

Title: Black Lancastrians in the 18th Century

Opportunity: Artist commission

Contract dates: May 2022 to March 2023

Closing date for expressions of interest: 8 April 2022

Lancashire County Council Museum Service, working collaboratively with its partners, is seeking to appoint an artist to work on the Facing the Past project in Lancaster. The chosen artist will create four new portraits of enslaved Africans for the collection and long-term display at Judges' Lodgings Museum from 2023.



Judges' Lodgings

Judges' Lodgings is a local authority and Accredited Museum owned and operated by Lancashire County Council, with the support of Lancaster Judges' Lodgings Trust. The Museum is housed within a Grade I listed building in the centre of the city of Lancaster, close to Lancaster Castle. Originally a house for the Keeper of Lancaster Castle and later circuit judges sitting in the castle courts, Judges' Lodgings has played a significance role in the story of Lancaster and its people. It houses extensive collections of fine and decorative art – including the largest display in the country of the work of furniture makers Gillows of Lancaster.

Background to Facing the Past and the Commission

In 2020 graffiti with the words SLAVE TRADER appeared on a prominent memorial to the Rawlinson family in the graveyard of Lancaster Priory. This prompted the formation of an action group bringing together multiple agencies and people in the city to address the complex issues that this raised. The Facing the Past Project emerged from this with multiple strands of work to address and acknowledge Lancaster's role in the slave trade and slavery and also the lack of public information and representation of the stories of Black people in the public realm.

One of the areas of work included the Lancaster Slavery Family Trees research project by Lancaster Black History Group which uncovered the histories of

individuals and families connected to slavery. Some of these individuals had portraits in Lancaster's museums by celebrated artists such as George Romney. Judges' Lodgings also housed a significant collection of furniture by Gillows and Co and many of the woods used were cut down by enslaved Africans in the Americas. The Gillows Company and its owners also had a share in a slave ship in the 1750s that took Africans into slavery across the Atlantic and many of their customers were involved in the slave trade and its associated industries.

As part of Facing the Past, Lancashire County Museum Service are now working to acknowledge this history through new displays, interpretation and education programmes.

This includes the commission of four new portraits which will depict enslaved Africans inspired by historical information on four individuals from Lancaster's past, which will be displayed alongside existing historic portraits. They will address the lack of representation of the stories of Black people in Lancaster and in the collections and displays at Judges' Lodgings. They will also enable the museum and community to acknowledge Lancaster's role as the fourth largest slaving port in Britain.

The museum team are working on this collaborative project with Lancaster Black History Group – a community group fighting racism through education, The Institute for Black Atlantic Research (IBAR) at the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan) and the Department of Sociology at Lancaster University.

The Commissioner

For this commission, Judges' Lodgings is working with Lancaster Black History Group, Lancaster University and the University of Central Lancashire (UCLAN) to appoint an artist to create the four portraits.

The artist will be chosen by a panel made of representatives from the steering group and the Lancaster's community. The Project lead and main contact will be Judges' Lodgings Museum.

Funding

The commission is grant funded by a Reimagine Grant from the Art Fund and the Association of Independent Museums New Audiences New Stories Project and will be administered by Lancashire County Council.

The Commission

Overview

This commission involves the creation of four new framed portraits which will depict four individuals with African heritage from Lancaster's past. The portraits will be displayed inside Judges' Lodgings alongside historic paintings of individuals who have connections with the slave trade and slavery.

Role of the artist

The commissioning group are looking for a portrait artist that works on paper or canvas to produce four works for framing and installation at the museum in 2023.

Details of the Commission

Firstly, the artist will need to be able to work from existing historical descriptions of enslaved Africans from different sources to give a possible likeness. These may include 'Runaway Slaves in Britain: bondage, freedom and race in the eighteenth century' database at Glasgow University [Runaway Slaves in Britain : Database \(gla.ac.uk\)](https://www.gla.ac.uk/runaway-slaves-in-britain-database) and sources such as parish records, letter books and wills. Artists will be able to consult with local historians & experts, and the members of Lancaster Black History Group who undertook the research. The portraits will help bring the personal identity and agency back to those Black people living in slavery in Lancaster and the surrounding area in the 18th century.

Public engagement

There may be some public engagement and workshop delivery as part of this project but this will not be part of the current commissioning process.

Physical or technical constraints

These new works will need to be an appropriate size and format so that they can be positioned alongside the existing portraits of slave traders and their families.

Copyright and ownership

The project budget covers the commissioning and purchase (including copyright) of the four works. The artist agrees to transfer ownership of the four works to the museum for long-term display as part of the project and for the agreed fee.

Budget

The budget for this work is up to £23,900 including commissioning, purchase of the works, materials, travel. The commissioning fee is £11,800 and total purchase fee is £10,000. There is up to £1800 available for materials (not including framing) and £300 for travel (max, subject to receipts received). Framing and marketing costs will be budgeted separately.

Your fee must be inclusive of all costs and exclusive of VAT.

Time frame with key dates

Activity	Date
Develop commission brief and artist call out	March 2022
Confirm artist chosen	April/May 2022
Artist create and produce x 4 newly commissioned works	May - November 2022
Interpretation developed for new commissions	Jan 2023
Final commissioned pieces installed at Judges Lodgings	Feb 2023
Display opens to the public (seasonal venue open March – November each year)	March 2023

What we are looking for:

1. Artistic excellence
2. Experience of creating portraits in a variety of medium including paint
3. Interest in working with historic archives and collections
4. Awareness of the historic context in which the portraits are being commissioned to ensure that early Black Lancastrians are made visible within museum collections

We welcome applications from candidates with a Black and Minority Ethnic backgrounds, especially those of African and Caribbean heritage.

Care Package

We recognise this is a complex subject and want to support the artist to deliver these commissions. Based on ACE guidance, we will

- Support including giving time to discuss with staff or the commissioning panel, all aspects of the commission or to debrief after meetings/events
- allow the artist to use spaces while they are unused such as desk space or meeting rooms
- offering the use of organisational resources such as printers where possible
- enable the artist to access training and development opportunities that are available to staff

How to apply?



Please submit your response to the brief.

Your proposal should include – no more than 2 sides of A4

- Your approach on delivering this brief including the skills you would use to deliver this work including creative process, research, community engagement and artistic output
- Examples of previous artistic work, including portraiture
- Any experience you have in relation to a similar project related to Black history and your understanding on how the theme of slavery/ Black presence could be interpreted
- Your approach to exploring and responding to sensitive stories with audiences
- Your response to the budget and timescales and how you would deliver the works required.
- A referee with whom you have worked on similar projects
- CVs can be included, but must be additional to your proposal and no more than two sides of A4
- A link to your web presence if appropriate

Selection process

Submissions/proposals will be selected based on the following criteria:

- Response to the brief
- Robust delivery proposal
- Relevant skills, knowledge, and experience
- Adequate resources / capacity to deliver the brief within the budget and timescales
- Interview

For an informal discussion please contact

Contact Lynda Jackson, Judges' Lodgings Museum Manager

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