

Commission opportunities for Black artists and practitioners as part of North West youth led Festival of Hope

What is the Festival of Hope?

A celebration of hope and heritage led by young people working in collaboration with museums around the North West. The festival is produced by Blaze and will take place in two stages: distanced and digital delivery in July and August 2020 followed by live events later in the year.

The Festival of Hope is part of Curious Minds' Hope Streets Project. Over five years (2018-2023), five museum partners (The Atkinson, Southport; Bolton Museum; Lancashire Museums; Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery, Carlisle; and West Cheshire Museums) will transform the ways in which they are working with young people. Hope Streets has been made possible thanks to a grant from National Lottery Heritage Fund and is part of their Kick the Dust Programme.

Who are the Connectors?

We are a centralised group of Festival of Hope Young Producers aged 12-25, representing the five hub sites from across the project. We meet fortnightly on Zoom to make decisions about the festival as whole. Putting youth leadership at the heart of the way the project is delivered.

Why the commissions?

Over the past few weeks, our Hope Streets teams of young producers and staff from partner museums have been asking what more we can and should be doing to show solidarity with Black people, and to ensure we are interrogating rather than contributing to the inherently racist narrative of British heritage. We are in the process of planning a North West-wide Festival of Hope. How can we champion hope if we are not using the resources and scope of the project to support this movement?

As a whole project we know we have so much work to do. We are starting by with two commissions for one emerging and one advanced practitioner to support Black artists and practitioners whose work will help us explore the untold stories of our local and regional heritage.

What is the Brief?

We are looking to commission two Black artists, practitioners, creatives or collectives to respond to our brief. One commission is for an emerging artist (within first ten years of your career) and one for an advanced practitioner (10+ years' experience).

We are interested in what stories are currently being told about our heritage and those that aren't. This could be about viewing the past through a different lens, or exploring the retelling of stories, unearthing and exposing truths, in order for people to rethink what they have previously been told.

We want to use our platform to educate, keep the conversation going and demand change.

We hope that the commissions will explore heritage and celebrate cultures that are often left out of museums. The commission will encourage growth and changes of opinion.

As a heritage project we are asking what stories from our past are preserved, and which are hidden away? What questions do we need to ask and what truths do we need to learn? What do museum collections tell us about who we are and where we are from, and what do they miss out?

This is a centralised regional commission opportunity that connects all the five festival sites. As the five sites are geographically quite far apart we want these commissions to connect the whole region and explore how we link the work produced back to the five sites.

We are interested in working with cross genre practitioners. This could include spoken work, performance, video and quieter artforms including writing. All art forms will be considered.

Where will the work live?

This will depend on your proposal, but it will need to sit within the wider Festival of Hope Programming taking place in August.

What timescale will I need to work to?

Deadline to apply Wednesday 22nd July – 12pm.

To deliver work as part of the Festival of Hope in mid/late August 2020.

What is the Budget?

Advanced practitioner – £1,500 – 10+ experience

Emerging practitioner – In first ten years of their career- £1,000

The advanced practitioner will be expected to offer one mentoring or support session to the emerging practitioner as a transactional piece of learning.

If you are interested in applying for the advanced role but have less than 10 years experience but feel confident you are able to deliver please specify this when you apply and you will be considered for this role.

How do I apply?

Send your proposal of how you would approach the brief along with the following questions within your proposal:

-How would you approach this brief?

-How will your proposal engage the young people working on the Festival of Hope, or other young people across the North West?

-How would you ensure the commission connects the five hub sites?

-Why do you want to work on this project?

-Please also include a basic budget and timeline for your proposal along with your contact details.

Applications can be written, filmed, or an audio recording. They should be sent to hannah@blazearts.co.uk

Please send no more than 2 sides of A4 or 4 minutes of audio/video.

Any questions can be sent to the above email address, you can also arrange a phone call with Festival Producer, Hannah Whitlow, via the same email.

