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**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

ARTIST COMMISSION BRIEF

Stories, Myths and Legends of Church Ope Cove

Working in partnership with b-side, Portland Museum wish to commission an artist to create work responding to the history and environment of Wakeham and Church Ope area of the Isle of Portland, Dorset. Expressions of interest are invited from artists working in any media to undertake a period of research resulting in a final work to be hosted by the museum in September and October 2020, and included in the biennial b-side festival 5 -13 September 2020.

Background:

Portland is a curious island with a very particular history and ecology. It forms part of the Jurassic Coast of Dorset and is approached via a narrow causeway. A hulk of limestone, bounded by steep cliffs and treacherous seas, it is unique, unlike anywhere else in Dorset. Its coastal edges are subject to the forces of nature, eroded by the sea, landslips and rock falls, its interior removed by quarrying and mining. Prior to the first road bridge built in 1839 linking it to the mainland, Portland was an isolated agricultural community sustained by farming and fishing and with its own individual ways and customs. However the island has been dramatically changed and influenced over the years by quarrying along with military appropriation and secret experimentation, resulting in what is now widely regarded as an industrial landscape and economy. The story of its extraordinary past is told in the collections held by the islands museum.

Portland Museum is housed in two 17th Century cottages in Wakeham, one of Portland's earliest settlements, situated on the eastern side of the island above Church Ope Cove - one of the few places the steep sided island could be accessed. The area is richly layered in history with a ruined medieval castle and church associated with Vikings, smugglers and pirates. Related artefacts from the church are held in the museum. The Church Ope area attracts much public interest but physical access to parts is restricted or difficult for many.

The museum is about to embark on a community led research project to explore the history of this area with the aim of enhancing interpretation and access to the museum's collections as well as engaging, diversifying and increasing audiences. Guided and supported by a Research Coordinator, local residents will research and gather together facts, stories, myths and legends about the Church Ope area and its context. This community research will involve walks, visits to sites and the use of records and archives, and the sharing of people's experiences and memories. The information and understanding gathered will be collated and recorded into a report linking to the museum's collection and the wider history of Portland. This report will be used to inform and inspire new interpretation materials for the museum and an artist commission to help share the learning with residents and visitors to Portland.

The commission is funded by Arts Council England and will be managed by b-side, an arts organisation based on Portland. b-side commissions artists from all disciplines to make site specific artworks for the Isle of Portland and holds a biennial festival to showcase the work. b-side's ethos is to develop projects that sustain or enhance the distinctive geographical character of a place - its environment, heritage, aesthetics, culture, and well being of residents.

Further background info:

<https://www.portlandhistory.co.uk/>

<http://www.portlandmuseum.co.uk/>

<https://b-side.org.uk/>

Commission Details

The commission offers the opportunity for an artist to respond to research about the Church Ope area gathered by the community research team. The work can be in any media and should aim to create a focal attraction for the museum and passing visitors going to Church Ope Cove - increasing visitor numbers, not just from the local community, but to widen the museum's appeal for tourists as a whole.

The commissioned work is expected to be temporary - based at the museum over the nine day period of the b-side festival in September 2020 with a continuation until the museum closes for the winter at the end of October - but will include some form of legacy such as the design of a souvenir product or publication to be sold in the Museum shop. There is a possibility that the work, or a further development of it, could become a permanent feature of the museum and this will be negotiated with the artist at a later date.

Fee: £4000 to include artist fee and all costs including materials, production, installation and de-installation of work.

Expenses: An additional allowance of up to £950 is available for travel and accommodation to cover research including initial research days in October/November, installation/de-installation of work and attendance for 4 days during the festival.

Deadline for applications: Midnight Sunday 1 September 2019

- Applications are invited from artists at any career stage and working in any media. The artwork can take any form and can include events and activities.
- The artist will be selected by representatives from b-side and Portland Museum on the basis of their expression of interest with a final proposal agreed with the museum and b-side in spring 2020 following the research period.
- The community led research will be undertaken in October and November 2019. The artist is expected to be available for some 'on site' research during this period alongside the research group, participating in some research activities.
- The commissioned artist will be invited to join other b-side artists for residential research & development days 18-20 October 2019.
- Material and information gathered by the community research team will be made available to the artist to inform the artist commission.
- It is expected that the final outcome will be located at the museum but could include use of the wider Church Ope site, including the ruins of St Andrews Church but a key aspect must be sited within the museum building or grounds.
- The museum is in two small cottages crammed with artefacts and has limited space but a small courtyard and garden offer greater scope for developing larger work.

- It is desirable that an aspect of the artist commission will include the design or development of a souvenir product or publication to be sold in the museum shop. A separate budget is available to cover the reproduction or print costs for this, which will be discussed as part of the artists final proposal.
- The b-side festival takes place over a nine-day period with installations and events at a number of locations across the island. This commission will be located in the museum and form part of the programme of the festival.
- The commission will be managed by b-side in close association with Portland Museum
- The artwork will be completed and installed by Friday 4th September 2020 and remain at the museum throughout the b-side festival period of 5-13 September and until the end of October when the museum closes for the winter.
- There is scope for the artwork, or a second stage, to become a more permanent feature of the museum. This will be discussed and developed with the artist and museum as part of the final proposal.
- The commissioned artist is expected to play an active part in audience engagement during the research & development phase and be in attendance with their work for a minimum of 4 days during the b-side festival. This may include walks, talks or other activities.
- The selected artist will have access to curatorial and production support, plus assistance with installation.
- The £4000 fee covers the artist fee and all costs including research and development, materials, production, transportation, installation and de-installation of work.
- An allowance of up to £950 is available towards travel and accommodation to cover research including initial research days in October/November, installation/de-installation of work and attendance during the festival.
- The artist is responsible for transportation, installation/de-installation of their work
- The commission and any associated events or activities will be promoted by the museum and b-side as part of the festival marketing.
- b-side and Portland Museum are committed to minimising our environmental impact. We encourage artists to consider the carbon footprint related to the production, materials, installation and any activities as part of their project proposals, including to re-purpose or recycle all materials from installations and performances.
- b-side and Portland Museum value diversity and are working to make the application and commissioning process accessible to all. We welcome proposals from those currently underrepresented in the arts particularly BAME and disabled artists. We will endeavour to work with artists to mitigate barriers to making their work for the festival. We welcome access documents from artists at any stage of the process. More info on access documents <https://www.accessdocsforartists.com/>

HOW TO APPLY

Applications must be made online via Curatorspace applications portal [CLICK HERE TO APPLY](#).

Please complete the online application form giving the following info:

- An expression of interest outlining how you might approach this project, including any initial ideas plus an indication of how you would use the budget.
This may be provided EITHER in writing using the online form OR as a video recording uploaded to YouTube or Vimeo (5 mins max).
- Any resources or technical support you would need access to.
- A summary description of your practice.
- A short summary CV
- Confirmation that you will be available for on site research during October/November 2019 including at least the first day of the residential R&D days 18-20 October.
- Images (10 max) or URLs/ links to other media documentation of your previous work.

Deadline: Applications to be submitted no later than midnight Sunday 1 September 2019

- All applications will be acknowledged on receipt.
- All unsuccessful applications will be notified at earliest opportunity.
- All shortlisted artists will be notified by 16 September and invited to an interview (via Skype) week commencing 23 September 2019
- We regret it is not possible to give feedback for unsuccessful applications

Any queries please contact: amanda@b-side.org.uk

www.b-side.org.uk

