

The Renewal Trust's Creative Programme at Place:

Artist Commission 2018

Artist Brief

We are seeking applications from artists who work in a socially responsive way, who would be interested in exploring notions of women's beauty across the diverse communities of Sneinton, Nottingham, over a 1-3 month project or residency.

Background

The Renewal Trust is a Regeneration Trust, offering a range of services to our two key areas of benefit, St Ann's and Sneinton. These include support into employment, affordable business space, advice for community groups including small grants, a sports centre and sports programme.

The Renewal Trust's creative programme is now in its 6th year, having worked with over 2,500 people in these neighbourhoods. The foundation of our programme has been excellence and artistic quality, enabling us to work with a range of artists and organisations including Birmingham Royal Ballet, Dance4, fashion photographer Rankin and Culture24, and The Caravan Gallery. Following a successful application to Arts Council England, our creative programme is now based in the Creative Quarter on Sneinton Market, an area at the heart of our two very different and diverse communities.

<http://renewaltrust.co.uk/what-we-do/creative-projects/>

As a regeneration trust, we seek to involve residents as participants, audiences and/or makers in art projects of the highest calibre, bringing art to people who would normally not engage in arts and culture. Commissioning and involving communities in that process is a completely new way of working for us - one which, we believe, will involve local people more directly in the making and shaping of art in their neighbourhoods, as well as offering artists the opportunity to create a bespoke response to these unique places.

We know - and statistics tell us - that many of our residents face a broad range of social problems. However, Sneinton is diverse and vibrant, home to an English community of generations, a long-standing Pakistani Muslim community, young professionals including artists and teachers, as well as being a destination for new arrivals that include Polish, Czech and Polish Roma, and Asylum Seekers from the African diaspora amongst others. Sneinton itself is rich in history with a working windmill (birthplace of mathematician George Green), the William Birthplace Museum, and woodland, as well as the cultural histories of those who make it their home.

We have recently undertaken a series of community conversations across Sneinton, to uncover key themes and to inform our next steps. One of the areas of concern is the lack of integration across our communities. Whilst people of different cultural backgrounds co-exist alongside one another, we are increasingly aware that there is little appetite for coming together and possibly overcoming some preconceptions about one another. A conversation with a mixed group of women at the Muslim Community Organisation (MCO) coffee morning told us that the most popular activities that attracted women, including many from the local Pakistani Muslim community, was their season of beauty and pampering sessions. Apparently, these were oversubscribed from across all cultures.

Theme

Throughout our community conversations, notions of beauty have reoccurred. From questions about how to make homemade, natural lotions and potions to the need for women to take time for themselves through receiving beauty and 'pampering' treatments as self-care, women's beauty has emerged as our key theme. A conversation with MCO suggests that this is a rich area, with the potential to explore depth and meaning across both Muslim faith and other non-faith-based heritage and practices.

What would we like to see happen

We would like this project to create a change in how local people see themselves, each other, and what is possible where they live.

Given some of the cultural sensitivities involved in this particular project, we are seeking applications from female artists only.

We are not being prescriptive about the artform or method, as we would like this document to form the basis of a discussion that will shape a project deliverable within the budget and capacity available. However, given the need identified through our conversations, we do want to see included beauty sessions for women locally (with some sessions open/available for men/members of our LGBTQ communities who identify as women), either as part of the engagement process or the project itself. These sessions can be lead either by the artist or in collaboration with a beauty specialist/s as appropriate.

Work developed through the residency should respond to the people and place of Sneinton, for example by getting people talking to each other, reframing the relationship the community have with each other, their cultural practices, and their relationship with place and each other.

Through the involvement of local residents in the process and possibly making, the artist/s will be able to create a final artwork that will bring a new way of thinking and working to the neighbourhood.

The focus on quality and professionalism of engagement and the resulting artwork will help people feel differently about where they live, what is possible, and what art can be.

We hope that through this project we will create a greater, shared understanding of cultural similarities as well as creating curiosity for and understanding of differences.

Who we are looking for

The successful artist/s will have experience of and confidence in working in different environments and being responsive to change. The artist will be supported by the Creative Director and Assistant Producer (both part-time) at Place and by MCO. However, our communities are well-known for being reticent to engage with art, so a confidence and willingness to find ways to build local relationships and encourage groups and individuals to take part will be necessary.

Ideally, the successful artist/s will have a cultural awareness and sensitivity towards working with people from different cultural backgrounds, in particular women from the Muslim faith, though support and information will be provided by MCO.

Structure

The project can take place over a minimum of one month to a maximum of three months, to be completed by **end of November 2018**. We have left the structure open in this way to allow for flexibility on behalf of the artist/s.

We will build regular reviews into the structure to ensure the artist and commissioners are happy with the process.

Artist/s will be commissioned by Place, a project strand of The Renewal Trust, but will need to work in partnership with MCO and any other partners/groups including our steering group.

The steering group to include a representative each from Place, MCO, an arts partner, and at least one of the local communities that we serve in Sneinton.

Budget

The overall budget including contingency is £10,000.

This needs to cover:

- Artist/s fee including any collaborators
- Artist/s travel, accommodation and subsistence
- Final artwork production/and display or performance
- Materials
- Workshops and engagement (e.g. beauty sessions) including venue costs
- Any promotional materials e.g. posters and/or fliers
- Contingency

How to apply

- To apply please submit a 1,500 word proposal that outlines:
- What you propose to do and why you are interested in the commission
- A background to your practice and why you feel it to be relevant
- Three examples of past work / projects that you think demonstrate how your practice fits this brief
- Your methodology - ideas on where you might start, how you would get to know people and the area (drawing on how you have done this in the past)
- Any information regarding collaborators you might want to work with
- CV (in addition to the proposal)

Process

We will invite shortlisted artists for an in-depth interview with members of our steering group.

- **Deadline:** Please email applications to Suzannah Bedford, Creative Director suzannah@renewaltrust.org.uk by **midnight on Sunday 1st July 2018**
- **Shortlisting:** **Thursday 5th July** – we will call or email by **end of Friday 6th July**
- **Interview day:** **Thursday 12th July 2018**

Further information:

<http://mcon.org.uk/activities.html>

<http://www.muslimheritage.com/article/muslim-contribution-cosmetics>