



Illuminate at Northern Roots 2025: Artist Commission

Northern Roots – a unique community hub and visitor destination

Born in Oldham, the Northern Roots charity is using regenerative land management techniques to transform 160 acres of uncared for space into a destination that is 'of' the local community, but for everyone. We are creating inspirational spaces, moments and opportunities for people to connect around food, growing, nature, learning, creativity, sport, work and play.

Arts and culture at Northern Roots

Northern Roots aims to create a bold, inspiring and surprising arts and culture offer, that helps to animate the site, bring local communities and visitors together, and support the creative community. Over the last two years we've commissioned artists and arts organisations working across diverse disciplines, delivered a range of outdoor arts events on the Northern Roots site, and developed an initial arts and culture strategy.

We are delighted to be partnering with Oldham Council on Oldham's Illuminate 2025 celebrations and we are now inviting proposals for an **Illuminate at Northern Roots 2025** commission.

Creative Brief

Northern Roots is inviting proposals from artists, creatives and makers for Illuminate at Northern Roots 2025. The event will take place on **Sunday 23rd February 2025** at Northern Roots, between 6-9.30pm, in Oldham.

How would you create **a magical, participatory light-night experience** for audiences of all ages in an outdoor woodland landscape setting after nightfall?

Your proposal needs to respond to and **be inspired by the landscape** at Northern Roots and, ideally, have **a theme** around which it is centred. For example, last year's Illuminate at Northern Roots was called By the Light of the Moon and centred around moths as nature's unsung nocturnal pollinators. <https://northern-roots.uk/our-nr/gallery/by-the-light-of-the-moon/>

You could be inspired by fairytales, folklore, hibernation, the natural world, the night sky and constellations, the idea of light emerging from darkness, hope, community – **whatever excites you creatively** and will in turn excite and enchant our audiences.

Your response could involve or combine music, film, storytelling, sculpture, performance, installation, dance, projection, lighting or fire. Your response could be a completely new, original piece of work or involve repurposing and reimagining existing pieces or performances within a new setting.

You can use the landscape in many ways, suspending or attaching elements to trees, creating standalone structures, using it as a performative space, a canvas. You have the possibility of creating illuminated trails and journeys, creating intimate experiences, creating at scale.

You could create something fun, playful and high energy or something more introspective and contemplative. Above all, we are looking for proposals that will **light up the landscape** in a way that **delights** and **surprises** visitors of all ages.

Key Information for your proposal

- Your proposal needs to be **family-friendly** and suitable for audiences of all ages.
- It needs to proactively attract and work as an experience for **1000 visitors plus**, and work as an **un-ticketed** experience.
- It needs to create opportunities for **audience participation** and **interaction**, and to **maximise dwell time**.
- Your proposal must include and budget for the delivery of **3 short workshops** that enable diverse local communities (up to 75 people in total) to get involved in learning, making, creating, participating in and contributing to the realisation of your proposal.
- There is currently no power source on site, so your proposal needs **to include and budget** for necessary power supply i.e. batteries, generator, audio.
- We encourage artists to think about using **sustainable materials** where possible. Proposals will be selected in part on how little impact they make on the environment. We operate a leave no trace policy on the Northern Roots site.
- The successful Illuminate 2025 commission will receive **£15,000 (VAT inclusive)** to deliver the specified number of community workshops and develop, make, deliver and install/perform work for the Illuminate at Northern Roots event **6-9.30pm on Sunday 23rd February 2025** on the Northern Roots site in Oldham.
- The successful commission will be selected by a panel of producers from Northern Roots and Oldham Heritage, Libraries and Arts.
- Northern Roots will lead on communications and marketing of the event, as part of Illuminate 2025 marketing.
- The Northern Roots team will work with you to support the development and production of your commission, supporting the initial development stage, site visits and providing access to existing community contacts and facilities in Oldham.
- Northern Roots will support event production by providing event stewarding, security and a Northern Roots Producer as your primary liaison.
- Northern Roots will develop and produce an offer around your commission involving additional entertainment, which we will be fully responsible for producing.

Commission Timeline

Monday 16th September	Commission opens for applications.
Tuesday 24th September 10-11.30am.	Any artist/organisation wishing to meet the Northern Roots team and visit the site before submitting an application, is welcome to join us for an informal site tour and conversation on Tuesday 24 th September. Please email kimomorrison@northern-roots.uk to book your place.
Friday 4th October	Deadline for applications. Please complete and return the Application Form to kimomorrison@northern-roots.uk
Monday 7th October	We will shortlist proposals and set up meetings with shortlisted applicants (by Teams or Zoom) the week commencing Monday 7 th October.
Monday 14th October	Applicants will be notified of the outcome by email on Monday 14 th October.
Monday 14th October	Successful applicant will be notified and appointed the week beginning Monday 14 th October. <i>Please note, we cannot provide feedback on unsuccessful applications.</i>

Please contact Kimo Morrison, Communications, Arts & Engagement Lead, Northern Roots, at kimomorrison@northern-roots.uk if you have any questions about the commission, your application or if you have any access requirements in relation to a site visit or application process.

Thank you for your interest in this opportunity, we look forward to receiving your proposals.