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**Brief: Visual Arts Curator**

**Brief description:**
The Visual Arts Curator has lead responsibility for researching potential artists, organisations and works which support the vision and aims of the Visual Arts Policy, presenting proposals for exhibitions to the Arts Advisory Panel and planning and coordinating activities to produce at least one exhibition each year.

Following an in-principle agreement by the Cathedral Chapter (Governing Body), for each exhibition, the Visual Arts Curator will have lead responsibility for project-management of the exhibition, working in collaboration with staff in the Cathedral and with artists in situ.

These responsibilities will include agreeing dates, arrangements for installation and removal, programming of allied events and activities, supporting marketing, PR and development activities, and regular reports to the Executive and Arts Advisory Panel.

**Estimated value of tender**:
The fee available is £18k annually.

**Budget**

The base budget specifically for art exhibitions is £24.5k annually to cover artist fees, specialist transport and installation costs. Additional budget may be available through fundraising.

**In-house support/working arrangements**

The Visual Arts Curator will be able to draw on the Cathedral’s in-house team for installation, marketing, educational and fundraising support. This is in addition to the budget given above. The Visual Arts Curator will provide their own administrative support.

Key relationships include: Director of External Relations and Visitor Experience, Canon Treasurer, Head of Communications, Head of Operations and Events, Clerk of Works, Technical Manager, Head of Development, Director of Community Engagement, Education Manager, [objects] Curator.

It is expected that the Visual Arts Curator will work from their own office or home base. Should work on site be necessary, such as when exhibitions are being installed, temporary desk space will be found.

**Estimated duration**:
Three years (renewable)

**Name of Contact**:
Beth Clarke – HR Officer

Email: recruitment@salcath.co.uk

**Timetable:**

Response deadline: Mon 25th November 2024 at 12 noon

Interviews: Thu 5th December 2024

**Background: Salisbury Cathedral**

Salisbury Cathedral is a truly remarkable [place](https://www.salisburycathedral.org.uk/history), a testimony to the faith and practical skills of the medieval craftsmen who built it, set in the [largest Cathedral Close](https://www.salisburycathedral.org.uk/visit-what-see/largest-cathedral-close) in Britain, covering 80 acres and with the tallest spire in Britain, which marks the Cathedral out as a symbol of the city for miles around.

The Cathedral is a living church and a place of prayer with [daily services](https://www.salisburycathedral.org.uk/worship-music/service-information) and a thriving congregation, enjoying a reputation for musical and artistic excellence. As the Cathedral Church of the Salisbury diocese, it is Mother Church of several hundred Church of England parishes in Wiltshire and Dorset.

The finest original copy of the [1215 Magna Carta](https://www.salisburycathedral.org.uk/magna-carta/what-magna-carta) is on permanent display to visitors in the Chapter House in a dedicated exhibition.

The Vision encapsulated in the Cathedral’s 2024-2029 Strategic Plan is that ‘we advocate liberty, encourage creativity and seek the eternity revealed in Jesus Christ’. We see the visual arts programme as the corner stone of our cultural programme, through which we want to explore and foster equality, diversity and inclusion, encouraging a wider range of voices and perspectives to be heard and seen and to draw in new visitors.

**Background: Visual Arts at Salisbury Cathedral**

Churches have employed the visual arts for centuries, to celebrate their faith and communicate its truth and beauty, but also to offer a critique of that faith. They have found that art has the power to do these things by attracting and engaging people who are outside the formal structures of believing or belonging.

It is this potency that has led Salisbury Cathedral to embrace the visual arts as a central part of its life, both in its worship and in its desire to reach out to people who might feel that the Cathedral is not for them.

We are continually looking for ways to enliven the experience on offer and to extend the range of people who come to us as tourists, members of the local community, and worshippers.

The Cathedral has had a strong visual arts programme for the past 15 years and gained a pre-eminent reputation as a venue of high-quality art exhibitions. Artists have included: Helaine Blumenfeld, Mary Branson, Sean Henry, Bruce Munro, Ana Maria Pacheco, Michael Pendry, Sophie Ryder, Anthony Gormley, Shirazeh Houshiary, Eduardo Paolozzi, Grayson Perry, Shezad Dawood and Mark Wallinger, among others. A link to a presentation of images from previous exhibitions is [here](https://www.salisburycathedral.org.uk/sites/default/files/Art%20in%20Cathedrals%20For%20website.pdf).

The most recent major group exhibition (2024) was ‘[**Our Earth**](https://www.salisburycathedral.org.uk/arrangements/our-earth-art-exhibition/)’, which focussed on the domestic impact of climate change, asking us to consider how our day-to-day lives may be impacted and how that will be felt differently across the world. The exhibition included a major interactive outdoor commission by artist Hilary Jack and a large-scale banner and animation work by Dryden Goodwin reflecting on the importance of having clean air to breathe. Another new commission, this time by Rebecca Chesney, was in the Cloisters where visitors could enjoy birdsong from four continents. Inside the Cathedral itself were two powerful paintings by artist, filmmaker and gay rights activist Derek Jarman exploring the joy found in the garden, and a multi-panel work by Ethiopian artist, Elias Sime, who thinks about the connection between the earth and the digital world.

The Cathedral’s permanent collection of modern art includes work by Elisabeth Frink and Barbara Hepworth.

**Partnerships**

The Cathedral has an excellent working relationship with cultural partners in the city, including Wiltshire Creative, Salisbury Museum and Sarum College and is a member of Salisbury’s Place Partnership. The Cathedral also collaborates with Salisbury City Council and Salisbury BID – for example, we are a founder member of [Experience Salisbury](https://www.experiencesalisbury.co.uk) and support the development and implementation of the city’s ‘Traditional, Original’ brand.

**Vision for the future for visual arts at the Cathedral**

Our vision is for Salisbury Cathedral to continue to be a significant venue for high quality exhibitions of visual art as a means of articulating our core principles of Liberty, Creativity and Eternity.

We expect each exhibition to fulfil the following criteria, at least in part:

1. have a dimension which explores aspects of Christianity, and/or promotes understanding of other religious faiths; and/or engages people with aspects of the human condition
2. represent the work of artists of national and international significance, local artists and emerging talents, and artists from diverse backgrounds and experiences
3. sympathise with the varying scales of the spaces of the Cathedral and its Close.
4. enable conversation, and advance at least one of the Cathedral’s core values and priorities
5. be of a stature and quality likely to attract significant visitor numbers and associated publicity, and especially draw in visitors who might not otherwise come to the Cathedral

### Visitor information

The Cathedral welcomes around a quarter of a million visitors annually, in addition to the thousands who attend services and events. Approximately 45% of visitors are from overseas, principally North America and Western Europe. Visitor numbers have exceeded pre-Covid levels, with the biggest growth being in visitors aged 35-54. The age of the average visitor has dropped from 55 to 52 since before Covid. The vast majority of visitors are white, with around 5% of visitors identifying as Global Majority Heritage. 3 in 5 visitors describe themselves as Christian and, for 75% of visitors, their visit is the first they have made to the Cathedral.

The Cathedral’s audience development targets are to maintain and grow the number of its existing audiences and to increase visits from those aged 45+ with children aged 12-25 as a proportion of the overall visitor numbers, as well as increasing visits from local people, particularly those from under-represented groups including 11-25 year olds, those on low incomes, those of Global Majority Heritage, the LGBT+ community, and those with accessibility needs.

**The Requirement**

The Visual Arts Curator is accountable to the Cathedral’s Canon Treasurer and Director of External Relations and Visitor Experience and will be supported and advised by the Cathedral’s Arts Advisory Panel.

The expected areas of work by the Visual Arts Curator are:

1. conceive exhibition proposals, researching and selecting potential artists and work of the quality and character to further the vision and aims of the Visual Arts Policy
2. approach organisations and artists who offer the potential for exhibitions, and respond to unsolicited proposals
3. prepare exhibition proposals for consideration by the Arts Advisory Panel prior to recommendation to Chapter
4. manage relationships with artists under consideration, ensuring clarity about the provisional nature of proposals before Chapter approval
5. Take overall responsibility for the project management and delivery of exhibitions, in collaboration with staff in the Cathedral, working in sympathy with services and other events and activities.
6. working closely with the Cathedral teams on the publication of exhibition programmes, website content and other publicity, interpretation and signage, private views and other related events
7. support and advise the Cathedral Development team on attracting grants and sponsorship
8. set dates with artists and organisations concerned for installation, programming and removal, and agreeing requirements for each
9. planning layout and installation of artworks
10. work with Cathedral colleagues and volunteers to ensure that works are accessible to the widest possible audience through appropriate interpretative materials, community and educational activities, including talks and tours
11. Keep accurate financial records and operate within the budget allocated
12. Share responsibility with Head of Operations and Events for install and deinstall logistics and arrange safe delivery, installation and return as necessary
13. negotiate contracts for works on loan
14. explore the potential for co-curation, guest curation and artist residencies
15. recommend, and help the development of, partnerships with other arts organisations to explore joint exhibitions or loans
16. in conjunction with the Arts Advisory Panel, recommend to the Chapter any commission of art works, funds permitting, either as permanent works inside or outside the Cathedral, or as part of festivals or other projects
17. Advise on the maintenance of the Cathedral’s collection of permanent and long-term loan modern art, in liaison with the Cathedral’s Collections team
18. When appropriate, work with members of the Cathedral staff to encourage and build on existing community links and, when appropriate, seek to work with charities and other groups on aspects of the exhibition programme
19. Work with members of the Cathedral staff to engage existing and new visual arts programme supporters.

You are invited to submit a proposal to undertake this brief providing:

* A concise statement of the overall approach.
* How the work will be carried out and by whom
* Examples of previous work undertaken in this area
* CVs of lead professionals who will undertake day-to-day work, and, if appropriate, the Directors/Partners of the Firm responsible for the work
* Names and contact details of two clients (the relationship with the referee should made clear)
* Fee proposal, broken down into days and day rates and including any other expenses or disbursements.

Please submit your proposal to Beth Clarke – HR Officer by email, recruitment@salcath.co.uk

The payment schedule will be agreed with the successful submission.