

Creative Connections Cornwall - Artist Brief

Creative Connections is an ambitious and exciting creative engagement project linking young people, schools, local communities and contemporary artists. *Creative Connections Cornwall* aims to connect young people living in Cornwall with a nationally renowned contemporary artist to explore the National Portrait Gallery Collection. Together, the young people and the artist will create new collaborative responses to portraits of notable people from or connected to Cornwall and Penzance.

Using a co-production framework in the developing of new work and an exhibition, this project will aim to inspire, raise aspirations and give the young people a sense of belonging, ownership and pride in their region. The exhibition at The Exchange in Penzance (Mid-June to Mid-Sep 2022) will provide a platform for the young people to share their work, thoughts and ambitions with a wider audience and for this audience to better understand and recognise the young people's voices.

Newlyn Art Gallery & The Exchange are actively contributing to debates around the civic role and social purpose of contemporary galleries and have a long-time commitment to working with young people and local communities in participatory ways. They have been working with students from Mounts Bay Academy in Penzance to select portraits from the National Portrait Gallery Collection. Newlyn Art Gallery & The Exchange are now looking for an artist to work with the students to develop new ideas and artwork through a series of creative workshops based on their own practice and informed by this selection.

Together, the young people and the artist will research the lives of the sitters to find shared themes and connections between the sitters, the young people and Cornwall. Interpretation is key to this project and the students will develop innovative and creative labels and resources in response to the work on display as part of the workshops. The artist will work with Newlyn Art Gallery & The Exchange and the students towards developing digital content for the Creative Connections project website that documents process and progress, giving context to the project.

The exhibition at The Exchange will consist of the selected portraits from the National Portrait Gallery Collection, new artwork created by the artist and young people, together with the interpretation materials, all resulting from the collaborative workshops. Alongside the exhibition, digital participation projects and a rich programme of events are to take place to engage local audiences.

Project Background

As part of *Creative Connections*, the National Portrait Gallery is working in partnership with museums and galleries around the country.

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 (particularly in relation to community and place). 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 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.

Creative Connections is part of the National Portrait Gallery's transformational **Inspiring People** project which includes an extensive programme of nationwide activities, funded by The National Heritage Lottery Fund and Art Fund. These ambitious partnerships with museums, local community groups and schools aim to bring the Gallery closer to communities across the UK. www.npg.org.uk/inspiringpeople

It is the mission of the National Portrait 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.

Project Framework

The relationships between young people and inspiring people from Cornwall are the foundations of this project. Through researching collections and archives, the young people will work with the artist to form ideas and creative work 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, Newlyn Art Gallery & The Exchange, the artist, teachers and The National Portrait Gallery, and in the working relationship between Mounts Bay Academy and Newlyn Art Gallery & The Exchange. The project will engage directly with about 20 Year 10 GCSE Art students, which may include some pupils with special educational needs (SEN). There will be a wider impact on the participants' communities, and other diverse communities engaged with throughout the project.

An inclusive approach to recruitment

Newlyn Art Gallery is committed to address the lack of diversity in the arts sector and to give voice to diverse communities through the curating of exhibitions. This extends to our approach when it comes to recruiting.

All the data shows that despite organisations' best intentions, those recruited into positions in public galleries, including opportunities for artists, tend not to reflect the diversity of the UK workforce. We'd like to change that. We want Newlyn Art Gallery & The Exchange to be a place where a diverse mix of talented people want to work, to stay and to do their best work, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity or class or socio-economic background.

As users of the Disability Confident Scheme, we guarantee to interview all disabled applicants who meet the minimum criteria for this opportunity.

We recognise that some artists may have access needs or care responsibilities that may affect their ability to participate in this programme. If this applies to you, please be assured we are keen to make any reasonable adjustment to the programme's design to accommodate your application.

If you would like to discuss any specific concerns, prior to submitting an application, please contact Bettina Wenzel at Newlyn Art Gallery & The Exchange, call 01736 363715 or email bettina.wenzel@newlynartgallery.co.uk.

Proposals are sought from artists who may:

- 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 Penzance and/or Cornwall.
- Can demonstrate creative ideas for the exhibition and high production values.

Artist Deliverables

- Deliver approximately 12 x 2-hour workshops with approx. 20 GCSE students at Mounts Bay Academy and Newlyn Art Gallery & The Exchange. Some of these may be in the form of field trips across locations in Cornwall with connections to selected sitters. (Depending on where in the UK the artist is based, workshops can take place in a condensed form as a block of sessions, rather than be spread out over twelve weeks.)
- 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 students' own work and research.
- 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.

Artist Responsibilities

- To develop further the project proposal and exhibition concept following interview, working closely with Newlyn Art Gallery & The Exchange, the National Portrait Gallery and Mounts Bay Academy to devise a participation and workshop plan that meets the project aims, young people's learning outcomes and curriculum needs.
- To work closely with Newlyn Art Gallery & The Exchange and National Portrait Gallery in researching the sitters selected for the exhibition, excavating connections with Cornwall's people, history, identity and geography, with an awareness of and focus on inclusion and representation.

- Research the selected sitters in regard to inspirational and aspirational stories. These can be life experiences with contemporary relevance for the project participants that might support their personal development. This can also include narratives around the sitters' identities that are anchored in place and of which visible geographical traces or connections remain – such as plaques, gravestones, former homes and studios, etc.
- Research into archival material and ephemera from the National Portrait Gallery as well as Cornish museums and archives that could help illustrate the lives of the sitters.
- 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 Newlyn Art Gallery & The Exchange 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 their experiences.
- An awareness of Cornwall's demographics and to encourage a reflection of this in the exhibition and production of work.
- Involve and connect to local community groups that are representative of the young people.
- To work closely with Newlyn Art Gallery & The Exchange 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.

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 teams at Newlyn Art Gallery & The Exchange and National Portrait Gallery including Programme Curators and Producers, Archivists, Education and Communication staff.
- Increased sense of pride in Cornwall 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 Cornwall.
- Confidence in accessing Newlyn Art Gallery & The Exchange and its resources.
- Confidence in accessing the National Portrait Gallery's collection.
- Sense of ownership and achievement over a project and exhibition.

Management

The project is a partnership project between the National Portrait Gallery and Newlyn Art Gallery & The Exchange and will be managed to reflect this collaboration.

At Newlyn Art Gallery & The Exchange, it will be managed by Bettina Wenzel, Programme Producer, with support from the wider Programming Team as well as Development and Marketing staff.

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 Mounts Bay Academy will work closely with the Project Managers, 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
Thursday 30 September 2021 – midnight	Deadline for Artist proposals
Week beginning 4 October 2021	Artist short-listing
Week beginning 11 Oct 2021	Invitation to Interview
Week beginning 18 October 2021	Artist Interviews via Zoom
Week beginning 25 October 2021	Artist confirmed
Nov/Dec 2021	Project proposal development – including creative and detailed project research, planning, workshop structuring and exhibition plans developed by the artist in collaboration with the galleries and school. Initial meeting with students.
Jan/Feb 2022	Workshops with students at Mounts Bay Academy and The Exchange, as well as visits to local or regional archives and fieldtrips.
March/April 2022	New artwork produced and exhibition concept agreed.
April/May 2022	Interpretation created.
April/May 2022	Exhibition designed.
June 2022	Exhibition opens.
June – Sept 2022	Public programme of events.
Sept 2022	Exhibition closes.

Budget

There is a budget of £8000 for the artist's fee, plus a budget for travel and accommodation of £2,500 and £2,500 for the 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 **midnight Thursday 30 September 2021** by email to Bettina Wenzel, Programme Producer, Newlyn Art Gallery & The Exchange, bettina.wenzel@newlynartgallery.co.uk and Helen Whiteoak, Head of Programmes & Engagement, National Portrait Gallery HWhiteoak@npg.org.uk

Please submit a proposal which includes the following:

- Please explain why you are interested in this project, including an outline description of your creative practice and examples of your work (a 4-min video statement or up to 800 words).
- Please explain your approach to the overall project concept, including outcomes and outputs, as well as your experience using digital media to reveal project process and how you would develop it for this project (a 4-min video statement or up to 800 words).
- A proposed project schedule.
- An initial outline budget including fees, resources and materials.
- An up-to-date CV, including any relevant weblinks and exhibitions.

If you choose to submit a video statement, this can be very simple and shot on your phone. You won't be judged on the production values of this video!

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.

Interviews

Interviews will take place **Wed 20 and Thurs 21 Oct 2021** and will be conducted by Bettina Wenzel, Programme Producer and Cat Gibbard, Programme Curator and Learning Lead, Newlyn Art Gallery & The Exchange, and Liz Smith, Director of Learning & Participation and Helen Whiteoak Head of Programmes & Engagement, National Portrait Gallery.

Please indicate in your application if you can't make the suggested dates and require an alternative option.

Please send your proposal to

Bettina Wenzel, Programme Producer, Newlyn Art Gallery & The Exchange
bettina.wenzel@newlynartgallery.co.uk

And Helen Whiteoak, Head of Programmes & Engagement, National Portrait Gallery
HWhiteoak@npg.org.uk

For more information on Creative Connections and to watch the project film please see Creative Connections website: www.npg.org.uk/creativeconnections

For more information on Newlyn Art Gallery & The Exchange please see www.newlynartgallery.co.uk/about

Creative Connections Cornwall – a National Portrait Gallery project in partnership with Newlyn Art Gallery & The Exchange. *Creative Connections* is funded by The National Lottery Heritage Fund and Art Fund with the generous support of the Palley family.

National
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