



**Lancaster  
Arts**

Where ideas, people and places connect

# DISSENT WORKS

**An open call for artists responding  
to DISSENT.**



**Selected artists will exhibit alongside works  
from the Lancaster University Art Collection.**

**Exhibition:**

**28 September – 17 October 2026**

## Why DISSENT WORKS?

Each year, Lancaster Arts explores a single theme across its programme, bringing artists, researchers and communities together through exhibitions, performances, residencies and public events. In 2026, our annual theme is **DISSENT**.

Over the course of this year we've been exploring dissent, not simply as protest or public action, but as a personal and creative act: the moments when we question accepted ideas, imagine alternatives or choose to do things differently.

As part of this year's programme, we're inviting artists from across north Lancashire to exhibit alongside works from the Lancaster University Art Collection.

The Lancaster University Art Collection is one of the University's most significant cultural resources. More than a permanent display, it is a living resource that continues to evolve through exhibitions, research and creative practice. DISSENT WORKS brings contemporary artists into that conversation, creating new connections across generations, media and ideas.

Whether your work is political, playful, personal or quietly provocative, we're looking for artists whose work, through the lens of dissent, opens up new ways of seeing and thinking.



*Our team installing work at Tony Heaton's Serial Dissenter Exhibition in spring 2026*

## The Theme

There isn't a fixed definition of dissent, and we're not looking for one.

Your work might explore dissent through politics or protest. It might question traditions, challenge assumptions or celebrate different ways of thinking. It might be playful, poetic, personal or quietly subversive.

Across this year's programme, we've seen artists express dissent in many ways, from political protest to quietly challenging expectations within their own practice. We're interested in how the idea of dissent connects with your work, whatever form that takes.

For more on this theme please see [here](#).



*Ben Turnbull's work uses humour and satire to question politics, power and popular culture, reminding us that dissent can be playful as well as provocative.*

## Who Can Apply?

We welcome applications from artists at every stage of their practice, whether emerging, established or self-taught.

Applicants must be over the age of 18.

Applicants must be based in north and west Lancashire, including Lancaster, Morecambe, Carnforth, the Lune Valley, Wyre, Blackpool, Preston and Blackburn.

We particularly encourage applications from artists from Global Majority communities, disabled artists, LGBTQIA+ artists and others currently underrepresented within visual arts.

## Artwork Guidelines

We welcome both existing and new work.

We welcome painting, sculpture, installation, photography, film and video, digital media, textiles and printmaking. Please note that we cannot accept artwork made from biological materials.

Because gallery space is limited, most selected works will need to be modest in scale. If you're proposing installation, audiovisual work or larger-scale work, please include dimensions and any technical requirements.

If you're unsure whether your work is suitable, we'd be happy to have an informal conversation before you apply. Please get in touch with our Assistant Curator, Jacob Cordingley at [jacob@lancastarts.org](mailto:jacob@lancastarts.org)



*Julius Bissier's work invites careful looking and quiet attention, reminding us that dissent is not always loud. Sometimes it lies in persistence, subtlety and making space for alternative ways of seeing.*

## What We're Looking For

DISSENT WORKS is a curated exhibition.

We're looking for thoughtful, well-made work that responds to the theme in an interesting way and contributes to the exhibition as a whole.

Applications will be considered on:

- the quality of the work
- how it responds to the theme
- how it sits alongside works from the Lancaster University Art Collection
- how it contributes to the exhibition as a whole

Selected artists will receive a **£65 contribution towards exhibiting their work.**



*Howard Hodgkin refused easy categorisation throughout his career. His work reminds us that dissent can begin simply by choosing your own path.*

## Important Dates

Applications close: **24 August 2026**

Applicants notified: **7 September 2026**

Artwork delivery: **By 18 September 2026**

Exhibition: **28 September – 17 October 2026**

Artwork collection: **By 30 October 2026**

## How to Apply

Before applying, please read this Open Call carefully.

**The application asks just three questions. Please limit your answers to no more than 200 words for each question.**

### 1. Tell us about the work you are submitting.

Describe the artwork and anything you think is important for us to know about it.

### 2. How does your work respond to the theme of DISSENT?

We're interested in the many ways artists interpret dissent. Tell us about your own response.

### 3. Why do you think this work would contribute to this exhibition?

Selected works will be exhibited alongside the Lancaster University Art Collection. We'd like to understand why you think your work would make an interesting contribution to the exhibition as a whole.

#### You'll also be asked to:

- provide artwork details
- upload 2–5 JPEG images of your submitted work (or an MP4 for video work)
- tell us about any technical or installation requirements
- complete a short declaration

#### Additional guidelines for submissions:

- Physical artwork that requires framing should be no larger than 63 cm x 78 cm
- Larger artworks that do not require a frame (such as canvas or textile) must be no more than 180cm x 180cm
- Sculptures must be no more than 100 cm in length, height and width.
- Video work can be no more than 1GB and in MP4 format. Applications are made using our online application form [here](#). If the online form isn't the best way for you to apply, please contact Jacob Cordingley and we'll be happy to discuss an alternative at [jacob@lancastearts.org](mailto:jacob@lancastearts.org)

**Explore the Lancaster University Art Collection [here](#)** to discover more about the collection and the artists it includes.

## **About Lancaster Arts**

Lancaster Arts is the professional arts organisation of Lancaster University and a National Portfolio Organisation funded by Arts Council England.

Through our annual themes, we bring artists, researchers and communities together through exhibitions, performances, residencies and public events.

We will invite all who submit an application to the Private View on 2 October at 5:30pm at the Peter Scott Gallery.

We look forward to receiving your application!

## **Contact**

Jacob Cordingley: [jacob@lancasterarts.org](mailto:jacob@lancasterarts.org)



Where ideas, people and places connect