

Brief for public art commission

SPAN: A hands-on history project seeks a socially-engaged artist or artists to help us devise and create a public artwork to explore the history of Single Parent Action Network.

Proposals should be received by **4th December 2019**

Interviews will take place on **17th December 2019**

The project

SPAN: a hands-on history project is a participatory research project that involves members of the public in researching and writing history. It is a collaboration between Barton Hill Settlement, the Feminist Archive South, and the University of Bristol, and is funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council.

Single Parent Action Network (SPAN) was formed in the 1990s by a group of Bristol women who wanted to support each other and make life better for single parents. Its work has now been incorporated into Barton Hill Settlement. Our research focuses on the impact of SPAN and explores its story by looking at how it supported single parents, its culture, and the political and social context.

We believe that it is important to bring new voices into the discussion of the past. This seems very important when writing the history of an organisation like SPAN, to which working class and black experience, activism and leadership was central.

From April 2019-March 2020, a History Group of volunteer researchers is meeting weekly at Barton Hill Settlement. Our researchers are mothers, single parents, volunteers, campaigners, activists, business owners, artists and more. Over the year, we are learning about research, looking at the SPAN archive, talking to people who were there, and planning how to tell the story of SPAN. We will share our findings in the spring of 2020. More information about the project is available at www.thespanproject.org.uk

The commission

We are looking for an artist or artists to work with us to make a piece of visual public art to explore and commemorate the history of SPAN. We are particularly interested in murals and mosaics, but are also open to other artworks that fit our criteria.

It is very important to us that the artistic output:

- Draws on our research, and the historical material in the SPAN archive
- Includes the members of History Group in its design and development
- Lasts for at least one year (but preferably longer)

- Is relevant and accessible to the local community in East-Central Bristol, including parents, single parents and women
- Is relevant and sensitive to those people who had a connection to SPAN, either as members or workers or service users, and have contributed their story to the research process
- Teaches people about the history of SPAN
- Has a big impact and is memorable, informative, powerful and brings people together

Timescale:

- Proposals received by Wednesday December 4th 2019
- Presentation and interviews Tuesday December 17th 2019 (morning)
- Work with History Group to design and implement output January–March 2020
- Launch of output, with associated public engagement activity to take place by the end of March 2020

Budget:

The budget for the project is up to £13k. Artists are invited to propose a budget up to this amount, to include the artist's fee (up to £9k) and the costs of producing/making the artwork (up to £4k). Childcare is an allowable expense.

In addition to artistic output/s, the artists will be expected to:

- Work with the History Group to design and develop the project (the History Group meets on Tuesday mornings at Barton Hill Settlement in Bristol and we would expect the artist to attend at least three Tuesday sessions)
- Engage with the historical material relating to SPAN (archive, interviews, photographs)
- Contribute to publicity for the project e.g. blogs, interviews, and short films
- Appear at key events associated with the project
- Provide a plan for the maintenance of the artwork

Evaluation is important to us. We will work closely with the selected artist to develop appropriate and robust evaluative measures and work them into the planning. We would be interested to hear how you might contribute creatively to the process.

Project management

We would expect the artist(s) to manage the project, ensuring timetables are met.

The artist(s) will report to the History Group and to the Project Lead, and will be required to submit a brief report on their activities at the midway point of the project and on completion. Payment will be released in three instalments: on commencing the project, and on submission of each report.

The key contact for this project will be Jenny Barke, and the artist will also work closely with the History Group facilitators, Jude Hutchen and Josie McLellan. Professional Services staff at the University of Bristol will also be available to work with the artist to promote and support the project.

Proposals

Proposals are invited in the form of:

- (1) An expression of interest of no longer than 2 pages of A4 outlining:
 - the artist's suitability for the role (please see selection criteria below) and relevant experience
 - how they would work with the History group to design and develop the artwork
 - an outline of the work they would expect to deliver (we understand that in a participatory project of this kind this is likely to be schematic)
 - a draft budget, including artist's fee and likely project costs
- (2) A recent CV of no longer than 2 pages of A4.
- (3) An example of their work that demonstrates relevant experience, presented in whatever is the most appropriate form.

Proposals should be sent by email to: Nicole.Andrieu@bristol.ac.uk

The closing date for this opportunity is midnight on **Wednesday 4th December**

Selection

To select the artist(s), all applications will be shortlisted according to the following criteria:

- The proposal will result in a piece of public artwork that will speak to and be accessible to the local community, including parents, single parents and women; teach people about the history of SPAN; have a big impact and be memorable, informative, powerful and bring people together
- The proposed artwork will draw on the archival and research materials relating to SPAN
- The artist has demonstrated that they are committed to a participatory process of developing the artwork, and has shown how the History Group will be involved in development and decision making
- The proposal demonstrates an understanding of the issues of race, class and gender that were at the heart of SPAN's work
- The proposal demonstrates that the artist has the technical ability and project management skills to successfully undertake the project

Shortlisted applicants will be invited to present their proposals to the History Group and be interviewed by a panel including members of the History Group. Presentations and interviews will be evaluated according to the above criteria. Examples of previous work may also be requested.

The anticipated interview date is **Tuesday December 17th (morning)**.

We are keen to work with artists from Bristol and from groups that were central to SPAN's work (including people from a Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic background, people from a working-class background and single parents). However, these are not pre-requisites. We are open and excited to hear from those with an appropriate and creative approach to the brief.

For an informal chat about the project please contact: Jenny.Barke@bristol.ac.uk