



LEVEL 2014 Request for Proposals

Overview

Thank you for your interest in participating in *LEVEL* 2014, the second year of this annual event being held in downtown Chicago, September 11 – 20, 2014. *LEVEL* is a ten-day, contemporary architecture and art event that looks towards the future in showcasing experimental, cutting-edge new media and interactive installations while embracing Chicago's rich architectural heritage. During *LEVEL*, resident and internationally recognized architects, designers and artists transform unique, hidden spaces within the downtown Chicago loop into destination places for visitors and locals alike.

There are a total of 11-15 artists, designers and architects (individuals and teams) that will be selected through this proposal process and by invitation to participate by creating installations for downtown concourse walkways, building lobbies, outdoor plazas, rooftops, and other 'hidden' architectural gems. Overall, we are seeking installations that react and respond both to the architecture/environment of the sites, and to the public audience that views them.

At least half of the installation selected will be comprised of Chicago/local artists and architects work. Partnering with local Chicago architects and artists is recommended. The RFP, however, is open to all artists and designers worldwide. Student teams are welcomed, however it is **strongly** recommended that student teams partner with a qualified professional or professor for submission.

There are two primary conditions for installation sites as indoors or outdoors. The outdoor locations will consist of open courtyards, building rooftops, plazas, or alleyways. The interior locations include building lobbies, unoccupied building floors, and covered walkways/concourse. Most of the locations are 'hidden' from public view, in that they are private, normally closed and/or inaccessible to the public. **All of the locations will be viewed at night**, thus the proposals should respond to this condition. For the outdoor locations we are seeking installations that are viable when exposed to the elements (rain, moisture, etc.) and also respond to/in the dark (illuminated or otherwise).

The exact locations of projects will be determined upon receipt of all proposals in order to provide the most suitable match of site to project. Examples of past sites can be found within the event images at the end of this document. Images of past installations can be found on the *LERATA* website at www.lerata.org.

Project selection will be done through a two-part process to identify the best pairings of potential projects to sites. First, the proposals are reviewed by the *LEVEL* host committee, board and past *LERATA* event participants to make the first selection round. Second, the final participants are determined by founder and curator, Melissa Urcan. Determination is largely based upon the selection criteria outlined in this proposal on page 3, but also on overall quality and concept of the proposal.

We are asking all potential participants to submit a proposal that will assist in the site selection, and provide information and images for PR purposes. Please review the 'Criteria to Consider' section of this RFP closely before submitting your proposal. Submission requirements are listed on the following page. If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to send inquiries to rfp@lerata.org noting '**RFP Question**' in the subject line.

Submittal Requirements

All architects, artists and/or teams responding to the RFP must submit complete responses to the information requested and must note any exceptions to any information required by the RFP. Applicants shall present information in a clear and concise manner following the format listed below:

A. Proposal to include the following:

1. **Concept.** Describe your overall concept.

Explain the proposed schedule, process, medium and method. If your piece is interactive, please explain how. Identify where you think the work will best fit, specifically outdoors or indoors. Please ensure that you have addressed the conditions (public, outdoors or indoors, etc.) in the concept. Proposals that directly react and respond to both site and audience will have first consideration. Proposals that highlight new or advanced technologies will have priority. While not a requirement, pieces that are interactive in some means (be it through advanced technologies and materials, or a direct physical interaction) will also be given priority during the reviewing process. The work should engage both the site and viewer versus a static sculpture or 'plop art'.

2. **Specifications.** Please detail all specifics about your piece, including but not limited to the following:

- Technology or technologies involved in the development, creation, production and outcome of your project. Describe the timeframe and process for each.
- How much time is required for installation and deinstallation;
- How much space will be needed for your work, (both the actual installation and area around it);
- If electricity is needed, and at what level; monitoring/maintenance of the piece and how this will be managed (will you be staying to ensure it is working, if not, who is and how is this arrangement handled?);
- If technology/electronic components are involved in the installation, please specify how this will be addressed (if computers/hard drives/projectors are involved, are you bringing your own or is it reflected in the budget, and how will it be stored/protected?);
- How is the piece secured to the ground and/or walls/ceiling? How is piece protected from wind and rain elements (it is important to note that most locations will not allow for any permanent securing into the ground or walls, thus most installations need to be self-supporting structures and your specifications should support this).

3. **Illustrations/photos.** Additional visual support material and/or illustrations to show the proposal. If possible, please include both a plan and section drawing for your installation to reflect the above specifications.

4. **Proposed Budget.** Projects will be awarded budgets between \$500.00 and \$5000.00. This amount is intended to cover all costs for the installation, including materials, shipping, travel, installation and de-installation. We need to ensure that your proposed budget is feasible for your project. It is imperative that installation and de-installation, as well as maintenance during the exhibition are considered in your budget proposal. If your budget exceeds the limits above, please include how you will cover the additional costs. The majority of awards fall within the \$2000 - \$4000 range. All travel costs to be reimbursed (for non-resident partners) including hotel, flight, rental car, etc. should be considered when creating your budget. All project costs are reimbursed after the event. Most all payments will be made by the end of October 2014. Certain exceptions can be made under duress, but it should be understood that the majority of all projects are reimbursed by LERATA organization after the event has concluded, and after receipts and invoices have been submitted by the teams and reviewed/approved. All participants receive written contract agreements upon selection specifying these terms.

5. **Contact information.** Please provide email and phone numbers for *all* team members.

B. Statement of Qualifications to Include the Following:

1. **Bio(s).** Information on the architect, artist or team, including a brief resume. Examples of past public works, including images, dates, location, and description, are highly valued.
2. **References.** Three professional references (particularly include completed public art projects or work with public art programs). These can be submitted in one document with names and contact information. Reference letters are also accepted.

Criteria to Consider

Please consider the following criteria of the project when creating your proposals.

- a) **Functionality and Durability.** These are PUBLIC projects. This event is open and free to the public. Thus, a clear understanding of the public's impact on your proposal, both through wear, use, touching, climbing, damage potential, theft and reparability should be considered. It is expected that your project is regularly maintained by you and your team during the 10-day event.
- b) **Weather Conditions.** The installation and components should be designed to withstand outdoor conditions; including cold weather and/or rainy climate (heavy rains should be considered). If electronic elements are involved, please include technical specifications for how it will perform in the rain if necessary. If your project will not work outdoors, you must specify an interior site; projects specified for outdoors that cannot be experienced in inclement weather will not be selected.
- c) **Time of Year.** This relates to both the weather (it could potentially rain at least one night) and the sunlight conditions. We have had prior projects that relied on solar power to function that failed to work for most public exhibition nights. If you are going to include solar power in your design, you **MUST** have a back up option for the piece to work. Testing in advance is highly recommended.
- c) **Installation Restrictions.** As many of these sites are historic, you will not be able to drill, nail, or otherwise permanently secure the installations. Thus, you will need to ensure that the proposal specifies a self-supporting structure. If it is not self-supporting, please be very specific for how you intend to mount and secure your work.
- d) **Appropriateness to the Site Location.** These installations are open to the general public, and located in historic locations that require a 'light touch' for installation. Drilling, painting, modifying the historic fabric will not be allowed. Furthermore, as a public piece, content should be appropriate for all ages, and should be accessible to a diverse audience.
- e) **Nighttime Exhibition Hours.** All of the installations will be seen at night, from 7pm – 11pm nightly – and most will not be viewed by the public during the day. Lighting needs to be considered and addressed in the proposals. This should be included in the proposal specifications as listed above. Please do not submit a project that is solely intended to be viewed in daytime hours.
- f) **Interactivity.** We are seeking works that interact with the site, public, or both in some manner. This interaction may be as simple as defining movement through a site, or identifying a means for the public to interact/engage with a static work; it can also be direct interaction, via sensors, video, hand held devices, and more. Projects that have a clear interactive intent and purpose will have first consideration.
- g) **Technology.** Our organizational mission promotes research and work that highlights advances in technology in art and architecture; therefore it is in our interest to select projects that focus on art/architecture as combined/affected/embracing/developed by/influenced or directly created by new technological developments in some manner. This technology can be in the form of the installations history/research background, in the development, or in the physical technology of the installation itself. All technological aspects should be clarified to the best of your ability.

Proposal Format

Proposals are to be submitted as a PDF file. PDF files should be under 8MB in size.

Proposals are to be emailed to rfp@lerata.org. If your files exceed 8MB, please ensure you contact LERATA by email at rfp@lerata.org or phone (213) 761-8061 before the due date to make special arrangements.

Proposals are due on Friday, June 27, 2014 no later than 11:59pm PST and will be reviewed by Monday, June 30, 2014. Projects that are selected to move onto the second phase may be required to submit a separate set of documents to further determine feasibility and most suitable location. This requirement is dependant on the extent of details provided in the initial proposal, and may not be required for all submissions. It is important that all submissions include as much information and details as possible. Final determinations will be made by Monday, July 7, 2014.

Proposals Due – Friday, June 27, 2014 no later than 11:59 pm PST.

Chicago LEVEL - Summary

Chicago's second annual, free, ten-day architecture, art and technology event.

- DATES:** September 11 – 20, 2014. (VIP/Press Opening on September 11)
- TIMES:** Open 7pm – 11pm nightly.
- LOCATION:** Downtown Chicago Loop plazas, building floors, storefronts, courtyards, rooftops, concourse walkways, and lobbies located between Michigan Avenue and the Chicago River, Wacker Drive and Roosevelt comprising a 10 X 20 block grid.
- FEATURES:** Architecture, visual art and cultural entertainment – 11 - 14 sites, 7 DJs/bands, 3 parties, 20 blocks.
- ATTENDANCE:** Projected attendance is estimated between 20,000 and 30,000 people over the course of the event. This figure is based on past event figures and partner event numbers, including those for our partner EXPO Chicago.
- PRESENTED BY:** The Laboratory for Experimentation and Research in Art, Technology, and Architecture (LERATA) a not-for-profit corporation, in partnership with the Chicago Loop Alliance, AIA Chicago, Choose Chicago, SOM, Thornton Tomasetti, and numerous civic and private organizations and entities.
- HOST COMMITTEE:** **Brad Lynch**, AIA, Partner – Brinistool+Lynch; **Patricia Natke**, Founding Partner, UrbanWorks; **Obi Nwazota**, Owner, Orangeskin; **Sabrina Raaf**, New Media Arts School of Art & Art History, UIC, Chicago; **Marcin Szef**, Designer, John Ronan Architects; **Ed Uhlir**, FAIA, Executive Director, Millennium Park;
- COST:** FREE to the public.
- ATTRACTIONS:** An eclectic variety of contemporary architecture and art installations from both invited and selected internationally recognized artists and designers including new media projects and installations. Access to some of Chicago's most historic and prized architectural gems, normally inaccessible to the public. Nightly changing, entertainment by local musicians in conjunction with the exhibitions. VIP/Press event and party, opening night party and closing night special event.

Images

These images provide a general overview of site types to assist in developing proposals. These images are intended to provide a visual for the basic set of conditions and constraints for the sites. While images may be used in proposals, we are *not* seeking or requiring proposals to respond to a specific site. The images below reflect site *types*, and do not represent the 2014 *LEVEL* sites which will all be based in the downtown Chicago Loop. **To best understand installation and site typologies**, please see images at www.lerata.org.

