

Arts&Heritage

Blue Sky Museums

An Arts&Heritage project seeking artists to respond to our Meeting Point museums

Introduction

Arts&Heritage is an agency based in Northumberland, working nationally to forge creative collaborations between artists and museums/heritage organisations to present history in different and imaginative ways.

During the Covid-19 period, Arts&Heritage is initiating an ambitious new project, investing in the imagination and sheer audaciousness that artists often bring to contemporary projects - their imagination.

We are releasing the details of six museums that we have previously worked with - ranging from the intimate Shandy Hall, popular with many contemporary artists, writers, musicians and other unconventional thinkers, to the wild, poetic moors surrounding the Brontë Parsonage museum, and the museum itself.

We want to receive ideas that are truly Blue Sky thinking. Blue Sky Museums is not for those seeking a project that will actually happen - but think, if you could make anything in response to this museum, what would it be? We are looking for maximum creativity and want to receive your imagined commission in visual, audio, film – or any other form we can display on our website.

We will select 25 bold, imaginative, Blue Sky thinking ideas. We would like to stress that the responses we are inviting from you will not result in a full-scale commission – this is an opportunity for artists to engage in untethered idea development without the restrictions of practical delivery or limitation of a budget. Don't think about how it could be made or the cost of it - just send us good visuals, film edits, sound files - anything that gives a clear, lively description of your idea. Remember if you are successful it will appear on our website and so bear this in mind - the response you send us is, in itself, the artwork, so please do stretch your imagination and ambition to its fullest.

Each artistic response we select to show online will receive £500. We want to demonstrate that artists generate extraordinary ways to experience and look at the past and place a new lens on heritage narratives. Be bold, creative and courageous in your artistic thinking.

This project supports the generation of new thinking and left field ideas, rooted in museums and their collections. Each partner museum taking part in **Blue Sky Museums** looks forward to seeing how artists respond to their place of work. It is important to note this project funds your ideas, **Blue Sky Museums** does not result in a physical commission at the site. We see this as a way of investing in artist's

creative thinking at a time when opportunities to visit and create on site are severely limited.

How to take part in *Blue Sky Museums*

UK-based artists are invited to consider the briefs of the 6 museums and choose those that are of interest. Research into the museum can be conducted online (some museums may have more information than others). Case studies and films of the projects that have already been realised appear on our website:

<https://www.artsandheritage.org.uk/projects/>

In considering the brief, we ask artists to propose unusual, inventive ideas for projects without the limitation of a budget or actual physical installation.

We are looking for ideas that respond to the museum, its context, location and potential, and we encourage you to seek out the unusual, the overlooked, the hidden stories and develop a project idea that is ambitious but relevant to the museum, rooted in its place, collection and its context.

How to Respond

At the beginning of the project we will release all 6 artist briefs and ask artists to select those that they wish to respond to. The deadline for applications will be staggered throughout the next few months to allow the Arts&Heritage team to administer the replies and pass on applications to our selection panel.

All 6 briefs can be found here:

<https://www.artsandheritage.org.uk/2020/05/05/launching-blue-sky-museums/>

The brief will outline the location and specific content of museums that we have previously worked with through our Meeting Point programme. These museums have already agreed to taking part in *Blue Sky Museums*.

This opportunity is open to all artists based in the UK, working in all disciplines, including writers, musicians, performers and filmmakers. We continue to be particularly keen to hear from artists who consider themselves marginalised.

We are confident that within these museums lie narratives that have not, up until now, been told or highlighted. We welcome responses from artists at different stages of their career, working in different artforms and living across the country.

The details that we require from you are:

- Your name, contact details and website address
- A short paragraph about your practice (up to 250 words)
- Why you have chosen your museum/what it is about the collection/context that interests you as an artist (up to 500 words)

- Your response outlining what you would do. This can include written word and/ or images, drawings, an audio file or a short film clip. The only criteria is that we need to be able to show it online.

Please send all of the above as one document / PDF when applying (with a second attachment if your application includes an audio / film file).

Please email all responses to info@artsandheritage.org.uk

- Please also complete this Equal Opportunities Monitoring Survey (responses are anonymous and used for data monitoring purposes only):
<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/Y2Q65VW>

How we will select the 25 and present your work online

A selection panel will be made up of Arts&Heritage and artists we have worked with on Meeting Point commissions in the past. We will select 25 responses, and these will appear on a dedicated portal within our Arts&Heritage website, called **Blue Sky Museums**. If we have selected your idea for one museum, you will not be selected for others as we want the overall budget to go as far as we possibly can to artists and to ensure the impact is as broad as possible.

We want to make sure our final selection reflects diverse artists and practices, and our decision making will take this in to account to ensure a broad spectrum of practice and experience. You don't have to have had experience of working within a heritage context; we are more interested in showcasing your ambitious and creative responses to the collections, history and location of each of our museums.

If selected, it is important that you agree to the proposal appearing on our website: this will mean we may not necessarily be able to protect your intellectual copyright, though the IP and copyright remains with each proposing artist.

Arts&Heritage know the value that artists bring when working within the heritage sector. We have been privileged to support many creative collaborations between artists and museums. It is our experience that artists create new ways for audiences to understand the past through their unflinching ability to reveal hidden histories that resonate with meaning today. We hope that this project allows the museum and heritage sector to see the innovative and creative thinking artists can bring to a museum or heritage site and to encourage more collaborations across the contemporary art and heritage sectors.

The six museums taking part in Blue Sky Museums are:

1. Morpeth Chantry Bagpipe Museum

<https://museumsnorthumberland.org.uk/morpeth-chantry-bagpipe-museum/>

2. Shandy Hall

<https://www.laurencesternetrust.org.uk/shandy-hall.php>

3. Workhouse Museum, Ripon

https://riponmuseums.co.uk/museums/workhouse_museum_gardens/

4. Lion Salt Works

<http://lionsaltworks.westcheshiremuseums.co.uk/>

5. Kelham Island Museum

<http://www.simt.co.uk/kelham-island-museum>

6. Brontë Parsonage Museum

<https://www.bronte.org.uk/>

Next Steps

Tuesday 5 May	Artists Briefs will be released
5pm, Friday 29 May	Deadline for responses to museum 1: Morpeth Chantry Bagpipe Museum
5pm, Friday 12 June	Deadline for responses to museum 2: Shandy Hall
5pm, Friday 26 June	Deadline for responses to museum 3: Workhouse Museum, Ripon
5pm, Friday 10 July	Deadline for responses to museum 4: Lion Salt Works
5pm, Friday 24 July	Deadline for responses to museum 5: Kelham Island Museum
5pm, Friday 7 August	Deadline for responses to museum 6: Brontë Parsonage Museum

Publishing your ideas online and how you will get paid

Arts&Heritage aims to publish the selected ideas online two weeks after the deadline for each museum. We will inform you of the decision to publish beforehand, if you have not heard from us two weeks after the deadline then please assume that your idea will not be published. If this is the case, we may not be able to inform you all individually or provide feedback, as we are expecting a large response and our team is small.

Please remember that the briefs will be initially released together so that you can make a decision as to which is of interest to you, and that the deadlines are staggered. This gives the Arts&Heritage team time to consider all ideas fully.

Payments will be made by BACS on receipt of invoice and we will request an invoice when we inform you that we want to publish your ideas.

We hope you enjoy this opportunity for ambitious creative thinking. Please do look at the Meeting Point case studies and films on our website for information regarding previous projects to these museums.

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www.artsandheritage.org.uk