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**Artist Commission Brief:   
High Wycombe, Castlefield and Micklefield Libraries 2020-21**

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| **Budget:** £10,000  **Deadline:** Wednesday 16 September 2020  **Interviews:** w/c 28 September 2020 | **Suggested start date:** Mid October 2020  **Suggested end date:** End March 2021 |

**Introduction**

This commission is part of a three-year project funded by the Rothschild Foundation, to create the confidence, experience and networks for the communities of Buckinghamshire to present and commission art and live performance. The overall project is managed by Farnham Maltings who are working with Essex Cultural Diversity Project (ECDP) on this commission.

For this particular commission, we are looking for a creative practitioner(s) to work with and within three sites: High Wycombe, Castlefield and Micklefield Libraries. **We are inviting inspiring project proposals from all creative practitioners, including artists, poets, writers, dancers, musicians and theatre groups, that respond to the following aims:**

* To improve equality of access to cultural activities and opportunities in Buckinghamshire via libraries
* To provide opportunities for creative practitioners from diverse backgrounds
* To engage and involve local communities, removing barriers to participation in the arts

The project should be bold, distinctive, relevant and excellent. It should also include an element of liveness such as a performance and/or a final exhibition event, and it should create a legacy for the libraries, their users and the communities they serve. As a place-based commission, the project should not only provide an opportunity for creative practitioners to explore diversity through their work and develop their socially engaged practice, but also aim to capture the ‘spirit of place’, help connect communities and give people a platform to tell their stories in their own words. For this particular commission we are looking to engage a variety of age ranges, to reflect the cross-generational make-up of the communities each library serves.

In light of the recent coronavirus outbreak and potential second wave this winter, we would expect creative practitioner(s) to remain responsive, creative and flexible. Although a live and in person approach to the project and participation should be the aimed for delivery method, the appointed artist needs to be able to quickly adapt to external circumstances for the project to continue, and we’d like this to be demonstrated in the proposal

We are also keen that this opportunity is used by the appointed creative practitioner to learn and stretch their practice, and that this learning is shared.

Although preferred, it is not necessary for the appointed creative practitioner to live or work in Buckinghamshire, but we would expect them to spend a significant amount of time in the libraries and the surrounding areas, across the duration of the project, and they should have good knowledge of High Wycombe.

This is the second of a series of three commissions taking place in Buckinghamshire from 2019 to 2022. For more information about Tom Cross’ commission in Aylesbury Library and from ECDPs wider programme, visit <https://essexcdp.com/commissions/>.

**About us**

Since 2007 Essex Cultural Diversity Project (ECDP) has been bringing together artists, museums, libraries, performers and writers with local authorities and commissioners to improve and enhance artistic and cultural diversity, ensure that excellence is thriving, and that cultural integration and understanding is supported and enhanced through arts and cultural activity. ECDP is an Arts Council National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) working across the East and South East of England to support diversity in arts and cultural practice.

Farnham Maltings works as a regional development organisation across South East England. As a NPO, Farnham Maltings runs a programme of work designed to increase the range, quality and audience for theatre across the south east region, has established a network of 200 venues who jointly programme and support a south east regional ecology, creates work for village halls, produces a cohort of the regions’ most promising talent and leads a national programme to internationalise the independent theatre sector in partnership with the British Council and UKTI.

Buckinghamshire Library Service is run by Buckinghamshire Council and has an extensive reach with 30 libraries across the county providing an important service for many local communities, particularly those in rural areas. The council has recently brought together its libraries and cultural services, is re-imagining the library offer and, by supporting the delivery of the new Bucks Cultural Strategy, it recognises the potential to build on their role as accessible community hubs.

**About the Three Libraries and their communities**

The three libraries hosting this commission fall into the most diverse wards in the county, and also the most deprived: the suburbs of Castlefield and Micklefield in particular have high levels of deprivation compared to the rest of the area. The three sites have been selected not only because of their proximity to each other, but also because of their focus on community and the opportunity to tap into existing strong networks.

**High Wycombe Library** is housed within the Eden Centre, a new shopping and entertainment complex that opened in 2008. The complex is part of a major regeneration of High Wycombe in a bid to transform the town into a regional shopping destination.

**Castlefield Library** is run by the Karima Foundation in partnership with Bucks Library Services. Managed by a project team of local volunteers, the library was relocated to the Community Centre and has seen a significant increase in usage as a result The Karima al Marwaziyya Foundation (KMF) was set up in 1998 by a group of volunteers based in High Wycombe with the aim to support young people, help develop a clear British Muslim identity and sense of belonging and social responsibility, and allow access to Islamic teaching for the benefit of the whole community. https://www.karima.org.uk/library

**Micklefield Library** is based in one of the communities benefitting from the Big Local project; in 2014 the communities of Marsh and Micklefield were invited to take part in this experimental community project, which gave funding to residents in 150 areas across England to create lasting change in their communities. Since then a group of residents have been working together, driven by the values of Empowerment, Enjoyment and Inclusivity. https://marshandmicklefield.com/

**Application process**

The successful creative practitioner(s) will be selected by a panel of representatives from ECDP, Farnham Maltings and Buckinghamshire Council. A shortlist will be made from the received applications based on how well they meet the above aims and these will be invited to interview to talk further about their proposal before a final decision is made. The commission will be managed by ECDP and the commissioned artist will receive ongoing support, advocacy and advice from ECDP and Farnham Maltings throughout.

As work will take place in the library and other public spaces, safeguarding children and vulnerable people is paramount; a full risk assessment will be required for this work and valid DBS accreditation in place if required.

**Timescales for Delivery**

It is expected that work on the commission will begin in October 2020 and be finished and invoiced for prior to the end of March 2021. A final timetable for delivery, including milestones to monitor progress against the stated aims, will be established with the successful applicant and payments will be made against this timetable.

**Budget**

The commission budget is £10,000 and will be treated as a grant. This is inclusive of all expenses and must therefore cover fees, travel, materials and marketing. Some promotion and advertising will be undertaken by the partners, at their cost, and this will discussed in due course. Payments will be made in instalments, on receipt of invoice, and subject to progress against achieving agreed activity as outlined above. If this is a joint commission one artist/organisation will need to be the project lead and all payments will be made to them.

The £10,000 can be used as match-funding for a larger project but this should not affect the ability to deliver the project nor the timelines for delivery set out above. If this is the preferred approach then please make this clear in your response and explain how the larger project still meets this brief.

**Responding to this Commission**

To apply for this commission please email Katy.Snelling@farnhammaltings.com and include the following:

* An outline of the artistic concept for the commission, including the proposed community engagement process, intended audience and legacy, and alternative engagement plans in case of a second wave of coronavirus (no more than 1 side of A4).
* A brief description on why you are interested in this commission at this time, how your project promotes diversity and any relevant connections with Buckinghamshire (no more than 1 side of A4).
* A biography/company description with relevant previous work (no more than 2 sides of A4). Please include links to relevant websites and social media/media.
* An outline budget breakdown showing how you would utilise the £10,000.
* An approximate timeline for the work.
* The signed declaration and monitoring form included below.

Please ensure that proposals are received by midnight on Wednesday 16 September. Interviews will be on held in High Wycombe at the end of September, and will include an opportunity for a 15-minute presentation on your proposal.

**Additional information**

The Buckinghamshire Cultural Strategy recognises that culture is an important issue as the area changes and develops with major new house growth and economic development. There is recognition that culture can play a greater role in reaching and engaging more people across all communities, *‘being fully inclusive, reflecting the county’s diversity of perspectives, ideas, skills and aspirations; and securing sufficient levels of financial investment to attend to the inequality of opportunity that our residents face’*.

Culture and the arts are seen as critical to the future success of Buckinghamshire – as a way of giving everyone a voice and an opportunity to express their views and opinions on the changes that will affect local communities over many years to come through new housing and business growth. For this to happen there needs to be more opportunities for artists to work within local communities, and libraries offer a unique and accessible space.

To read the Buckinghamshire Cultural Strategy in full visit:

* <https://buckinghamshireculture.wordpress.com/cultural-strategy>[essexcdp.com](http://www.essexcdp.com)
* farnhammaltings.com
* <https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/libraries/>

**Artist Commission:**

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**Declaration**

* I have read the details and terms above and my submission is my own work.
* I understand that this is a grant and not a contract of employment. I am able to provide evidence from HRMC of appropriate company or self-employed status. I undertake to manage the budget legally and responsibly to fulfil the aims stated.
* I will comply with Buckinghamshire Council safeguarding policies and undertake a DBS accreditation if necessary.

Name:

Signed: Date:

**Equality and Diversity Monitoring**

All the partners are committed to ensuring equality of opportunity and as such monitor applications to measure progress towards this aim. We would therefore be grateful if you would answer the following questions. If you are applying jointly or as part of a company the lead applicant should respond.

How would you identify your gender?

Which Ethnic group do you perceive you belong to?

Which age group do you belong to?

Do you consider yourself to have disability or health condition?

Please provide your postcode

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