

Open Call for Exhibition Commission

INTRODUCTION

We are seeking expressions of interest for an artist commission that explores the meaning and value of care in human relationships.

Public debate on care is typically limited by policy concerns about the economic costs of an ageing population and the anticipated impact on health and social care resources. It is also underpinned by an intrinsic fear and distancing from ageing inherent in our contemporary culture and the idea that independence and autonomy are to be valued above all else. This creates a shadow in our consciousness, often internalised by people as they age - that needing help essentially lowers our value as human beings and the ultimate goal should be that we remain totally independent of others when this is no longer realistic, possible or desirable.

Funded by Wellcome Trust (Research Enrichment), this commission opportunity responds to new research being undertaken by University of Brighton, University of Birmingham and University of Lincoln. The commissioning partnership (OPCARE) comprises the research teams at these universities, and three arts organisations: Fabrica gallery (Brighton & Hove), Ikon gallery (Birmingham) and Threshold who produce Frequency Festival (Lincoln) who will all present this new work and develop a programme of engagement around it between September 2019-June 2020.

This commission provides the opportunity for an artist to work with the research teams to expand the public conversation about care and open up a space to explore the universal human dilemmas that we may all face but not want to think about until they happen.

Deadline for expressions of interest: **14 January 2019 - 12 noon**

IKON



Threshold

FABRICA

BRIGHTON'S CENTRE FOR CONTEMPORARY ART



University of Brighton



**UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM**



**UNIVERSITY OF
LINCOLN**



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ABOUT THE COMMISSIONING PARTNERSHIP

BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

This commission opportunity is funded by Wellcome Trust (Research Enrichment). Strategically its focus is to enable new research undertaken by a team of researchers from the universities of Brighton, Birmingham and Lincoln to reach new audiences in meaningful and imaginative ways.

Artists are well-placed to engage with, and respond to, the complex matters that the researchers are uncovering and illuminate these visually without the constraints of language. Consequently, the researchers, have chosen to work with Fabrica, Ikon and Threshold to develop an artist commission in order to do this.

About the research

The research teams are looking at older people's experiences of funding their own social care. The research project is a collaboration between academic researchers, older people, community partners and key stakeholders in the health and social care sector and aims to co-produce knowledge of older people's experiences of self-funding in Brighton and Hove, Lincolnshire and Solihull. Data collection started in January 2018.

The research project is concerned with ethical issues in the self-funding landscape and understanding the context in which older people secure and manage their own care; and what this means in terms of risks and responsibilities for older people, their informal carers, social care practitioners, service providers and commissioners. Also, older people's perspectives tend to be marginalised, both in policy and practice, which are dominated by managerial concerns of resource allocation and service provision, and in research, where their voices are largely absent. The research teams are addressing this by working with older people as co-researchers and through knowledge exchange meetings with community partners in the health and social care sector, putting older people's lived experiences at the centre. These research 'clusters' have been established in Brighton, Solihull and Lincolnshire. The involvement of older co-researchers provides an additional layer of reflection and insight by including their own experiences of growing older, and their insights into the lived experiences of other older people encountering similar and familiar issues to those they may be facing themselves. The knowledge exchange meetings bring together practitioners, service providers, commissioners and researchers to discuss issues and themes emerging from the research. These meetings are creating space for dialogue and a deeper exploration of self-funded care from a range of perspectives.

Themes emerging from the research and knowledge exchanges

The contexts of ageing and how these impact on care:

- how older people negotiate the challenging tasks involved in managing care relationships with others they depend on at a time of heightened invisibility, reduced power, and increased vulnerability. Some of these are psychological and emotional, related to the impact of ageing, such as living with ill health, bereavement, coping with a loss of capacity and possibly contact with the outside world. All make a difference in how people feel about themselves and this in turn impacts on negotiating care relationships and the receiving of help.
- The ambivalence (of care receivers) over care, feeling conflict between their needs and those of their carers. Not knowing what to expect in relation to care and trying to understand the boundaries. For example, 'is it ok to say what I want?' 'should I expect the carers to come at the time that I would like?' 'I'm not really happy with the care I get but I'm grateful that I have any care'.

A sense of helplessness and difficulty in dealing with the unpredictability of the situation:

- 'who is going to turn up and what will it be like?' 'what if no one turns up?' and in the background, a constant fear that it doesn't take much for things to go wrong.
- the best care is versatile around the cared for person's capabilities and finding a creative solution through the care relationship. The difference when that happens is vast and what that can feel like for both the person receiving and the person giving care. Good care is about being able to respond to how somebody is feeling and thinking in their particular situation, and being attentive to how they respond to their care. Without that it can't be good because care is relational and interactive.

THE COMMISSION

Concept

This new commission provides the opportunity to create a compelling, emotionally engaging artwork that explores and challenges public perceptions about the meaning and value of care in human relationships. Through the artist's work we, the commissioners, wish to create the space for deeper reflection and consideration of philosophical issues underlying care, such as, interdependency, relationships and identity. The commission may be exhibited as an indoor or outdoor work, or as a series of screenings/events. It will provide the focal point for a programme of public engagement informed by the research findings on older people's lived experiences of care.

Criteria

The art work must be able to function at three separate and very different locations: Fabrica gallery, Ikon (at an on or offsite location yet to be determined) and at Frequency Festival (at one of various possible locations).

Consequently, we welcome expressions of interest from artists working with digital photographic media (including those with interactive, extended reality (XR), film and sound based practices). Applicants must be able to demonstrate a genuine interest in the concept and a strong track record in producing art works for unconventional/offsite locations.

We will favour expressions of interest that are experimental, interactive, reflect current thinking in arts practice, and that show a clear understanding of audiences.

Expressions of interest should:

- Make a clear point of connection with the concept set out above.
- Outline any areas or research, or past works, that have been undertaken in relation to the concept, and outline any further research that would need to be done.
- Describe how audiences could access and engage with the core ideas of the piece.

- Say whether the technical aspects of the proposed work are well tested or speculative, and the artist's track record in this area of technology.

Budget

The total budget for the production of the artist's work is **£24,000 (UK £)** and is inclusive of artist fees, travel, equipment, labour, material, assembly and testing costs, and VAT.

Education and participation

The artist commission will provide the focus for a rich public programme of education and participation activities, inviting viewers to reflect and draw on their own experiences and thoughts about care. These may include:

- An artist residency to run alongside the exhibition
- Artist and contextual talks, conversations and discussions
- 'Hands on' activities that explore ideas connected to the work
- Activities for online audiences

The production of the public programme will be participative and involve building trusting relationships between the researchers and arts organisations, and the commissioned artist(s). The artist(s) will be expected to contribute to this process but not lead it. The engagement programme will be funded via a separate budget.

TIMELINE & PROCESS

This call is for a short expression of interest.

Initial selection

The selection for expressions of interest will include representatives from Fabrica, Ikon and Threshold, University of Brighton, University of Birmingham and University of Lincoln and their co-researchers, where appropriate.

We anticipate shortlisting between 2-4 artists who will be invited for interview via Skype with representatives from Fabrica, Ikon, Threshold and University of Brighton.

Timeline

Monday 14 January 2019, 12 noon - Deadline for expressions of interest.

Tuesday 15 until Thursday 17 January 2019 – Applications assessed by representatives from Fabrica, Ikon, Threshold and University of Brighton.

Friday 18 January - Shortlisted artists will be notified and asked to confirm they can be interviewed on 25 January 2019.

25 January 2019 - Skype interview

30 January 2019 - Selected artist notified

February-August 2019 Artist Production Period

September 2019-June 2020 - Exhibitions/screenings and engagement events take place. The first exhibition of the artist work would take place in early October 2019.

HOW TO APPLY

Who Can Apply

- Artists based in the UK, and European Union.
- Artists who have been making work professionally for no less than two years and have a track record of producing large-scale installation and/or artworks for unconventional locations.

Submitting an expression of interest

Your expression of interest should include all of the following:

1. Your full name
2. Contact Details

Your full address, your phone number, your email address, your URL (or somewhere online that we can view your work)

3. Your statement

Please write a short statement which:

- Introduces yourself and your artistic practice
- Outlines your idea for the commission, and how you would approach it
- Outlines any areas or research or personal and/or professional experience that have been undertaken in relation to the concept, and outline any further research that would need to be done.
- Outlines how audiences might access/engage with the core ideas of the piece.
- Outlines the technical aspects of the proposed work and your competencies in this area.

N.B. Your submission should be no longer than 1000 words in total and should be sent as a PDF document.

Send it by email to: office@fabrica.org.uk with:

- a two-page CV
- a link to a website, or downloadable file, which contains documentation of your previous work.

DEADLINE: 14 January 2019 - 12 noon

About the Commissioning Partnership

The Research Teams:

The Brighton team is led by Dr Lizzie Ward who is a Principal Research Fellow in the School of Applied Social Science at the University of Brighton. Lizzie is a qualitative researcher with a background in community participatory research and working with older people as co-researchers. Dr Phil Locke is the Research Fellow working with the Brighton team of older co-researchers and Bea Gahagan, our community practitioner to carry out the research in Brighton and Hove.

The Lincolnshire team is led by Prof Mo Ray who is Professor of Health and Social Care in the School of Health and Social Care at the University of Lincoln. After qualifying as a social worker, Mo worked for many years as a social worker, care manager and Team Manager before entering academia. Dr Claire Markham is the Research Fellow working with the team of older co-researchers and Evergreen Care Trust to carry out the research in Lincolnshire.

The Solihull team is led by Dr Denise Tanner, Senior Lecturer in Social Work in the School of Social Policy at the University of Birmingham. Denise Tanner is a registered social worker and worked for 14 years in social work practice before joining academia. Dr Llinos Jehu is the Research Fellow in Solihull working with the team of older co-researchers and Age UK Solihull to carry out the research in Solihull.

The Arts Partnership:

Fabrica is a National Portfolio Organisation funded by Arts Council England. Fabrica has a strong track record in commissioning artists who explore end of life issues and the social dynamics of caring, and in developing audiences for this work (see links below). Fabrica has an established approach to partnership working regionally, nationally and internationally. As the lead arts partner for this commission Fabrica will be the main point of contact for the artist and is co-ordinating the arts partners and research teams to work together to deliver the commission and its associated activities, as a whole.

Video – The Interval and the Instant – Steven Eastwood

Insight into the commission: <http://thirdtext.org/eastwood-riley>

www.fabrica.org.uk

Threshold is a National Portfolio Organisation funded by Arts Council England, producing new media art since 1998, with specialisms in moving image, digital and emerging technologies. Threshold also produce and curate high-quality, no barriers festivals with a commitment to democratising arts engagement – enabling those who might not regularly attend gallery spaces to experience surprising and playful art that has meaningful relevance to their lives. Threshold are the festival Directors of Frequency festival, A Festival of Digital Culture. Frequency is a biennial festival hosted in the city of Lincoln, providing a platform to celebrate the pioneering spirit of digital innovation and culture through exhibition, creative collision and debate. The festival integrates art into Lincoln's landscape via non-traditional venues. It showcases artists' work from all over the world, using a historic city as its canvas and sharing it around the globe.

Threshold: <http://thresholdstudios.tv/about/>

Frequency Festival: <http://frequency.org.uk>

Ikon Gallery is an internationally acclaimed contemporary art venue located in Birmingham. Ikon is an educational charity and offers free entry to all. The gallery programme features artists from around the world, working in a variety of media, including sound, film, mixed media, photography, painting, sculpture and installation. Through its off-site programme, Ikon develops dynamic relationships between art, artists and audiences outside the gallery. Projects vary enormously in scale, duration and location, challenging expectations of where art can be seen and by whom. Education is at the heart of Ikon's activities, stimulating public interest in and understanding of contemporary visual art. Through a variety of talks, tours, workshops and seminars, our Learning team aims to build a meaningful relationship with Ikon's audience that enables visitors to engage with, discuss and reflect on contemporary art.

ikon-gallery.org