

## On Belonging: a new commission with Lancaster Arts

Following an extraordinary year, Lancaster Arts is creating a new artist commission to explore what belonging means to us in 2021, seeking new perspectives on identity and place that have been underrepresented in our programme. **On Belonging** is a new commission for artists of colour<sup>1</sup> who live and work in the north of England.

This commission has evolved from our work with the national [Diverse Actions](#)<sup>2</sup> programme (in partnership with Live Art UK 2018/19) and our ongoing interest in Place. Our previous commissions as part of this programme were with Maya Chowdhry and [Fabiola Santana](#). As a result of our work with Diverse Actions, we wanted to address what we saw as a gap in our programme and support more inclusive representation in Live Art throughout the north of England.

**On Belonging** will result in an event or experience that will take place in the Lancaster District in 2021.

We are excited to receive proposals to make new work that responds to one or some of the following prompts:

- What does it mean to belong?
- What is needed to belong?
- What makes us feel connected to a place or each other?
- Is belonging what makes society possible?
- How have identity and belonging been affected by the life-changing events of the last year?

### Who can apply?

We seek applications from artists or collectives of colour, acknowledging the inadequacy and limitations of this terminology (please see the glossary for further clarification of our usage) and who are:

- Based in the North of England (encompassing Northumberland, Tyne & Wear, Tees Valley, Cumbria, Durham, Yorkshire, Lancashire, Greater Manchester, Merseyside, Cheshire).

- Seeking to try something new/take a new direction with their work through this commission.
- Mid-career artists: you must be able to evidence a significant and sustained professional body of work; a record of exhibitions, commissions, projects or self-directed creative work.
- Artists who are interested in building a relationship with the people in Lancaster District (Lancaster, Morecambe and surrounding rural area).

### **Other considerations for your proposal**

- We are seeking Live Art that is interdisciplinary<sup>3</sup>, site-specific or site-responsive. “*Whatever it might look like, and wherever it may take place, Live Art always explores the possibilities of the live event and the ways we can experience it*” ([Live Art Development Agency](#)).
- The work should consider live and online components as a recognition of the constraints of the Covid 19 pandemic as well as the challenges of access; we are keen to build on the learning of 2020.
- The timeframe of the commission is divided into development and then delivery phases taking place in 2021 with final completion including evaluation by December 10<sup>th</sup> 2021.
- We welcome proposals that articulate a complex view of belonging with both positive and challenging dimensions of the concept.
- The commission will incorporate a [Creative Gathering](#)<sup>4</sup> at the start of the commission to explore your initial ideas, and another at the end to reflect on outcomes.

### **What does the On Belonging commission offer?**

- £ 3,500 to cover artist fees, materials, travel and accommodation
- Lancaster Arts Producers will support this commission with documentation, marketing and evaluation.
- In kind support: This commission will begin with a discussion about ideas and opportunities. Lancaster Arts can normally offer making space (rehearsal rooms, theatre, gallery, etc.), negotiated producer support, technical support, access to academic research and brokering with locally based community groups.
- Time and space to seek other, additional or complimentary funding; although your proposal must include a plan, if additional funding is not awarded.

### **How to apply?**

Please visit our website to familiarise yourself with our work, paying particular attention to our recent Diverse Actions commission by [Fabiola Santana](#).

Please submit the information requested on [the application form](#), or send a video including the same to [producers@lancasterarts.org](mailto:producers@lancasterarts.org)

## **Timeline**

Call out: 26 January 2021

Application Deadline: Midnight 28 February 2021

Shortlisting and offer made: Week commencing 8 March 2021

Development period: March – August 2021

Project or presentation takes place: September – November 2021

Evaluation: December 2021

If you have any specific questions related to the commission, or if you have any access requirements regarding submitting a proposal please contact [producers@lancasterarts.org](mailto:producers@lancasterarts.org). We can provide an audio version of the brief and application form and would be happy to offer further explanation of anything that seems unclear.

If you would like an informal discussion about this opportunity, please get in touch at the same address.

## **Working with Lancaster Arts**

[Lancaster Arts](#) is nationally acclaimed for the presentation, creation and development of innovative contemporary work across art forms.

Our strapline reads: 'Where ideas, creativity and people connect' and we are committed to ensuring this weaves throughout all of our work.

We are committed to nurturing artistic development through the exploration of new ideas and challenging boundaries of practice inside and outside our venues (the Nuffield theatre, the Peter Scott Gallery, the Great Hall) and support work that happens across the Lancaster University campus as well as in partner venues and spaces across the region. We are situated within a world-class university and support and broker relationships with academic colleagues. We also have long standing relationships with a variety of community-based groups and our local museums, schools and libraries.

Lancaster Arts has a long-term attention to exploring place and what this means to us all now. Some examples of previous commissions that have addressed place in very different ways are:

[This Place Project](#)

[These Hills are Ours](#)

[Taking the Time](#)

**Lancaster Arts** presents annual thematic seasons, in which the work we present and commission reflects a variety of interpretations of the chosen theme. We adapted our thematic approach to respond to the Covid-19 crisis which led to a body of work called [Breathing Space](#). In 2021, the theme of Water will inform our work. We have a long-standing commitment to exploring 'place' and what this means to us all now.

- You will be supported in developing your **On Belonging** commission by the Lancaster Arts Creative Producing team. We hope this commission will be the beginning of a long and mutually beneficial relationship. We will connect **On Belonging** to our broader programme and activities.
- We are committed to foregrounding the perspectives of those with marginalised identities, in recognition of our responsibility as an organisation.
- We will host a visit to Lancaster at the start of the developmental process where you can meet the Lancaster Arts team, see our venues but importantly, visit the area you most want to explore and hopefully connect you with the relevant groups or individuals you would like to meet.
- We will take a long view, staying in touch throughout the development of the commission. You can expect a transparent process: at the beginning of our working relationship, we will establish key milestones and jointly design a support agreement. This will enable us to establish a clear and effective way of working with you while remaining prepared for the unexpected.

Thank you for your interest in the **On Belonging** commission. We are excited to receive your proposal!

#### <sup>1</sup> **Artists of colour**

We recognise that grouping people together by nationality and ethnicity in this way is inherently problematic and that language evolves. In this context by 'artists of colour' we mean people of African, Asian, Middle Eastern, Caribbean, Indigenous and ethnically diverse heritages. We have used

various research documents to inform our decision, including this [statement](#) from [Arts Inc.](#)

<sup>2</sup> From the [Diverse Actions report](#): 'Ordinarily it is difficult for artists of colour to have access to funds to make work. [Via Diverse Actions] the LAUK network [was] utilised to share opportunities and make work visible, and by default more artists of colour [were] engaged. For artists to fully excel and create, they desire the freedom to not have to conform to expectations from stereotypes and the 'diversity' label.'

### <sup>3</sup> **Interdisciplinary**

Combining or involving different artforms and practices.

### <sup>4</sup> **Creative Gathering**

[Creative Gatherings](#) are meeting spaces with a difference, bringing together a diverse range of people, from a variety of backgrounds, interests and sectors, in order to investigate themes of interest. They incorporate a methodology that is based upon creative practices in the arts. The gatherings are neutral forums, facilitated by people with experience of creative practice and offer safe spaces for provocation and challenge that in turn lead to fresh thinking and new perspectives.