

OPEN CALL FOR

**THE SHANE AKEROYD ASSOCIATE
CURATOR OF THE BRITISH
PAVILION**

AT THE 59TH INTERNATIONAL ART
EXHIBITION – LA BIENNALE DI
VENEZIA

APRIL – NOVEMBER 2022

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1. The invitation

The British Council is delighted to announce the opportunity for a mid-career curator to collaborate with British artist Sonia Boyce OBE RA on the development of her Commission for the 59th International Art Exhibition, La Biennale di Venezia, opening in Venice in April 2022. The Shane Akeroyd Associate Curator will be given the opportunity to not only participate in creative conversations with the artist, acting as a sounding board but will also write and speak about her work to an international audience. This role provides a unique platform for a Curator with experience of commissioning new work and writing for a variety of audiences to take the next step in their career. They will represent Britain and the British Council through participation in an exceptional exhibition and its associated programme.

This role is not a full-time appointment and we anticipate that it will require an overall commitment of approximately 35 days starting in January 2021 and ending in November 2022 when the exhibition closes in Venice. A fee of £12,500 is offered for the role.

We particularly welcome and encourage applications from candidates who are under-represented in the Visual Arts sector.

Submissions must be received by 23:59 UK time on Sunday 27 September 2020

The application process has two stages:

Stage 1

Applications submitted via open call

Please use: <https://airtable.com/shrXxjlvlshtBb7V> to complete the application form for this position. Please note, we recommend you keep a copy of your answers as you will not receive an automated copy of your response and if you leave the browser before the form is submitted, your application will not be saved.

Stage 2

Shortlisted candidates invited for online interview

Key dates

See Appendix A for a detailed timeline – all dates subject to change due to current pandemic.

27 September 2020	Deadline for applications
12-16 October 2020	Shortlisted candidates contacted
20-22 October 2020	Shortlisted candidates are interviewed by a selection panel
06 November 2020	Curator appointed
TBC November 2020	Press release announcing appointment
11 January 2021	Curator start date
Mid-April 2022 opening week	59th International Art Exhibition - La Biennale di Venezia
23 April 2022	Official opening

Who can apply – see section 9 for more details.

This opportunity is offered to contemporary visual arts curatorial professionals who are either independent or are working in or affiliated with organisations in the arts and creative sectors. You must be able to demonstrate strong curatorial experience but should also be at a stage in your career where you still have more to learn.

Experience of commissioning new work and working alongside artists as they develop their ideas, is essential. You will be supported by experienced members of British Council staff in your relationship with the Artist, the Biennale, other stakeholders and the media. Media training will be offered as part of the programme. As a result of this opportunity you will have:

- gained insights into and knowledge of the practice of Sonia Boyce OBE RA
- learnt about the Venice Biennale and the wider cultural ecology of Venice
- participated in a high-pressure media and stakeholder environment during opening week
- developed new public speaking and media skills and confidence
- increased your media profile and global contacts significantly
- learnt more about the cultural relations work of the British Council and the interplay of contemporary culture and national identity at the core of the Venice Biennale

In the event that Covid-19 continues to affect working environments, international travel and/or exhibition making, you will need to work flexibly, remotely and digitally as required to support the artist and the British Council Venice team to adapt the exhibition and its related programmes to the prevailing conditions at the time.

2. About the artist

In December 2019 Sonia Boyce OBE RA was selected to represent Great Britain at the 59th International Art Exhibition by the British Pavilion Selection committee:

Hammad Nasar – Independent Curator, London
Mary Cremin – Director Void Gallery, Derry NI
Irene Aristizábal, Head of Curatorial and Public Practice, BALTIC, Gateshead
Beth Bate – Director DCA Dundee
Elvira Dyangani Ose – Director Showroom Gallery, London
Alistair Hudson – Director, The Whitworth and Manchester Art Gallery, Manchester
David Hevey – Director Shape Arts, London
Nicholas Thornton – Curator, National Museum of Wales, Cardiff

Of Sonia Boyce's selection Emma Dexter, British Council Director Visual Arts, Commissioner of the British Pavilion and Chair of the British Pavilion Selection Committee, said: "We are eagerly anticipating her exhibition, where collaboration, improvisation and dialogue will undoubtedly play a key role".

Sonia Boyce OBE RA came to prominence as a key figure in the burgeoning Black-British art scene of the early 1980s. She was one of the youngest artists of her generation to have her work acquired by Tate, featuring deeply personal reflections on race, class and gender in Britain.

Boyce is known for her highly innovative and experimental approach to art-making, using performance, drawing, print, photography, and audio-visual elements in her work. Since the 1990s, her practice has become increasingly improvisational and collaborative, inviting a broad cross-section of participants to come together and speak, sing or move in relation to the past and the present. At the heart of Boyce's work is an empowering exploration of gestures and events, with an underlying focus on the personal and political subjectivities behind them.

Boyce has taken part in numerous solo and group exhibitions, both internationally and in the UK. Notable recent exhibitions have included solo shows at Manchester Art Gallery (2018), The *Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA)*, London (2017), Villa Arson, Nice (2016), and group exhibitions including Prospect 4, New Orleans (2017), and *All the World's Futures*, 56th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia, Venice (2015). Her 2020 solo exhibition, *In the Castle of My Skin*, at Eastside Projects, Birmingham travels to Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art. 2020 will also see the completion of a major public art commission by Boyce for the Elizabeth Line, Crossrail project, London.

In 2016, Boyce was elected a Royal Academician, and in the same year received a Paul Hamlyn Artist Award. In 2019, she received an OBE for Services to Art in the Queen's New Year Honours List, as well as an Honorary Doctorate from the Royal College of Art. Boyce is currently a Professor at University of the Arts London, where she holds the inaugural Chair in Black Art & Design.

Sonia Boyce has stated that the Associate Curator to the British Pavilion at the 59th International Art Exhibition, La Biennale di Venezia would ideally:

- Be as interested in the process as the outcome.
- Work in an agile way – as in not having too rigid an idea of something as it unfolds.
- Relish the challenges of improvisation and the unexpected.
- Have experience of performance-based work / improvisation.
- Be at performances and the preparatory conversations and collaboration leading up to them, to understand how this process has led to the outcome.
- Reflect on the implications of working in a particular way in order to be able to write about what materialises.
- See interim production work (eg editing / fabrication) to gain a sense of the exhibition's direction in order to articulate this in their writing.

3. Background

The International Art Exhibition, La Biennale di Venezia is the foremost global presentation of visual art, with an unrivalled international reputation for excellence in the sector. The artist representing Great Britain in 2022 is Sonia Boyce OBE RA (see Section 9 for a brief biography). Find out more about the British Pavilion and our previous exhibitions: www.britishcouncil.org/venicebiennale

With over 500,000 international visitors each year, the Venice Biennale is one of the longest running cultural festivals in the world. The Venice Biennale (La Biennale di Venezia) is renowned for setting new global trends and launching the international careers of many pioneering artists and architects. The Biennale presents an unparalleled opportunity for international cultural networking, and offers a unique platform, bringing together leading artists, architects and curators from around the world. It is a remarkable opportunity to demonstrate the UK's strength in art and architecture. At the British Pavilion, we commission ground-breaking new projects, promoting the best of British visual arts and architecture.

The International Art Exhibition is the oldest regular contemporary art exposition in the world and inclusion in the Biennale can have a substantial impact on an artist's international career. Being selected to represent the UK at the Venice Biennale offers an artist the opportunity to display their work on this hugely prestigious platform alongside other national representations from across the globe. The Venice Biennale also appoints a guest curator for each Art Biennale to curate a major international exhibition organised around an overarching theme. That exhibition combined with the national pavilion exhibitions form the main component of the official Biennale, which attracts significant critical attention from arts professionals, the media and visitors.

During the seven months of the Biennale, Venice becomes a showcase for international contemporary art, with a large audience visiting the official Biennale as well as a host of complementary exhibitions and collateral events across the city. This audience consists of curators, artists, leaders of global museums, collectors, gallerists, journalists, critics and a diverse public audience. Association with the Biennale brings huge international exposure to artists – creating new global audiences, platforms and opportunities for them and their work. The British Pavilion is an exceptional platform for highlighting the innovation, ingenuity and diversity of the British contemporary art scene.

The British Council has owned and managed the British Pavilion in Venice since 1937, over the years showing the work of an incredible range of internationally renowned artists and architects such as: Henry Moore, Barbara Hepworth, Anish Kapoor, Richard Rogers, Rachel Whiteread, Chris Ofili, Zaha Hadid, Steve McQueen, Sarah Lucas and Phyllida Barlow. As owner of the British Pavilion, the British Council commissions an artist or architect to present an exhibition in the pavilion each year and manages its delivery and display.

For more information about La Biennale di Venezia, visit: www.labiennale.org/en

4. Venice Fellowships

The Fellowships programme was initiated in 2014 by the British Council to strengthen the British Pavilion as a platform for ideas and research. Each year, the Fellowships provide a unique opportunity for up to 70 students and young people to gain invaluable experience over a month at the British Pavilion. Fellows use their time in Venice to undertake their own research programme and help us to steward the pavilion to ensure works and visitors are protected and to encourage audience engagement. Fellows are selected through British Council partner universities and organisations. For more information, please visit: venicebiennale.britishcouncil.org/fellowship

5. Working with the British Council

Our work in arts is a cornerstone of the British Council's mission to create a friendly knowledge and understanding between the people of the UK and the wider world. We find new ways of connecting with and understanding each other through the arts, to develop stronger creative sectors around the world that are better connected with the UK. We work with over 100 countries across the world in the fields of arts and culture, English language, education and civil society. Founded in 1934, we are a UK charity governed by Royal Charter and a UK public body.

For more information, please see the British Council Arts Strategy here:
www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/bc013_arts_strategy_1.pdf

The British Council has an overriding commitment to equality, inclusion and diversity. It is a disability confident employer and aims to create opportunities and reduce barriers for everyone, particularly under-represented groups.

We are dedicated to sharing the very best of UK arts with the world and the British Pavilion in The British Council's work in Venice aims to support and encourage collaboration, dialogue and exchange between the UK and the international art sector. In support of this, the British Council collaborates with the wider UK visual arts community to jointly promote and interact with other UK representation at the Biennale including collateral events such as Scotland + Venice and Wales in Venice.

The British Council is here to support the selected artist and associate curator and help realise the vision for the project. To do this, the British Council's core Venice team provides marketing, PR, project management, programming, production and logistics.

Reporting to the Commissioner, the successful applicant will work closely with the British Council's commissioning team to support delivery of the exhibition, texts/publication and associated public engagement and promotional activities in London and Venice. The Commissioner will have responsibility for final sign-off for all the Associate curator's deliverables (see section 5).

The British Council's communications team will run a focused and dedicated integrated campaign to publicise the project to a wide range of media, including national outlets from the UK and the international arts media.

6. Deliverables

Your draft deliverables and the timing of these will be approximately as follows:

Period	Deliverables
January – December 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaise with the artist during the development of new work; for example, by attending performances as well as preparatory conversations and developing exhibition narratives, providing contributions to the selection of artworks, collaborators or exhibition narratives. • Attend an agreed schedule of team meetings online and occasionally at the British Council office in London. • Subject to travel advice and risk assessment, attend a two-day recce trip to the British Pavilion in Venice with the British Council team and the artist. • Draft exhibition interpretation materials (the Commissioner is responsible for final text sign-off). • Contribute to the films made by British Council to promote the exhibition. • Collaborate with the British Council Venice team to develop a public programme of events, talks and other engagement activity in relation to the artist’s proposal and exhibition. • Attend media launches, press conferences and interviews. This requires availability for select media interviews and events before launch.
January – June 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute to the Fellowship programme by speaking about the exhibition content and curatorial process at their induction/training days both in the UK and Venice • Undertake at least one visit to the Pavilion during artist installation to support the artist and British Council Venice team. • Attend the Biennale opening week in Venice to support the British Council’s opening events and official receptions by speaking publicly at events, promoting the exhibition to the press, leading tours for external partners and key stakeholders including government representatives and take part in all associated programming including communications. • Attend fundraising events to help garner support for the exhibition and associated programme among British Council external stakeholders, including patrons.
July – December 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present a follow up on-line session with all fellows towards the end of the exhibition to reflect on the exhibition, its reception and your own learning and professional development that has resulted from this opportunity. • Take part in lessons learned and feedback meetings after the exhibition’s closure in November, and submit a written report on your experiences and what you have learned and gained from the experience
After December 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the event that the exhibition tours after the presentation in Venice, you will not play an active role in the tour, but may be engaged separately by the respective tour venues to deliver talks or take part in events as required.

7. Payment Schedule

The successful applicant will be expected to sign a contract with the British Council and will receive a Fee of **£12,500**. This fee is to cover the time and work required to meet the Deliverables outlined in Section 5, of approximately 35 days. It will be paid in the following instalments.

Payment date	Deliverable	Payment
Payment 1: January 2021	Start of contract	£2,500
Payment 2: July 2021	Delivery of exhibition concept narrative	£2,500
Payment 3: January 2022	Delivery of interpretation texts	£2,500
Payment 4: May 2022	Opening of exhibition to public	£2,500
Payment 5: November 2022	Completion and closure of exhibition	£2,500
Total		£12,500

Travel expenses, including flights, hotels and subsistence, will be organised and paid for by the British Council.

8. Press and publicity

The British Council's communications and marketing team will support the successful project. You will be required to take part in a substantial media and marketing campaign and act as one of the key spokespeople for the project, undertaking speaking responsibilities for UK and international press opportunities.

9. Application process

The open call application is a two-stage process.

Stage 1: Applications submitted via open call by 23:59 UK time **Sunday 27 September 2020**

Stage 2: Shortlisted candidates interviewed online by a selection panel between **20-22 October 2020**

Please use the online form at <https://airtable.com/shrXxjvlshtrBb7V> to submit your application.

Eligibility

You must meet all three of the following criteria to be considered for this position.

- You should live and/or work in Britain. You do not need to have been born in the UK.
- You must be the Curator for the British Pavilion in Venice only. You cannot perform any other role within the Venice Biennale's 59th edition such as working for other National Participations or Collateral Events in Venice.
- We welcome applications from curators both employed by organisations and those working independently but you must be able to take time away from other commitments to fulfil the work of the Associate Curator. As part of the application, you will need to confirm how you plan to manage this opportunity with other work commitments, including a letter from your current employer(s) if applicable.

Selection Criteria

The shortlisting process to determine who will be called to interview will be based on following scoring on the criteria below and carried out by the British Council. Due to the volume of submissions, we will be unable to give feedback to applicants.

If your application is eligible, your CV, examples of published work and personal statement will be awarded points as follows:

Selection Criteria	Points (out of 100)	Evaluation of:
Significant curatorial experience and an excellent knowledge of contemporary British art.	15	CV
Experience of working with and collaborating with artists on commissions of new work	15	CV
Experience of writing about contemporary art for a wide range of audiences (three examples of written work from public platforms or published materials to be submitted as part of online application)	15	Online application
Experience of public speaking such as media interviews, panel discussions, curator led tours for stakeholders, along with an existing social media profile which you are confident to use for the Associate Curator role as per agreed guidelines.	15	CV
What interests and excites you about working alongside Sonia Boyce OBE RA for the 59th International Art Exhibition, La Biennale di Venezia? Please highlight those aspects of Sonia Boyce's practice and career that present the greatest opportunity for developing your curatorial practice. Please refer to Sonia Boyce's description of qualities needed to successfully engage with her artistic practice in Section 2 of this document.	20	Online application

How will this opportunity support the development of your career, what more do you have to learn, and what do you hope to gain from the experience?	10	Online application
How will you ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion are promoted through the British Pavilion in accordance with the Purpose and Values of the British Council?	10	Online application

10. Appendices

Appendix A - Schedule timeline

Dates are for indication only and are subject to change

09 September 2020	Open call announced
27 September 2020 23:59	Closing date for Curator applications
20-22 October 2020	Interview dates for Curator shortlist
06 November 2020	Curator appointed
TBC November 2020	Press/social media announcement
11 January 2021	Curator post start date
TBC 2021	Recce trip to Venice
January – July 2021	Development of exhibition concept and narrative
July – December 2021	Delivery of texts for exhibition
January 2022	Exhibition text submission
March 2022	Installation in Venice
Mid-April 2022	Preview and opening events, Venice (7 days)
April – November 2022	Public exhibition, Venice with the opportunity for participation in lectures/events in Venice.
End November 2022	Curator post end
December 2022	De-install exhibition, Venice

Appendix B - Resources

For more information about the British Pavilion's previous exhibitions and Venice Fellowships initiative, visit: www.britishcouncil.org/venicebiennale

For more information about the Venice Biennale, visit: www.labiennale.org/en

For more information about our work in arts, visit the British Council Arts YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/user/britishartschannel