

# AoA EXHIBITION PLANNING MANUAL

The AoA Exhibition Planning Manual aims to help the presenter prepare to create a successful luminarium event where the visitor experience is optimised and the presenter's expectations are met and hopefully exceeded. In one day 2,000+ visitors may visit the luminarium. Handling such large numbers requires good preparation.



## OPENING TIMES AND PRICING

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### OPENING TIMES

Typically opening hours average around 6 hours per day. The opening hours may vary from day to day according to the presenter's requirements. Often there is longer opening at a weekend when more visitor demand is expected. If the opening hours average more than 6 hours per day, the core team of 2 AoA Exhibition Managers travelling with the luminarium will be supplemented with additional team member/s.

The light levels inside the luminarium depend on the daylight outside so admissions would stop 30 minutes before sunset unless artificial lighting is provided.

Advertised admission times will indicate the span of time when visitors are admitted. So an advertised admission time of, e.g., 13.00 - 19.00 means a last admission at 19.00 and a luminarium closure at 19.20.

### PRICING

The presenter sets the admission fee. The typical fee is around £3.00/ €5.00/ \$5.00 for both adults and children. To reduce the cost for families there is often a family concession and under 2 or 3-year-olds are usually given free entry. An adult is required to accompany visitors under 16 (4 children per adult).

## REACHING OUT TO & INFORMING THE VISITORS

### PROMOTION & MARKETING

Before the event AoA provide documentation, photos and videos to help the presenter to promote the event. The presenter will seek AoA's copy approval before going live or to print with press releases, posters, programs, flyers, and website contents.

Before and during the event the photogenic luminaria offer exceptional potential for attracting good media coverage. It is not unusual to have a front-page photo on a national daily. Television news coverage is common as well as occasional live broadcasts. A press-call on the get-in day once the luminarium has been erected will help maximise public interest.

Architects of Air provides a '**MEDIA GUIDELINES**' document.


### AoA BANNERS

Architects of Air provides 2 banners (6.6m x 83cm). The banners display the name of the structure and the website. These are usually set up on the barriers surrounding the luminarium.



### SIGNAGE

The presenter provides the signage that ensures visitors have clear information about the nature of the luminarium and admission conditions. Signage should be a minimum A2 format with a font large enough for text to be legible to the visitors. The signage will be accessibly placed for all visitors to read it. The signage should state:

- The name of the luminarium or just 'Luminarium' - Architects of Air - by Alan Parkinson
- The dates, ticket price and admission times (An advertised admission time of, e.g., 13.00 - 19.00 means a last admission at 19.00 and luminarium closure at 19.20)
- Accessible to wheelchair users and people with mobility difficulties and indicated by a sign. 
- Children under the age of 16 must be accompanied by an adult (a minimum of 1 adult for up to 4 children)
- Shoes and possessions are left in the reception area at the owner's risk.
- The website: [www.architects-of-air.com](http://www.architects-of-air.com)

A poster for the Mirazozo Luminarium event. The poster features a blue background with a large, stylized, colorful graphic of the luminarium's structure. The text on the poster includes:

visit CLARE Clare County of Culture An Initiative of Clare County Council

# Mirazozo

LUMINARIUM A MONUMENTAL INTERACTIVE INFLATABLE WALK-IN STRUCTURE THAT PROVIDES A SENSORY EXPERIENCE OF LIGHT, COLOUR AND SOUND  
WWW.ARCHITECTS-OF-AIR.COM

AUGUST	
SAT 13TH - SUN 14TH	€6 PER PERSON
10am - 6pm	€15 FOR A FAMILY OF 3 (two adults, one child)
MON 15TH - THUR 18TH	€20 FOR A FAMILY OF 4 (two adults, two children) etc.
12pm - 6pm	UNDER 1'S FREE
FRI 19TH - SUN 21ST	
10am - 8pm	

Entry tickets must be purchased from the box office before joining the queue.  
MIRAZOZO is accessible to wheelchair users and people with mobility difficulties.

Shoes and possessions are left in the reception area at the owner's risk.  
Children under 16 must be accompanied by an adult.

In addition the signage should make clear the nature of the luminarium:

- A few welcoming words that also describe the experience such as: *Welcome to a wonderful world of light and colour / Enter a world of wonder / A luminarium is a sculpture people enter to be moved to a sense of wonder/ A luminarium is a dazzling maze of winding paths and soaring domes where natural forms, Islamic architecture, Archimedean solids and Gothic cathedrals meld into an inspiring mix of design and engineering.*
- Photos of the luminarium with people inside will illustrate what visitors may experience. Often such photos may be used as a background to the text

## RECEIVING THE VISITORS

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### AoA & THE PRESENTER'S STAFF

On the site the people who will be working to create the best visitor experience are the stewards, the local site manager supported by the AoA Exhibition Managers. Their main responsibilities are the safe management of the visitors and of the physical structure of the luminarium and, of equal importance, assuring the presentation of the luminarium in a professional manner. See **KEY PERSONNEL** below.

### FRONT-OF-HOUSE /RECEPTION AREA

The front-of-house / reception area is where visitors come to learn more about the event, where they buy their ticket at the box office and prepare to enter the luminarium.



### SELLING THE TICKETS

AoA knows what works well with different pricing / admission scenarios and how they impact on the visitor experience. The presenter is therefore well advised to consult with AoA before finalising arrangements.

**On-the-day sales:** Tickets are sold on arrival at the reception tent for immediate admission. When the structure is full a queue will form and visitors are then admitted as other visitors exit the luminarium. On-the-day tickets can only be bought at the luminarium.

**Advance booking:** Selling tickets at front of house for immediate entry is the simplest manner of admission. It can also be the most effective way of maximising attendance. But where a presenter wants to offer advance booking these are the conditions that make it most manageable on-site:

- To offer no more than 40 advance tickets for every 30-minute slot giving the ticket holder priority access at the specified time. (The 30-minute slot does not define the duration of the visit).
- Advance tickets will state that the ticket holder must arrive 10 minutes before the time indicated on their ticket and that children under 16 years will only be admitted accompanied by an adult.
- No advance tickets to be available for the first half-hour and the last hour of the day. Those times should only allow for on-the-day sales. So in the case of an opening period of 12.00 to 18.00 (last admission) the available advance tickets would be for every 30-minute slot from 12.30 to 17.00. On-the-day sales would be from 12.00 to 18.00.
- Advance booking ends at midnight prior to the day of the visit and a print-out, stating the number of sold tickets for each 30-minute slot, will be sent to the Front of House staff in time for opening the following morning

Visitors waiting in the on-the-day sales lane and visitors waiting in the advance ticket priority lane will be admitted in turns to keep a continuous flow of both queues.

**The box office:** The box office will sell tickets for immediate admission or, in some cases, for immediate admission and advance booking. The physical arrangement of front-of-house and box office might vary to accommodate this (see illustration below).

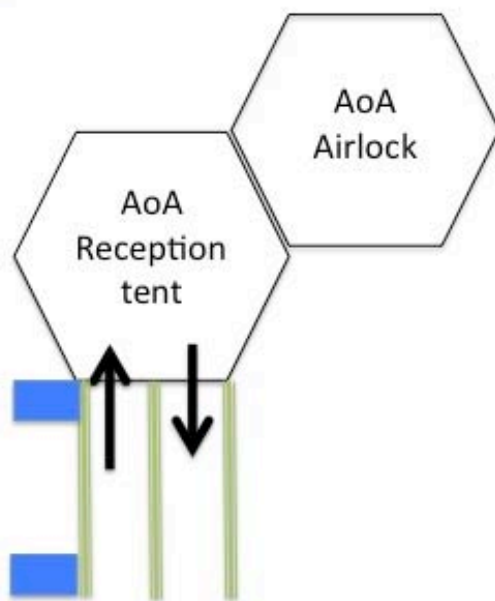
The on-the-day tickets can be sold at a box office located at the start of the admission line or on entering the AoA reception tent. The box office cannot be located at an impractical distance from the luminarium as visitors must join the line for entry as soon as they have bought their ticket. Advance booking may take place online or at a box office near or at the luminarium.

The presenter will have the responsibility of the box office and the provision of a cash box, box office staff, tickets etc. In addition to selling tickets and explaining the luminarium the person at the box office will give out maps and, by agreement with the presenter, will also sell AoA postcards and the AoA book. The box office staff is separate to the stewards.

## AoA FRONT-OF-HOUSE SET UP

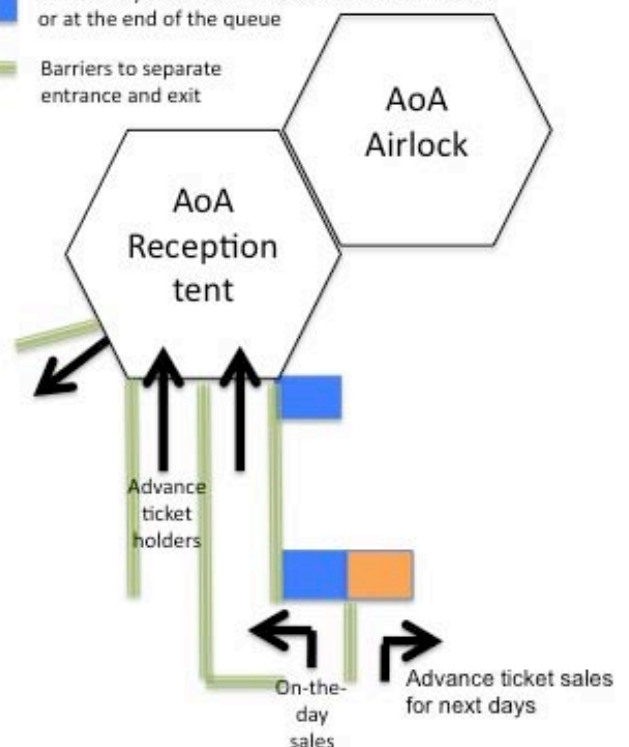
### With on-the-day sales only

- On-the-day sales box office can be located at start or at the end of the queue
- Barriers to separate entrance and exit



### With advance bookings and on-the-day sales

- Advance ticket sales box office can be located at the start of the queue if it does not obstruct access to on-the-day sales line. Can also be located away from the luminarium
- On-the-day sales box office can be located at start or at the end of the queue
- Barriers to separate entrance and exit



## CAPACITY

A luminarium has a capacity of 80 visitors at any one time. Occupancy is monitored at the reception tent with the aid of the shoe racks that hold a maximum of 80 pairs of shoes. Once the luminarium has reached capacity then visitors are admitted as others exit, which means there is a continuous flow of visitors entering and exiting the luminarium. At its busiest 160 to 200 visitors per hour can be expected. When there are large queues outside visitors are asked to limit their visit to 20 minutes. Visitors can remain as long as they want if there are not many people waiting outside.

## QUEUING

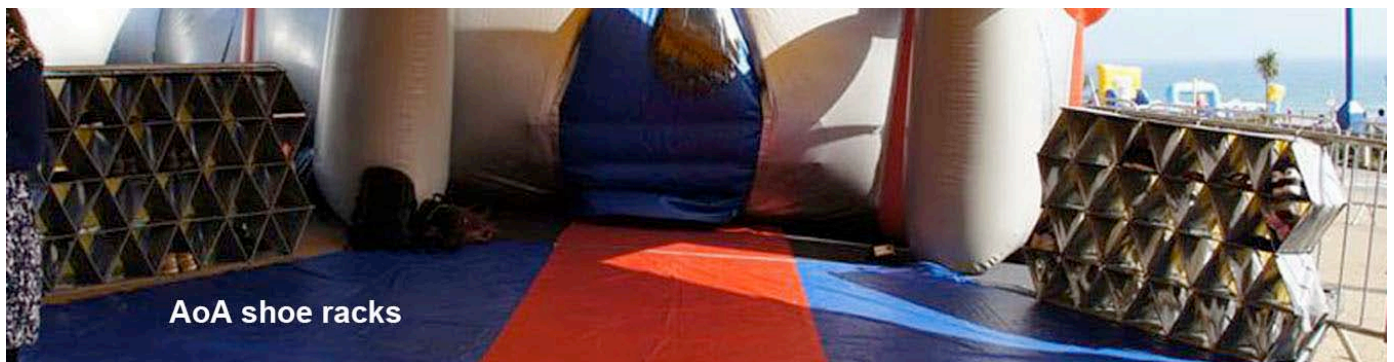
People waiting to enter should know how long they have to wait – markers along the queue lane indicating 20 minutes, 40 minutes etc. can help people make an informed choice about whether to queue. The position of the queues should be planned in advance. If there is a large queue then the presenter should consider providing additional personnel to inform, organise or even entertain the waiting public.

The luminarium's popularity can mean a long queue and a consequent need to close the queue before the last admission time if everyone queuing is going to be able to enter. For this eventuality the presenter will plan for a person (additional to the existing team of stewards) to stand at the end of the line and inform people wanting to join the line that the luminarium has unfortunately reached capacity for the day.



## FURNITURE

For the reception area the presenter provides a table and chair for ticket sales/ visitor reception, 16 chairs for visitors to sit on when taking off their shoes and a waste bin. AoA provides the shoe racks for storing 80 pair of shoes.



## VISITOR MAPS

On entering the reception tent a map is given to the visitor. The map is not essential for navigation in the structure but is useful to help guide the visitor's experience. AoA will provide map originals of the event's specific configuration of the luminarium, with an introduction to AoA. These can then be simply photocopied. Non-English speaking events will produce their own translations. The presenter may integrate the map into other promotional material and include sponsors logos if desired. The content of the map needs to remain the one provided by AoA.

### Welcome to KATENA

KATENA luminarium is a sculpture people enter to be immersed in radiant light and colour. Since 1992 Architects of Air's luminaria have enchanted over 3 million visitors in more than 40 countries.

KATENA is inspired by the beauty of natural geometry and by Islamic architecture. It features winding passages of small domes inspired by repetitive forms found in the bazaars of Iran. The luminosity of light and colour inside KATENA is created purely by the light shining through the coloured plastic. All the individual pieces have been cut & glued together by hand in our workshop in Nottingham, England.

Once inside please take your time and walk slowly. Keep to the paths that are in contact with the ground as the plastic is delicate. There are pods where you can sit down or lie back to absorb the ambience.

The music is created by David Bickley.

For more information about future exhibitions visit :

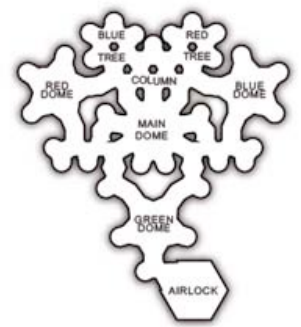
[www.architects-of-air.com](http://www.architects-of-air.com)

You are welcome to share your experience

by posting your photos, videos and comments

on our Facebook profile: Architects of Air

enter and be amazed...



KATENA

## VISITORS BOOK

When a visitor leaves the structure they often like to talk about their experience and they are encouraged to write comments in the 'Visitors Book'. A copy will be sent to the presenter after the event.

## **INCLUSIVITY – OPTIMIZING THE EXPERIENCE FOR ALL AUDIENCES**

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By its nature a luminarium gives access to a very broad audience. They are appreciated by all ages, all cultures and all abilities. For all audiences to get the best experience it is important that visitors respect the artistic intentions of the space and the comfort of the other visitors.

### **CHILDREN**

On entering the luminarium the visitors are advised to take their time and walk slowly. Children don't always listen to that advice so we ask their responsible adults to ensure their good behaviour. Calmness in the luminarium provides the ideal ambience for all visitors to appreciate the luminarium for its merits. To help maintain calm and to ensure that the structure does not get disproportionately populated by children advance publicity and signs at front-of-house will state that under 16's are admitted only if accompanied by an adult and that an adult may accompany no more than 4 children.

**School Groups:** School groups are welcome, especially on weekdays when the luminarium might otherwise be quiet. Our experience is that one teacher alone can rarely control a whole class in a luminarium so schools are asked to provide 1 adult for every 4 children, and if this is impractical the presenter could enlist more stewards to supplement the school's staff. When a lot of school groups are planned the presenter is advised to have one staff member dedicated to coordinating the school groups and to have school sessions outside general opening hours to public (eg morning sessions for schools).

**Children's Festivals:** Choose stewards with proven communication skills with children and add extra stewards for front of house and inside patrolling to maintain the calm atmosphere inside.

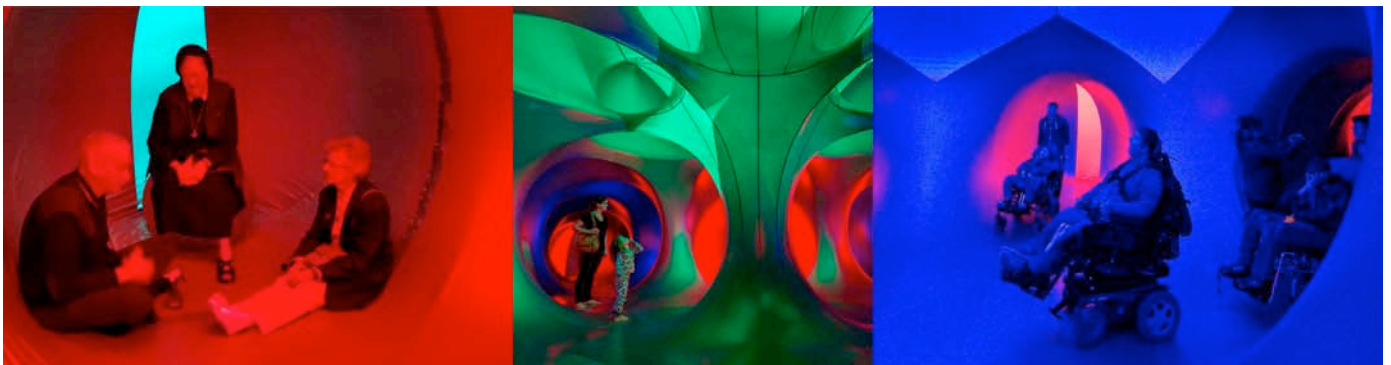
### **CHILD-FREE SESSIONS**

Adult-only sessions have been popular when scheduled for the last hour of the day on one or two days towards the end of the event.

### **PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES & THE ELDERLY**

AoA grew out of a theatre project for people with special needs and accessibility to a broad audience remains central to our work. Beyond the event publicity announcing the luminarium is wheelchair accessible and inviting special needs schools and institutions, as well as homes for the elderly, at quiet times in the week some presenters have undertaken significant collaborations particularly focussed on the needs of people with disabilities.

More information is available in the document "**INCLUSIVITY**"



**Improving accessibility:** During the actual event, if there are long queues, the presenter may wish to relieve the elderly, people with disabilities or pregnant women of the hardship of queuing for an excessive time. The staff on the ground would have to trust those claiming hardship and be prepared to speed their access. This could also entail planning signage indicating how to gain that assistance and adding this information to the stewards' training. AoA promotes that the luminarium is accessible to wheelchair users but the presenter must ensure the site itself is accessible to wheelchairs and recognise that people with carers require two tickets instead of one.

## KEY PERSONNEL

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On the site the people who will be working to create the best visitor experience are the stewards, the local site manager and the AoA Exhibition Managers. Their main responsibility is the safe management of the physical structure of the luminarium and, of equal importance, assuring the presentation the luminarium in a professional manner. It is the AoA Exhibition Manager's duty to train and advise the stewards in the running of the luminarium.

**AoA Exhibition Managers:** Their main responsibility is the safe management of the physical structure of the luminarium and, of equal importance, assuring the presentation the luminarium in a professional manner appropriate to its merits. It is the AoA Exhibition Manager's duty to train and advise the stewards in the running of the luminarium.

**The presenter's Site Manager / Steward Coordinator / Front-of-house Manager:** The presenter may decide to have one person dedicated to each or to all of these roles. The Site Manager is the presenter's representative responsible for technical and event planning areas, who is the face of the presenter to the public, and who ensures the good performance of the presenter's team.

The Steward Coordinator / Front-of-house Manager, is responsible for ensuring a full team of fully trained stewards is present at all shifts and will ensure that all the steward rota positions are filled before opening to the public. The steward coordinator is responsible for ensuring stewards arrive on time for their shifts, for resolving any issues that may arise if a full team is not present, works alongside the AoA Exhibition Managers to organize the steward rotas, covers for toilet breaks and provides support and management of the team when needed.

## THE STEWARDS



Stewards are key to a successful event. They are the presenter's ambassadors and the interface between the audience and the experience. Depending on the admission system a minimum of either 9,10 or 11 stewards will form the dedicated team when the luminarium is open to the public.

The presenter will ensure that the stewards are sufficiently mature and confident, and have enough authority to ensure the good behaviour and safety of all visitors to the luminarium. Stewards should be over 18 years, be fluent in the local language, and have good communication skills. In non-English speaking countries the presenter may be required to ensure the full-time assistance of someone fluent in both English and the local language. It is essential that all stewards fully understand the training they receive, and are able to communicate with the AoA exhibition managers. All stewards will be capable of the physical tasks on the steward rota as well as being able to engage fully with the public.

It is essential for the smooth running of the event that a full team of stewards is present at all times during opening to public. If a full team is not functioning, it may not be possible to accommodate the maximum potential in audience numbers, and safety will be compromised. The AoA Exhibition Managers may then be obliged to close the luminarium to the public.

Having a dedicated team of stewards for the luminarium and keeping the number of stewards involved to a minimum will contribute to create a team spirit and enable stewards to take ownership of the luminarium. Some events choose to have paid stewards while others have volunteers. In either case it is essential that the stewards are fully capable of all tasks. Volunteer teams generally require significantly more support from the presenter. Volunteers should be asked to take part in a minimum of 3 or 4 shifts over the event and each shift should be minimum 3 hours.

When advance booking is implemented, one extra steward is required to manage the queue entries. The box office staff should be planned separately to the steward team.

**The stewarding experience:** A luminarium exhibition can be a great way of involving local people in an event and often contributes to their personal development and skill set. For some events there have been very positive synergies when presenters have involved students in art and architecture, event management, drama, or other people with an interest in the arts and communication.

Stewarding is generally a very positive experience for the people who work with us. Some of the friendships made during an exhibition have carried on over the years with some stewards becoming part of the AoA company.

**Events with a high proportion of children:** When children are expected to come in large groups extra stewards should be added to the team. Although an adult will accompany all children, large groups of children will require more engagement and proactive supervision from the stewards. The stewards should ideally have experience with working with children.



**The shifts and the working hours:** Stewards will arrive on-site at least 30 minutes prior to opening to the public. If it has rained overnight they will be expected to arrive earlier to help dry the structure. They are generally free to leave 15 minutes after closing time, though on occasion there follows a short debriefing.

Some events will not expect stewards to work through the whole period of opening and will want to split the day in shifts. For up to 9 hours opening per day, then 2 shifts may be planned for, and for up to 12 hours opening per day, then 3 shifts may be planned for.

A 30-minute overlap in between the shifts is needed to ensure all positions are covered and to give a steward briefing before the change of shift is completed. Conditions may vary throughout the day. The steward coordinator should be present during this time to resolve issues should there be steward attendance issues.

The stewards will be working on a rota system, devised by AoA and filled out by the AoA Exhibition Manager and steward coordinator before each shift. Each steward will have their own paper copy of the rota for the shift they are working. The rota is arranged so each steward changes position every 30 minutes, and ensures that all stewards have a 30-minute break and spends no longer than 30 minutes inside the structure at a time. Therefore all stewards must be capable of fulfilling all duties on the rota, otherwise it will create unnecessary stress on other team members and the rota will not work efficiently.



**Training:** All stewards working on the luminarium will receive a focused training on their roles and responsibilities from the AoA Exhibition Managers, who will demonstrate the requirements for the safe and smooth running of the luminarium and on how to best facilitate the visitor experience.

Focused training is best done in small groups, with a maximum of 15 stewards at a time. Multiple training sessions may be needed if more than 15 stewards altogether. The training session lasts approximately 45 minutes and must take place outside of public opening time, ideally before the event and if needed at the beginning of the day, before opening to the public when the luminarium is inflated.

No stewards can work in the luminarium or be part of the steward rota unless they have been fully trained by an AoA Exhibition Manager. Training stewards individually or throughout the day will not be possible.

The presenter should provide each steward prior to the training with a paper copy of the steward guidelines and a copy of the steward rota detailing the roles and rotation system. AoA will provide templates for these documents that can be translated into the local language if needed.

**Clothing provisions:** The presenter should provide the stewards with a T-Shirt or lanyard that enables the public and the AoA Exhibition Manager to easily identify them as part of the luminarium team. This can provide a good opportunity for festival logo and sponsorship visibility too

All crew and stewards must remove their shoes whilst working inside the luminarium. Stewards will be working long hours on their feet, so comfortable shoes that can be easily slipped on and off are advised.

The stewards will be working outdoors and they should be advised to dress appropriately for the weather. Extremes of temperature and rainfall could make it worth recommending a spare set of clothing, extra layers, warm socks etc. depending on the weather.

The presenter will consider providing support for the stewards and crew, i.e. an secure place for stewards personal belongings whilst working inside the luminarium, plenty of bottled drinking water throughout the event, sunscreen and access to toilet facilities.

***A reliable, fit, enthusiastic and competent team of stewards is essential for a successful event!  
Stewards are vital to the success of your event and should be chosen and looked after with care!  
A well-supported happy team will work efficiently for your event and provide a warmer welcome to your public.***

A 'STEWARDS MANAGEMENT' and 'STEWARDS GUIDELINES' document have been created to assist in the planning and in the training of stewards.



## INTERVENTIONS IN THE LUMINARIUM

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Over the last 25 years most of the 3 million visitors to AoA's luminaria have enjoyed their visit simply for the experience of the structure itself. On occasions the luminaria have also been a wonderful setting for performances, workshops, meetings and happenings.. The luminarium is an unconventional venue with many practical factors to consider - so hosting such interventions is a collaboration between AoA and the presenter, a creative partnership requiring an in-depth dialogue to ensure that the intervention and the luminarium, will be experienced at their optimum.

### PERFORMANCES

The luminarium can play host to a wide range of performances, from music concerts to dance, storytelling, short film projections and much more. Performing artists should be prepared to work with the space, not just inside the space and to require minimal technical installation

Performances affect the visitor flow. An ambient music performance or brief informal interludes may not slow down the flow but longer performances are best kept separate from general public admission to avoid there being a structure full of people staying till the end of the performance while many wait outside.

Whether they are unscheduled interludes or scheduled sessions, how and when to schedule the performances will be coordinated with AoA.

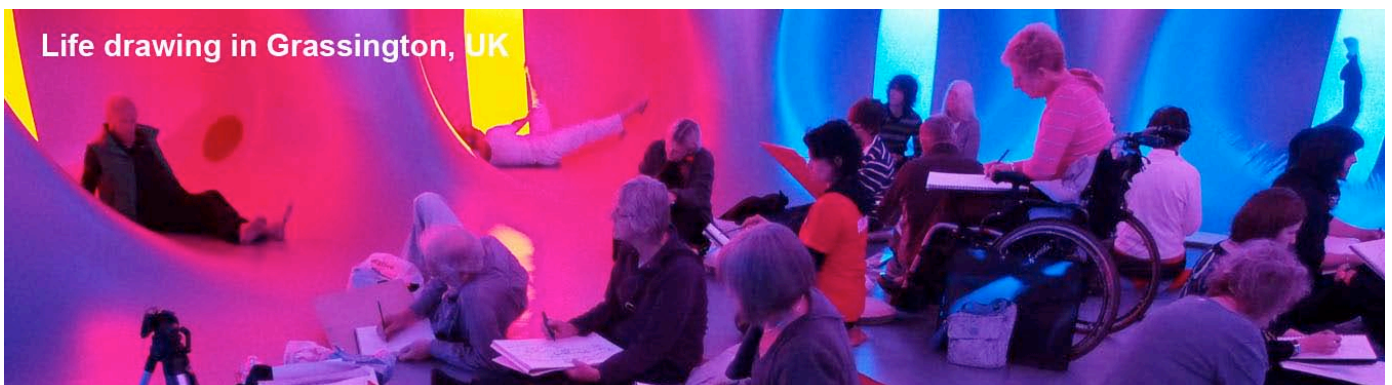
### WORKSHOPS

A wide range of workshop activities in complementary arts may take place before, during or after, inside or outside the luminarium installation. Workshops have taken place around yoga, photography, the physics of light, making stained-glass windows with translucent materials and more. Such workshops may be tailored to involve any sector of the public according to the interest of the presenter.

### MEETINGS

The luminarium can also host various types of meetings. The large domes and the smaller pods are all spaces that can welcome groups from 6 to 60 people.

More information is available in the document '**HOSTING PERFORMANCES & WORKSHOPS**'



## **AoA WRAP AROUND ACTIVITIES**

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Architects of Air propose wrap-around activities that can either be a complement to a luminarium exhibition or be independent. They fall largely within the spheres of art, education and community engagement. AoA is receptive to the creative initiatives of the host presenters and has experience of welcoming intercultural artistic interventions in the luminaria.

### **EDUCATION**

A luminarium offers a variety of ways to engage the attention and enthusiasm of the young visitor. The luminarium can be used as inspiration for a number of curriculum themes in Science, Art and Design, General Design and Technology that can be explored before, during or after a visit.

### **BUILD WORKSHOPS**

AoA is keen to promote the skills of inflatable design and construction. We have the experience and resources to propose short and long-term hands-on build workshops aimed at groups of 10 to 100 people as an introduction to basic pneumatic principles and inflatable construction techniques.



### **SPECIAL NEEDS**

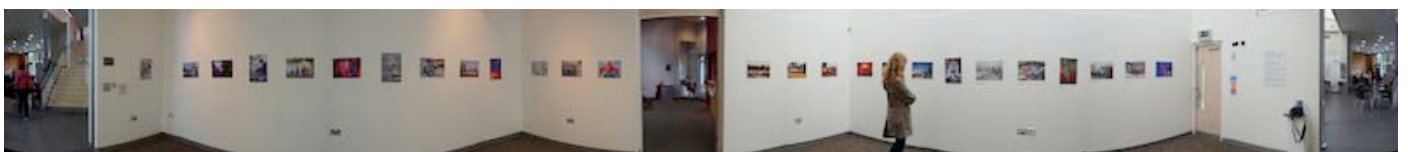
Luminaria offer something special to those who may be disadvantaged in terms of their participation in the arts – sectors such as the elderly, people with a learning disability, the physically handicapped. Accessibility to the widest audience is central to the work and there have been significant collaborations with hosts interested to promote social inclusion and integration of people with disabilities in the wider community.

### **LECTURE**

Alan Parkinson, designer and founder of AoA, would be happy to lead a lecture illustrating the design evolution of luminaria over 30 years, for art, design and architecture students.

### **EXHIBITION**

A touring gallery exhibition '25 years of Luminaria' illustrating the evolution of the Alan Parkinson's luminarium designs is available courtesy of Lakeside Arts Centre, Nottingham.



AoA 20 years of Luminaria exhibition in Nottingham, UK