

● Birmingham

Big Art Project

2014 – 2018

Draft Artist Brief

Nov 2015

On behalf of Birmingham Big Art Foundation
Commissioning Agents: Eastside Projects

“The Birmingham Big Art Project is a fantastic example of local residents joining together to support culture in their local area. Innovative fundraising initiatives, such as this one, highlight the huge potential philanthropic giving has to support culture in the UK, and I wish the project every success.”

Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, the Rt Hon Sajid Javid.

“As we have seen with the example of the Angel of the North, public art can be a powerful symbol for a community and city. I am happy to hear that Birmingham is encouraging the public to help raise funds for the Birmingham Big Art Project. Empowering citizens through culture is a positive way of engaging the local community. Whether large or small, I hope Birmingham picks a work that will make the public proud, stand the test of time and act as a magnet for cultural tourism. I hope it also inspires other artists to create new works.”

Androulla Vassiliou, Europe’s Culture Commissioner.

Birmingham Big Art Project

Artist Brief

Outline Brief

The Birmingham Big Art Foundation is commissioning a major new work of public art for the city of Birmingham in partnership with The Birmingham Civic Society. The new work will be completed by April 2018.

Eastside Projects are the commissioning agents, responsible for curating the process and artwork. They will work closely with a Selection Panel of experts in the fields of contemporary and public art throughout this process.

Vision

The Birmingham Big Art Project believes that art is a vital part of our city's past, present and future. We imagine a new public artwork can support and expand the idea of a twenty first century city, develop new myths and perform an iconic function within Birmingham. We want an artist to engage with many layers of Birmingham, translating them into objects, scenarios or events that can produce new histories and possible futures.

We believe that Birmingham needs to invest in permanent and temporary public art works that animate the city in unexpected and memorable ways. The Birmingham Big Art Project will work towards creating a new image for Birmingham as a place that has art and ideas at its core.

We aim to work with the best artist/s who are making outstanding work of their time. We see the Birmingham Big Art Project as a key element in the ongoing making of Birmingham as an exciting and challenging environment for people to live and work in.

We understand the tradition of art to question what art is, can be, should be and why. Birmingham should be engaging with and demanding these questions. Our city is a vibrant and diverse metropolis and we should be confident about dealing with difference and oppositions as much as synergy.

We are not looking to commission a one size fits all public artwork; the new artwork could create a community as much as be designed for one; it might interrupt not embellish our city; it may give us a chance to imagine alternative ways of living. The artwork may be for the people and made with the people but the artist will be the author. Everyone who experiences the new artwork should want to tell someone else about it.

Principles of the Commission

The Birmingham Big Art Project aims to commission an internationally significant work of public contemporary art that is:

- High quality
- Innovative
- Permanent
- Low in maintenance

The commissioned artist should:

- Develop a depth of engagement with the site and its history and people.
- Question the nature of what art in the public realm can be.
- Analyse, update and question an idea of permanence within the context of a city.
- Develop a work that contributes to a sense of place but may question the character or attributes of its location.
- Demonstrate experience relevant to delivering their proposed work.

The commissioned work may:

- Take any form.
- Exist in one part of, or across, the proposed site.

Site

Eastside City Park (and Future Curzon Station HS2 Terminus)

The site for Birmingham Big Art Project is the western entrance to the current Eastside City Park, which has been established around the existing Millennium Point building and in relation to the future construction of Birmingham's High Speed Railway station (HS2).

It will be a major destination and arrival point in the city and a new 'Curzon Square' will be created over time around the artwork. You will see from the illustrations that there will be a very large new train station, and tram line framing the square on the South side of the site.

Within Eastside City Park there is a 40 metre by 12.5 metre area which currently contains two grass squares as identified in the Birmingham City Council plan by a red dashed line. The artwork was ultimately to be located within the boundaries of this site with currently no limit to height, although this will have to be negotiated with the planning department. The land is owned by Birmingham City Council (BCC) but may become the responsibility of HS2 in the future.

We are now able to locate the artwork closer to The Woodman pub and the old Curzon Station building directly without need for the temporary site as previously mentioned. We are currently awaiting new detailed drawings from BCC planners to pass on to you. We attach an updated drawing showing the potential scope overlapping with the two grass squares mentioned above.

Adjacent to the site, on the Eastern side, sits The Woodman Pub (1897) and the Curzon Street Station (1838), the oldest railway terminus in the world, an imposing neo classical building. Further to the East of Eastside City Park is the new 'Parkside' campus of Birmingham City University and

the Conservatoire. To the North is Birmingham Ormston Academy, an Academy for creative, digital and performing arts. To the West of the park is the ongoing city centre. To the South is Digbeth which contains a number of arts and media organisations, mixed with light industry and retail in a developing industrial area of the city centre.

*See site plans below for further information.

Audience

This is a public art work. Its audience is multifaceted; it should be for many publics. It is for the people of Birmingham and for international audiences, both art specialist and not.

Budget

This is an ambitious project with a target budget of around £2 million to be fundraised. The artist's fee will be £100,000.

Copyright

Copyright for the artwork will remain with the artist. The Birmingham Big Art Project will reserve the right to reproduce images of the finished artwork, any preparatory work in accordance with the artists' contract, and use images and other reproductions for marketing and commercial activity.

Selection Process - Timeline

1. First Longlist of 20

Using their knowledge and expertise in the field of public art Eastside Projects and the Selection Panel drew up a long list of 20 artists for the Birmingham Big Art Project. In December 2014 this long list went to the Selection Panel for consideration.

2. Longlist of 10 (not public)

In February 2015 the Selection Panel met to draw up a list of 10 artists for continued consideration. The selection was made and confirmed by April 2015.

In June 2015 EP will approach the selected 10 artists with information about the commission. In return we will ask for an initial outline. This will be a broad outline of an approach to the project rather than one specific or final idea. Each artist will be paid a fee of £2000 (including VAT) to develop their approach to the commission.

3. Shortlist of 5 (public)

Expressions of interest will be submitted and collated in November 2015 and distributed to the Selection Panel who will meet to consider them further in December 2015. The Selection Panel will draw up a list of five artists to recommend for the next stage.

In January 2016 the Steering Group will consider a short list of five artists recommended by the Selection Panel.

4. Maquettes and public consultancy

From January 2016 until May 2016 the five shortlisted artists will work up their proposal and develop maquettes and videos to communicate their proposals. They will each be paid a fee of £5000 (including VAT) to develop and produce the maquette.

In June 2016 the short list will be made public. From June 2016 to January 2017 information about the artists and their proposals will be made available to the public via exhibitions at Millennium Point (June to August 2016); The Library of Birmingham (September to November 2016) and Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery (December 2016 to January 2017).

In December 2016 the Selection Panel will hold their final meeting, at which they will recommend one of the shortlisted artists for commissioning.

In January 2017 the Steering Group will meet with Eastside Projects to consider this recommendation and agree the final commission.

5. Final commission

In February 2017 the artist will be invited to take the commission and the commission will be announced publicly.

6. Unveiling of artwork

In May 2018 the completed artwork will be unveiled by a Royal Patron.
Selection Panel

- Michaela Crimmin (Art in the Public Domain, RCA; co-director of Culture + Conflict and head of arts, RSA 1997-2010.)

- Lisa Le Feuvre (Head of Sculpture Studies at the Henry Moore Institute, Leeds)
- Beverley Nielsen (Director Corporate Affairs, Birmingham City University & BBAP Steering Group.)
- Sally Shaw (Head of Programmes at Modern Art Oxford and previously Deputy Head of the Mayor of London's Culture team)
- Gavin Wade – Chair, (Director, Eastside Projects)
- Toby Watley (Director of Collections, Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery)
- Andy Wayro (City Centre Senior Planner for Birmingham City Council)

These individuals would bring a breadth of knowledge and expertise to the project. Some have experience of commissioning contemporary art internationally and some have specialist knowledge about the history and current landscape of public art in Birmingham.

Selection Panel Bios

Michaela Crimmin is an independent curator; a tutor and research associate at the Royal College of Art; and co-director of Culture+Conflict. She was Head of Arts at the Royal Society of Arts (RSA) from 1997 to 2010, a role that included initiating and directing the RSA Arts & Ecology Centre; coordinating the first phase of the Fourth Plinth series of temporary commissions in London's Trafalgar Square; and directing the two-million pound Art for Architecture award scheme. Previous to this, she was a curator for Public Art Development Trust, a pioneer of work in the public domain in the UK. She gives lectures frequently both nationally and internationally, is a Board member of Wysing Arts Centre, and has most recently edited a collection of essays in an online publication on the subject of art and conflict.

Lisa Le Feuvre, currently Head of Sculpture Studies at the Henry Moore Institute, Leeds, has written extensively on contemporary art and curated many shows internationally. Le Feuvre was joint Curator of the 2010-11 British Art Show 7. Between 2005 and 2009 Lisa directed the contemporary art programme at the National Maritime Museum, London. She is Senior Lecturer in the Department of Art on the postgraduate Curating Programme at Goldsmiths and has taught at numerous academic organisations, including Chelsea School of Art and Design, Royal College of Art, Sotheby's Institute, Birkbeck College, San Francisco Art Institute and Städelschule.

Beverley Nielsen is Director of Corporate Affairs at Birmingham City University. Formerly MD of Fired Earth and Group Director AGA Rangemaster plc. manufacturing iconic brands from the Midlands, including AGA, Rayburn, Rangemaster amongst others she has also been Regional Director at CBI and CE Heart of England Tourist Board. She is

currently involved in various businesses, including as non executive Chairman of Malvern Outdoor Elements, non executive director of Aston Reinvestment Trust (ART), and representative on the Design Council Advisory Board. Beverley is an Associate Fellow at WMG, the University of Warwick, served as a County Councillor on Worcestershire County Council until 2013, and was voted Business Desk West Midlands Business Ambassador 2013.

Sally Shaw is Head of Programme at Modern Art Oxford. Prior to this role Sally was Deputy Head of Culture for the Mayor of London where she managed a range of visual art programmes including the Fourth Plinth. From 2006 – 2010 Sally was Senior Curator for Art on the Underground where she programmed a broad range of ambitious and unconventional artist commissions for a daily audience of 4 million Tube passengers. From 2000 to 2006 Sally was based in the South West of England where she curated many exhibitions and projects including running Media Art – Bath a commissioning agency for artists working with new technologies as well as establishing LOT gallery, an artist run exhibition space in central Bristol

Gavin Wade is Director of Eastside Projects, Birmingham and an artist-curator. Previous projects include Strategic Questions Venice, 52nd Venice Biennale (2007); Public Structures, Guangzhou Triennial, China (2005); ArtSheffield05: Spectator T (2005). His books include UPCYCLE THIS TEXT, Stroom (2011); Has Man A Function In Universe? Bookworks (2008); The Interruptors: A Non-Simultaneous Novel, Article Press (2005); STRIKE (adjusted by Liam Gillick), Alberta Press London (2002); and Curating In The 21st Century, The New Art Gallery Walsall (2000).

Toby Watley is Director of Collection at Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery. Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery (BMAG) first opened in 1885. It is housed in a Grade II* listed city centre landmark building. It has over 40 galleries that display art, applied art, social history, archaeology and ethnography. In April 2012, Birmingham Museums and Art Galley joined forces with Thinktank, Birmingham Science Museum to form the UK's largest independent museums trust. Birmingham Museums is now responsible for governing and managing the museum sites and collections owned by Birmingham City Council, including the Council's public art collection.

Andy Wayro is City Centre Senior Planner for Birmingham City Council. The City Centre Development and Design team manages many of the major projects and schemes that will continue the revitalisation of central Birmingham and raise the city's profile and connectivity, both nationally and internationally.

Please note: this brief will work in accordance with an artist contract and does not represent a legal document.

May 2015

On behalf of Birmingham Big Art Foundation:
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