

Request for Proposals: Orion Magazine Design Update

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Orion, an ad-free magazine about nature and culture now in its thirty-sixth year of publication, seeks proposals for an update to the magazine's print design.

This design update is not intended to dramatically overhaul *Orion*'s aesthetic or brand, but rather to refine and reiterate the elements that work best across all pages of the magazine, update departments for more accessibility and brand cohesion, and create standardized but elastic design templates for the feature well (openers in particular). This design update should also help *Orion* meet its financial goals, which include production cost management, strategic spending on the print medium, and increasing circulation. The result of the design update should be a print format that is consistent, strong, high-quality, readable, and appealing to an increasingly diverse readership.

Orion readers deeply appreciate *Orion*'s commitment to maintaining a high-quality, high production-value print magazine in addition to a lively digital presence. They appreciate the magazine's artful presentation, the quality of *Orion*'s art selection and layout, and the prevalence of visual art throughout *Orion*'s pages. When it is at its most successful, *Orion*'s design is timeless and calm without coming across as precious or remote.

Orion publishes print, digital, and Kindle editions on a quarterly schedule, maintains a digital archive, and runs an annual writing workshop. It has offices in Northampton and Great Barrington, Massachusetts. It has eight full-time, local staff, and eight part-time staff who work remotely. More information is at orionmagazine.org.

DELIVERABLES

The firm we select will work with us in order to provide the following:

- 8-12 InDesign templates for features (openers and interior pages) that accommodate standard design elements such as pull quotes, spot illustrations, and captions
- 8 InDesign templates for value-added bind-in content
- modest design updates to each of *Orion*'s departments, according to guidelines created by the *Orion* staff: Table of Contents, Enumeration, Lay of the Land, Mailbox, Reviews, Contributors, Poetry, Preamble, and covers (in InDesign)
- an update to *Orion*'s overall design specs (trim size, binding, page count, paper stock) that aligns with *Orion*'s 2018 print budget
- a design guide that encapsulates and describes the basic rules, guidelines, structures, typefaces, and tools of the design update
- design implementation of the Spring 2018 issue
- one series of modest design adjustments following the Spring 2018 issue, in time for the design of the Summer 2018 issue
- complete instructions for implementation of the Summer 2018 and subsequent issues by a freelance design technician to be hired by *Orion* in early 2018
- oversight and support of the design technician for the Summer 2018 issue

Orion will provide:

- examples of successful designs from previous issues of *Orion* for reference
- the basic structure for *Orion's* 2018 issues (number of features, word count, FOB and BOB page counts)
- contact information for participants in the discovery process
- assistance convening focus group(s)

TIMELINE

Proposals will be accepted until midnight on December 12. *Orion* will make a selection and notify the firm we select on or before 5 p.m. on December 15.

Between December 15 and December 22, the design firm will conduct a discovery process involving *Orion's* staff, board, and reader focus group.

The design firm will present *Orion* with 3 or more views of each deliverable on or before January 12, and *Orion* will select from among those options by January 15.

The Spring 2018 design implementation will be completed between January 16 and 31, and ready for final upload to *Orion's* printer on February 6.

The design firm we select will conduct a discovery follow-up process following publication of the Spring 2018 issue (in March), and do one round of modest design adjustments according to that feedback in time for the design of the Summer 2018 issue.

Contract terms and conditions will be negotiated upon selection of the accepted proposal.

PROPOSAL STRUCTURE

Proposals can follow whatever format you feel will best demonstrate that your firm is the best match for *Orion's* specific needs at this time. Your proposal should be well crafted, thoughtful, grounded in *Orion's* unique brand and history, and give us a window into how you work, the kind of work you would be able to produce if selected for *Orion's* design update, and why you would want to be selected for this project. Your proposal should demonstrate that you have thought deeply about magazines in general and *Orion* in particular.

In order to have your proposal considered, please be sure that it includes the following:

- a budget that follows the bulleted list of deliverables above, with all costs itemized and briefly but clearly explained
- examples of relevant design work
- references from previous clients
- resources and support you will need from *Orion* in order to complete the project other than those listed here

Send your proposal by email as a single PDF of 12 pages or fewer to mmiller@orionmagazine.org

EVALUATION

Orion will evaluate all proposals based on:

- demonstrated ability to engage in an authentic, reader-centric discovery process
- demonstrated ability to facilitate and give leadership to a collaborative and efficient process
- demonstrated ability to produce a design concept that will uphold and enhance *Orion's* brand, while also improving the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of *Orion's* design and production processes
- demonstrated ability to complete the proposed work on time and on budget
- demonstrated understanding of and familiarity with the strength of *Orion's* current design and aesthetic, as well as clear vision for how it can be refined and improved
- informed and nuanced perspective on environmental, independent, and nonprofit media as a cornerstone of a strong and healthy society
- demonstrated understanding and familiarity with *Orion's* current design and aesthetic
- an open, collaborative approach, welcoming of feedback but with a distinct design point of view
- expertise, experience, and successful completion of other magazine designs, redesigns, and design updates
- proposed project cost