

## Creative Connections Artist Brief

*Creative Connections* is an ambitious and exciting creative engagement project involving young people, schools, local communities and contemporary artists. *Creative Connections Coventry* aims to connect young people living in Coventry with a nationally renowned contemporary artist to explore the National Portrait Gallery and the Herbert Art Gallery and Museum's collections. Together, the young people and artist will create new collaborative responses to portraits of notable people from or connected to Coventry.



The young people come from an age and demographic that are currently underrepresented in both gallery's collections. Using a co-production framework in the developing of new work and an exhibition, this project will aim to inspire, raise aspirations and give a sense of belonging, ownership and pride in their area. The exhibition at the Herbert Art Gallery and Museum (January – April 2021) will provide a platform to encourage and develop a more positive perception of young people in Coventry amid some negative press.

This project will launch the Herbert's 2021 programme when Coventry is City of Culture with the new work exhibited alongside portraits from the National Portrait Gallery and Herbert's Collections in galleries 1, 2 and 3.

GCSE Art & Media students from Sidney Stringer Academy in Hillfields, Coventry will be the project collaborators. The artist will work with the young people to choose portraits and research the lives of the sitters and artists in the collections and archives. Through a series of creative workshops at the National Portrait Gallery, at the Herbert and at Sidney Stronger Academy, new ideas and artworks will be developed. Interpretation is key to this project, and young people will develop innovative and creative labels and resources in response to the work that will be on display.

The artist will work with Herbert Media and participants towards developing digital content for the Creative Connections project website that documents process and progress, giving context to the project.

## Project Introduction

*Creative Connections National* is an exciting creative engagement and participation project for schools and young people that sees the National Portrait Gallery working in partnership with museums and galleries around the country. The principle aim is for artists and young people to create new and exciting art work inspired by the National Portrait Gallery's Collection.

At the heart of the project, is the belief that discovering inspirational stories connected to people and place through the strong visual medium of portraiture, is an empowering way

for young people to re-examine and express their own sense of identity. The practical project develops young people's own creative practice and portfolios, interprets their ideas through new work and re-imagines interpretation of the National Portrait Gallery Collection. It is a project model, which is artist-led with strong input from educators, curators and historians working closely with teachers.

*Creative Connections* has been running since 2012. The project aims to inspire young people, raise aspiration and pride of their local neighbourhood and support their creative skills development. The first four years of the project focussed on four London boroughs before a national pilot in Nottingham working in partnership with Nottingham Contemporary. The project is now being developed in Coventry, Sheffield, Southampton and Newlyn as part of the National Portrait Gallery's *Inspiring People* transformation project, the Gallery's most extensive programme of activities nationwide alongside a comprehensive re-display of the Gallery's Collection, combined with a significant refurbishment of the building creating 20 percent more public space and a new Learning Centre.

*Inspiring People* will position the Gallery and its unique Collection and mission at the heart of contemporary debates on identity during a period of unprecedented change within the United Kingdom. The Gallery has a strong commitment to its national programme and this is a key part of the future vision and aspect we wish to strengthen and diversify working directly with audiences.

The project has been successfully delivered in London enabling the Gallery to test a model of participation where each year, an artist works collaboratively with a local school and their Art department – art teachers and their students (14 years) studying Art GCSE to research the Collection and identify portraits of Sitters connected to their local neighbourhood. Together they create a new artistic response which is displayed at the Gallery for 3 months alongside the works from the Collection that provided the inspiration. Alongside the display, digital participation projects and a rich programme of events take place to engage local audiences.

It is the mission of the Gallery to collect portraits of people who have made a significant contribution to British life and culture so the Collection is unique and well placed to support this approach. By discovering the stories of key individuals with connections to their local neighbourhood, city or county the project not only aims to increase knowledge of and confidence in accessing museums and galleries, but seeks to enhance a sense of identity and pride, and supporting increased self-confidence and esteem.

This project enables partners and the Gallery to develop their audience reach and approach to learning and participation. Working together with contemporary artists, young people have the opportunity to respond creatively to the Collection and their local neighbourhood to create their own artistic response. This will be exhibited with the Collection with interpretation created by the young people. Alongside there will be a strong digital and regional programme offer for schools, families and young people.

### **Project Framework**

The relationships between young people and inspiring people from Coventry are the foundations of this project. Through researching collections and archives, the young people

will form ideas and thoughts that will frame and inform the collaboration and resulting exhibition content.

### **Approach**

The overarching narratives for *Creative Connections* are those contained within the relationship between young people, inspiring people who have achieved in the areas of identity, citizenship, culture or visionary leadership and the connection of both to a locality. In each geographical area, broad themes emerge from these narratives framing and informing the collaborative process and resulting in an exhibition and digital content.

A co-production approach is key to Creative Connections. This exists creatively between the young people, the Herbert and the artist, and in the working relationship between Sidney Stringer School and the Herbert. The project will engage directly with about 30 GCSE Art & Media students, which may include some pupils with SEN needs. There will be a wider impact on the participants' communities, and other diverse communities engaged with throughout the project.

### **Proposals will be accepted from artists who:**

- Have a socially engaged creative practice.
- Enjoy and have a knowledge of working with young people.
- Have a practice that encompasses portraiture and identity.
- Have experience working with galleries and museums.
- Have worked with/are interested in working with schools.
- Are experienced collaborators with an understanding of co-production.
- Have knowledge, a connection or interest in Coventry and the West Midlands area
- Can demonstrate creative ideas for the exhibition and high production values

### **Young people's Learning Outcomes**

- Critical thinking and research skills, working with collections and archives.
- New creative skills and development of artistic practice.
- Ability to talk about portraits using visual language and the confidence to articulate their opinions and ideas about artworks.
- Rich and varied work experience through working with members of the Herbert's and National Portrait Gallery's team including curators, archivists, education and communication teams.
- Increased sense of pride in Coventry and its inspirational people.
- A developed sense of identity in relation to their locality.
- Ability to pull together different resources and understanding of how to work as a team towards planning an exhibition that will tell a story about Coventry.
- Confidence in accessing the Herbert Art Gallery and Museum and its resources.
- Confidence in accessing the National Portrait Gallery's collection.
- Sense of ownership and achievement over a project and exhibition.

### **Artist Deliverables**

- Deliver approximately 12 x 2 hour workshops with approx. 30 GCSE students at Sidney Stringer Academy and the Herbert Art Gallery and Museum and possibly other locations in Coventry.
- Lead 1 x 1 day workshop with the young people at the National Portrait Gallery
- The creation of new artwork produced in collaboration with the young people for exhibition
- Engage in the interpretation of the exhibition of the new artworks alongside the Collection works at the Herbert
- To participate in 4 events that will form part of the public and schools programme that will run alongside the exhibition
- Development of innovative interpretation materials with the students.
- Engage with wider school team to realize potential of the project across the school
- Deliver workshops with staff to inform and explain project and exhibition
- An evaluation at the end of the project on outcomes.
- To deliver press and media interviews

### **Artist Responsibilities**

To develop further the project proposal and exhibition concept following interview, working closely with the Herbert, National Portrait Gallery and Sidney Stringer to devise a participation and workshop plan that meets the project aims and young people's learning outcomes and meets curriculum needs.

- To work closely with the Herbert and National Portrait Gallery in researching Coventry's people, history, identity and geography, with an awareness of and focus on inclusion and representation.
- Work with the galleries to choose portraits from both collections that are: rich in their ability to tell a narrative around the sitter's identity; visually strong images that have impact on display; sitter life experiences that have contemporary relevance to the participants, supporting their personal development; sitters lives or work that have a visible geographical trace in the area e.g. a blue plaque, street name or building; sitters who have inspirational and aspirational stories.
- Research into archival material and ephemera from the Herbert's social history collection that could help to illustrate the lives of notable people from Coventry.
- To produce new artworks working to Gallery standards, ensuring high production values are met and integrity to the young people's voice is maintained
- To work with the Herbert and NPG on realising the concept and narrative of the exhibition, supporting the production of an exhibition plan and contributing to the exhibition interpretation process
- To collaborate with the Project Manager and relevant gallery staff throughout
- Make reflection and evaluation with participants and gallery staff a key priority for the project.
- To work with and respond to young people's interests, thoughts and ideas, considering how artworks could be reinterpreted to relate to the participant's experiences.
- An awareness of Coventry's demographics and to encourage a reflection of this in the exhibition and production of new portraits.

- Involve and connect to local community groups that are representative of the young people.
- To work closely with Herbert Media and participants on a plan to digitally document the project, producing content for the Creative Connections blog.
- Working with gallery staff at all levels to communicate the project’s intentions.
- Work with the young people to choose visually strong images from the collections that have an impact on display.
- To advise on extension projects to be delivered with youth organisations in Coventry that will sustain engagement with the Herbert.
- To work within an agreed budget and timeframe.

## Management

The project is a partnership project between the National Portrait Gallery and the Herbert Art Gallery and Museum and will be managed to reflect this collaboration. At the Herbert, it will be managed by Rosie Addenbrooke, Exhibitions and Events Manager and Rosie Watts, the Community Engagement Officer as well as a wider internal project management team with representatives from the Curatorial, Collection, Exhibition, Design, Digital and Marketing teams. The National Portrait Gallery will be closely involved throughout the project with Helen Whiteoak, Head of Programmes & Engagement the key project lead and input from Liz Smith, Director of Participation and Learning.

The project partner Sidney Stringer Academy will work closely with the Project Manager, the artist and the project management team to ensure that the participative elements of the project meet their objectives.

## Project timeline & key dates for artist

Date	Action
By Fri 21 February 2020	Artist brief distributed
15 March 2020	Deadline for Artist proposals
16-17 March 2020	Artist short-list discussed with school and artists invited to interview
19 March 2020	Artist Interviews at the Herbert
March-May	Project proposal development including creative detailed project research, planning, workshop structuring and exhibition plans developed by the Artist in collaboration with the Galleries and school project partner
15 June – 17 July	Creative Art Workshops: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 1 day workshop at the National Portrait Gallery with school</li> <li>- Workshop at the Herbert</li> <li>- Workshops at Sidney Stringer Academy – Mon, Weds &amp; Fridays</li> </ul>

July-August	New Artwork created and exhibition concept agreed
September- October	Interpretation developed.
October- November	Exhibition designed.
January 2021	Exhibition opens
Jan - May	Public programme of events
May	Exhibition closes.

## Budget

There is a budget of £8000 for the artist's fee inclusive of travel costs and £2000 for production of new contemporary artwork for the exhibition.

The Gallery holds a separate budget for exhibition design, interpretation, installation materials and marketing.

## Requirements for submission

Artists interested in the project are invited to submit a proposal by **12 March** by email to Rosie Watts, Community Engagement Officer, Culture Coventry [rosie.watts@culturecoventry.com](mailto:rosie.watts@culturecoventry.com) and Helen Whiteoak, Head of Programmes & Engagement, National Portrait Gallery [HWhiteoak@npg.org.uk](mailto:HWhiteoak@npg.org.uk)

The proposal should be short – up to 4 sides of A4 – and include:

Statement of interest in the project

- Overall project concept, approach, outcomes and outputs
- Proposed project schedule
- Initial outline budget including fees, resources and materials
- Experience using digital media to reveal project process and how you would develop it for this project

## Accompanied by:

Outline description of creative practice

An up-to-date CV

Examples of work embedded into the proposal

The commissioned artist will be expected to have:

- Appropriate insurance and public liability cover
- Evidence of a recent enhanced DBS check, or willingness to submit details for the check to be undertaken. Studio space for the production of artworks

Interviews will take place at the Herbert on 19 March 2020 and will be conducted by Francis Ranford, Cultural and Creative Director, Rosie Addenbrooke, Exhibitions and Events Manager and Rosie Watts, Community Engagement Officer, Culture Coventry, and Liz Smith,

Director of Learning & Participation and Helen Whiteoak Head of Programmes & Engagement, National Portrait Gallery.

Please send your proposal to

Rosie Watts, Community Engagement Officer, Culture Coventry  
[rosie.watts@culturecoventry.com](mailto:rosie.watts@culturecoventry.com)

And Helen Whiteoak, Head of Programmes & Engagement, National Portrait Gallery  
[HWhiteoak@npg.org.uk](mailto:HWhiteoak@npg.org.uk)

For more information and to watch the project film please see Creative Connections website: [www.npg.org.uk/creativeconnections](http://www.npg.org.uk/creativeconnections)

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