

Artist Brief - MMAC Bradford 2025

Introduction

We're looking for an artist to respond to *Everything is Connected* the exhibition of artworks belonging to the Methodist Modern Art Collection (MMAC) during Bradford 2025 City of Culture.

Background to the Methodist Modern Art Collection (MMAC)

The Methodist Modern Art Collection is one of the Church's greatest treasures. It is an outstanding collection of 20th and 21st Century religious art, founded in 1962 by Dr John Morel Gibbs during the post-war revival in British religious painting. Since then, it has grown to comprise more than 60 paintings, prints, drawings and sculptures by artists from across the world including some by well-known artists such as Graham Sutherland, Elisabeth Frink, Patrick Heron and Maggi Hambling. It has enhanced worship, opened faith conversations, amazed visitors, and inspired different art forms including poetry and dance.

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/faith/the-methodist-modern-art-collection/>

Bradford City of Culture 2025

As part of the Bradford City of Culture 2025 celebrations, in the early Autumn, five venues in the Bradford District will be exhibiting artworks held in the Methodist Modern Art Collection (MMAC). Whilst they all will have their own theme, they will all be linked via an Art Trail and the overall theme for the exhibition, *Everything is Connected*. The exhibition is being coordinated under the care of The Methodist Church's Yorkshire West Methodist District which covers Bradford and surrounding area.

Venues and Themes

Ben Rhydding Methodist Church – Peril in relation to the environment, climate change and the impact of conflict around the world.

Bradford Cathedral – South Asian arts and heritage

South Square Centre, Thornton – Women artists and the legacy of the Brontes

St James Church, Thornton – Women in the Bible

Woodhouse Grove School – Hope and what that means to the school community on an international level

There will also be a series of reproductions of some works in the collection at several bars and cafes in the North Parade area of Bradford.

There will be an Art Trail linking all five venues in the exhibition – an Art Trail leaflet will provide more information for visitors on each venue and the associated programme of events.

We are starting to work with local communities, groups that relate to the themes, organisations, schools and individuals who would like to creatively respond to any of the artworks on display. We're also hearing from those who would like to volunteer their time to steward at venues and support creative activity during the exhibition period.

Audience

The audience is likely to be very varied; visitors local to the District, some of whom will know of and be supporters of the Collection, but as with previous City of Culture locations, we are also expecting a significant proportion of visitors from outside the region who will be discovering Bradford and the region for the first time. At each venue there will be connections with local communities.

The Commission

We're looking for an artist who can connect our visitors with the artworks, most of which are paintings, in new ways and potentially link the sites where we are displaying them. This can cover the telling of new stories, exploring hidden or overlooked histories, diverse and marginalised heritage, engaging new and existing audiences in responding to the Collection through creative visual methods as well as linking to some of the themes the venues are exploring. Responses to the Collection can be in any media including the spoken word, dance, film, textile as well as fine art.

We envisage that the artist or collaborators will be based at one venue for most of the residency but also willing to spend dedicated time at the other four venues and are required to lead at least two workshops. We understand that the artist will wish to visit all venues to spend time with the works and then may want to spend a proportion of the time allocated in their own studio / space, making work.

The opportunity is open to artists working across the UK however, knowledge and/or experience of working within Bradford and/or the wider Yorkshire region would be an advantage.

We are looking for someone with community experience to engage local communities with our artworks. There can be further discussion of this at interview. We expect the artist to be available for the duration of the exhibition, which is 6 weeks however, orientation with the venues before w/c 1st September and attendance at a briefing in August with volunteers and stewards on the logistics of the exhibition would be desirable. The artist will be supported during the residency by the Faith & Arts Development Lead for this project, and the Chair of the Methodist Modern Art Collection.

Exhibition period

The overall exhibition held across the five venues will open across w/c 1st September 2025 and run until Sunday 12th October 2025.

There is potential for the artist's and workshop participants' work to be displayed for a further few weeks up to late November 2025.

Creation and Display

We're keen to hear from shortlisted applicants about their ideas for the display of initial early work e.g. drawings, studies etc. and see a display of the progression of work over the course of the residency but we'd be happy to explore options and have further discussion at interview stage. It would be wonderful to exhibit final works at all venues for a time towards the end and beyond the defined exhibition period. This is subject to further discussion and consideration of constraints at the individual venues. The MMAC may consider the acquisition of work(s) produced – depending on the artist and the nature of the final work. Copyright and ownership of any final commissioned artistic outputs will be agreed with all parties involved.

Budget

The core artist fee is a maximum of £6000 based on up to 20 days work. We acknowledge that production days might incur a slighter higher fee depending on what the individual would like to create, considering size and detail, and this can be discussed following appointment of the artist. We will pay 50% of the core fee at the start and 50% at the end of the contract.

Expenses will be covered in addition to the core artist fee for travel (and any accommodation), equipment, and the making, display and (de)installing of the work where applicable. This must include VAT. Reimbursement for expenses can be made on receipt of an invoice, separate to that of the artist fee, at the end of the exhibition period.

How to apply

The Yorkshire West Methodist District, together with the Management Committee of the Methodist Modern Art Collection is inviting responses to this brief and remains open to ideas from all artists across all media. Your proposal should be no more than two sides of A4, briefly outlining your practice and how you feel it relates to MMAC Bradford 2025. It would help us understand what it is about the Collection that interests you. Please also include an outline of your idea for creative activity during the residency and how you propose to develop the work through the residency. This does not have to be too detailed at this stage, but please keep descriptions succinct and in clear and accessible language. We're interested to hear how you will work with visitors and local community groups, and what you would like them and yourself to get out of this.

Please include the following in your application:

1. Your contact details (name, phone number, address, email).
2. Tell us about your connections and commitment to Bradford and the City of Culture 2025.
3. An example of your work (weblink or an attachment).
4. A brief project timeline.
5. An indicative budget for how you will spend the budget.
5. Any access needs you may have and costs relating to this.
6. Any other support you need from us where relevant.

The contact details of two references, at least one professional (*e.g. an organisation you have worked with before / in the last 2 years*). These can be on a separate page to your core application.

Please send your application by email to Verity Smith, Faith & Arts Development Lead, at verity.smith@touchstone-bradford.org.uk by **Friday 7th March 2025 at 5pm.**
Applications sent after this time will not be accepted.

For a list of the artworks that will be on display during the exhibition, and for any queries relating to the brief including more details on the venues, please contact Verity using the same email address above, or on 07507 790819.

Shortlisting & Interviews

The shortlisting and interview panel will include the following individuals:

Verity Smith – Faith and Arts Development Lead, Bradford 2025
Prof. Ann Sumner – Chair of the MMAC Management Committee
Corinne Miller – Vice Chair of the MMAC Management Committee
Alice Withers – Director of South Square Centre, Thornton

We aim to shortlist during w/c 10th March. The shortlisted applicants will then be informed and offered an informal interview. Candidates are welcome to visit the venues prior to this – conversations may be held online rather than face to face, but this will be confirmed if, and when you are invited to an interview. These are likely to be held in late March. If you have any access requirements, please do not hesitate to contact us with the details. There is disabled parking, step-free access and hearing loops at all venues.

The Methodist Church is an inclusive and supportive employer. We are actively committed to encouraging applications from people of all backgrounds. We welcome applications from people of Black, Asian and other Minority Ethnic groups. We also welcome applications from people living with disabilities.