More people understand how to express their creativity through stories on screen, including children and young people
- 2.2 Creative talent is supported and nurtured, as they emerge and throughout their careers
- 2.4 A wider range of stories are told that otherwise wouldn't be

Genre really matters.

- ▶ Emphasise the genre aspect of your screenplay project.
- ▶ You may have an opportunity to elaborate on why you have chosen to work in a particular genre.
- ▶ Genre: identify it and refer to existing films in the genre within which you are working.
- ▶ Embrace genre

Specificity

- ▶ Consider ways to locate the story in a specific British context.
- ▶ Degrees of subtlety.
- ▶ As a script reader, you get a barometer of what's on peoples' minds:
 - ▶ Gender identity
 - ▶ Rural/urban
 - ▶ Environment

Context (again) 1

- ▶ Type of question / consideration to have in mind:
- ▶ What development work has been done so far ? (this is especially pertinent if you are already working on a project with a producer / director team)
- ▶ Here's the question that might be asked / or a version of it: "Please provide a statement describing any work you have done so far on developing your story idea and why you are ready to write a full treatment now. (100 - 150 words) If you prefer you can answer this question by video."
- ▶ What materials are you planning to create for your early development?
- ▶ Environmental sustainability

Context (again) 2

- ▶ You may have to be mindful of budget; especially if developing a feature and working with a producer / director team
- ▶ You may need to consider diversity issues and issues of on-screen representation and related themes and narratives
- ▶ You may want to think about how collaboration functions for your project ?
- ▶ You may want to think about what your project can foster and lead to beyond the project itself...might it allow for new collaborations / connections ?
- ▶ Networking in order to connect with producers. Producers will often have particular awareness of what funding may be available.

Arts Council reference point.

- ▶ Footnote: if you apply for an Arts Council project to develop a script, you may want to think about the legacy and community resonance of a given project.

Resources

- ▶ **Resources to access beyond our session:**
- ▶ BFI Network
- ▶ <https://film.britishcouncil.org/>

Resources

- ▶ Local / regional points of connection: community arts / community media eg: Rural Media,
- ▶ Regional film festivals
- ▶ The Lighthouse, Brighton
- ▶ The Watershed, Bristol
- ▶ <https://filmhubnorth.org.uk/>
- ▶ Producers Forum: <https://producersforum.org/>
- ▶ www.northernirelandscreen.co.uk
- ▶ www.artscouncil-ni.org

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Resources

- ▶ MEDIA strand of Creative Europe (EU only)
- ▶ Creative England
- ▶ Underwire Film Festival
- ▶ Ffilm cymru
- ▶ Creativescotland

Resources

- ▶ <https://www.wftv.org.uk/industry-opportunities>
- ▶ Arts Council Developing your creative practice grant: <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/dycp>



▶ Thank you

▶ @Jameswriter72