



Creative Catalysts

Exploring approaches and the features of practice that enable community connection

Artist Brief

Project Overview:

We invite proposals from experienced artists to lead an enquiry-based community engagement programme aimed at fostering curiosity and wonder within the local communities of Coundon and Witton Park in County Durham. This artist residency is generously funded with £10,000 and offers the unique opportunity for two artists to collaborate closely within the two identified communities from May 2024- August 2024. The project aims to explore different types of invitations and innovative practice that can captivate and guide the community to engage in ways meaningful to them and the places where they live. We would like to hear from artists who use a range of methodologies and art forms that can enable multiple entry points and possibilities for residents to engage and explore their own creative capacities.

Project Aims:

To ignite curiosity: develop and employ a range of creative strategies that ignite curiosity and wonder within the local communities, encouraging everyone involved (*including you) to be able to explore and express ideas and develop lines of enquiry, to participate and fuel a sense of discovery.

To develop approaches to community engagement: create the conditions for inclusive and participatory processes that involve residents in shaping and contributing to the creative process, fostering a sense of connection.

To explore innovative practice: explore and implement innovative practices that encourage those involved in the collaboration to ask questions, test ideas and reflect on these. Work together and alongside Northern Heartlands to create space within this opportunity to capture and record your reflections about this practice

To make creative thinking/processes visible: use artistic vehicles and strategies to explore routes to engagement and connection. Work alongside Northern Heartlands to articulate these processes and inform approaches to developing creativity.

To reflect and learn: take this opportunity to reflect on practice and help Northern Heartlands to better understand the features of artistic processes that can inspire engagement and enquiry. Exploring opportunities that enable creativity to develop (inquisitiveness, imagination, persistence, discipline and collaboration) and the conditions which can help enable this.



Project approach:

Be Collaborative: work alongside people, understand interests, opportunities and challenges

Be Enquiry based: catalyse opportunities that spark curiosity and wonder

Be Reflective: include discussion, sharing events and short report focusing on the features of practice/process that enable curiosity and wonder (report could be in a range of creative formats and involve the people you have worked alongside, a zine, a short film...)

Project to involve:

- Artist residencies in both Coundon and Witton Park. Supported by Northern Heartlands, work with community leaders to explore opportunities for connection and potential ongoing activity that could develop beyond the residency.
- Sharing/learning event(s) exploring the features of practice that have enabled community connection
- Short report/learning tool that captures and documents the learning from the process.

We would be interested in proposals from individuals or two artists together.

Budget: (to include travel, materials and VAT)

£10,000

Proposal requirements:

- A project proposal of no more than 400 words outlining your approach and an indication of some of the creative strategies/methodologies you will explore
- CV – including examples of similar/previous work
- Budget Breakdown/Overview
- Two referees including a contact email and phone number

If you require information in another format, please let us know.

Selection process & timeline:

- ‘Find Out More’ event – Tuesday 9th April 2024, Coundon and Leeholme Welfare Hall.
- Proposal deadline Monday 29th April 2024
- Review and shortlisting Wednesday 1 May 2024
- Shortlisting short discussion (stipend): Friday 10 May 2024
- Decision and contracting: Week commencing Monday 13 May 2024
- Residency begins: From Monday 20 May 2024
- Complete all activity: September 2024
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Please send your proposal to info@northernheartlands.org

Please put **CREATIVE CATALYSTS** in the subject title

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Some Background information:

Witton Park

(notes taken from articles by Chris Lloyd, Historian and Editor of the Northern Echo)

Bolckow & Vaughan established blast furnaces at Paradise Cottage in 1846 beside the new Bishop Auckland to Crook railway and Witton Park developed as an ironworks. In the 1881 census the village had a population of 3,982. They lived in 650 houses and they were served by 42 shops, 21 pubs, seven official places of worship (although there were perhaps 15 places where people of smaller denominations gathered), two stations, two police bases, a school, a doctor, an institute... however a year after the census the iron works closed.

From 1951, Durham County Council tried to address some of the challenges faced by its formerly industrial settlements by drawing up lists of places it felt had viable futures. These places went into the top categories and had some investment made. Witton Park (and 121 other communities) were placed on the lowest list, Category D, which received no investment.

Coundon

Coundon is an old mining village and former civil parish in the County Durham district, in County Durham, North East of England. Coundon - Cunadun, means "hill of cows". In the railway era once it was reached by the Chilton branchline of the Clarence Railway in 1835. Its population in 1801 had been 163; by 1871 it was 3,513; by 1911, it was 6,912, in 2011 the population was 7139.