Open Call for HEI Partners

Biennale Arte 2022, British Pavilion Venice Fellowships

June 2021
The Venice Biennale

The Venice Biennale is the foremost presentation of visual art and architecture in the world, with a global reach and international representation for excellence in the sector. It is a unique opportunity for artists to display work in incredible settings, and the British Pavilion serves as a platform to showcase the best of British Visual Art and architectural practice alongside national representation from countries across the world. The history and prestige of the Biennale has generated a legacy that goes beyond its location in Europe and can truly be considered as a global forum for art and architecture, attracting an international audience and many high level cultural and political figures. For the Art Biennale there are 89 National Pavilions in the historic Pavilions at the Giardini, at the Arsenale and 21 collateral events in the historic city centre of Venice.

The British Council has owned and managed the British Pavilion in Venice since 1937, showing the work of an incredible range of internationally renowned British artists and architects over the years, such as Henry Moore, Barbara Hepworth, Richard Rogers, Antony Caro, Anish Kapoor, Bridget Riley, David Adjaye, Gilbert and George, and Tracy Emin. 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 the delivery and display of the exhibition.

The British Council commission for the Biennale Arte 2022 is the artist Sonia Boyce OBE RA.

The Venice Fellowships Programme

Initiated in 2014, the British Council created the Fellowship programme to encourage discussion around the British Pavilion, and to help to make the Venice Biennale a reference point for universities and their programmes.

The Venice Fellowships programme offers students, graduates and researchers a unique opportunity to spend a month in Venice during the world’s most important art and architecture biennales. The fellows perform the important role of stewarding the British Pavilion to ensure works and visitors are protected. The Fellows are given training to encourage audience engagement and are given access to the artist and commission curator. Fellows are introduced to organisations and networks in Venice to learn about the Biennale and cultural life in the city.

Fellows share their time between invigilation of the British Pavilion and independent research. The themes of the research and creative projects are inspired by the Biennale and the exhibition. They can also be steered by university interests, course links and other opportunities in Venice.
Programme Outcomes

The British Council has created the programme to achieve the following outcomes:

- encourage discussion and research around the British Pavilion
- to open up international experiences in the arts and creative sectors
- to offer learning & development opportunities to students & early stage career artists
- to provide networking and connections in UK and in Venice.
- we are looking for partners who add value to the programme and access to emerging arts professionals from underrepresented communities in the arts.

Outcomes for Fellows

The opportunity is one of personal and professional development in the context of a high profile international Biennale. In the words of a past Fellow, this unique international experience in the Arts was “awesome, life-changing and inspiring.”

From our Career Impact Survey 2020 the top 3 skills identified by Fellows were:

- Personal skills e.g. confidence, resilience
- Communicating with audiences and exhibition interpretation
- Cultural awareness and understanding

Fellows reference their Fellowship on their CVs, in job applications and at interviews. The experience has had a direct impact on future employment, with some Fellows making direct connections between their Fellowship and the work they secure afterwards. Fellows have created strong networks of peers and used the research opportunity to develop future collaborations.

Biennale Arte 2022

Sonia Boyce OBE RA has been selected by the British Council to represent Great Britain at the 59th International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia, presenting a major solo exhibition of new work, running April to November 2022.

Sonia Boyce OBE RA came to prominence as a key figure in the 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 and was the first Black-British female artist to enter that collection, with drawings that reflected on race, class and gender in Britain. Throughout her career as an
artist and academic, Boyce has been a huge inspiration to artists, curators, thinkers and researchers.

Since the 1990s Boyce’s practice has taken a significant multi-media and improvisational turn by bringing people together in a dynamic, social practice that encourages others to speak, sing or move in relation to the past and the present. Incorporating film, photography, print and sound in multi-media installations, Boyce’s practice is fundamentally collaborative and inclusive, fostering a participatory approach that questions artistic authorship and cultural difference. At the heart of her work are questions about the production and reception of unexpected gestures, with an underlying interest in the intersection of personal and political subjectivities.

Since 2014 she has been a Professor at University of the Arts London, where she holds the inaugural Chair in Black Art & Design. A three year research project into Black Artists and Modernism culminated with the 2018 BBC Four documentary, *Whoever Heard of a Black Artist?*, exploring the contribution of overlooked artists of African and Asian descent to the story of Modern British art.

Boyce has a long history of exhibitions both in the UK and internationally. Notable recent examples include solo shows at Manchester Art Gallery (2018) and (ICA), London (2017), as well as inclusion in Okwui Enwezor’s *All the World’s Futures, 56th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia*, Venice (2015). Her current solo exhibition, *In the Castle of My Skin* is currently on show at Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art, having previously been at Eastside Projects Birmingham in 2020. This year sees the completion of a major public art commission by Boyce for the Elizabeth Line, Crossrail project, London.

https://venicebiennale.britishcouncil.org/sonia-boyce-obe-ra-british-pavilion-artist-2021

**How to partner with British Council**

The British Council works in partnership with universities and arts organisations throughout the UK to support up to 70 Fellows to embark on a one-month fellowship at the Venice Biennale.

The British Council is a looking for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to partner for the 2022 programme, by completing partner application forms in **July 2021**. Later in the year we will also be recruiting community partners to broaden access to this programme.

This is an opportunity for HEI partners to send some of their most ambitious students and motivated graduates to Venice to embark on a unique personal and professional development experience.
HEI partners should nominate candidates through a competitive internal application process (guidance and forms provided by British Council.) The British Council will then appoint Fellows after reviewing these nominations and managing a second stage video submission. Fellows are awarded a grant to cover their travel, accommodation and living costs.

We are looking to formalise partnerships in **October 2021** and places will be open to an interdisciplinary cohort from across art, design, architecture and humanities subjects. Fellows will be appointed by **December 2021**.

The British Council coordinates an induction school in **February 2022**, during which the Fellows receive practical advice, learn about the exhibition, be trained how to invigilate an exhibition and engage with audiences and will participate in discussions and workshops.

The induction school is an important chance for Fellows to meet as a group prior to their travel to Venice and build relationships with peers across UK institutions.

**What we offer**

The British Council will:

- Provide all programme administration including issuing of travel grants to Fellows.
- Provide an induction course and training for Fellows, covering curation, stewarding and research / practice inspired by the British Pavilion, the Biennale and Venice
- Publicise the Partners’ involvement in the Venice Fellowships Programme
- Co-ordinate Fellows’ groups and provide briefing materials to prepare Fellows
- Provide supervision of the stewarding role at the British Pavilion
- Showcase Fellows’ research in digital and/or physical formats according

**Role of HEI Partners**

HEI Partners will:

- Advertise the opportunity within their HEI and shortlist eligible candidates, following the project timeline and using materials provided by British Council
- Provide support to the Fellow(s) with their research and maintain connections with Fellow(s) during the duration of the programme.
- Seek opportunities within their HEI and beyond for promotion and presentation of the Fellows’ research work and experience in Venice
Timeline

- **Thursday 10 June 2021** – Open call goes live on British Council website
- **Thursday 15 July 2021** - Deadline for Partner application (form on website)
- **Thursday 29 July 2021** – Partners will be notified by email of place in the programme
- **Thursday 14 October 2021** – Partners will be sent a contract to formalise funding arrangement and provided with application packs and guidelines for candidates
- **October 2021** – Partners will advertise and shortlist candidates within their HEI
- **November 2021** – British Council will follow up with candidates for second stage application process via video submission
- **December 2021** – Fellows appointed and notified (decision with British Council)
- **January 2022** – Partners will be invoiced and Fellows issued with individual contracts
- **February 2022** – Training school for Fellows to understand all aspects of Fellowship role and curatorial context
- **April-November 2022** – Art Biennale in Venice (Fellows travel in set groups for 1 month within the period)
- **Spring 2023 TBC** – Showcase of Fellows’ research and creative outcomes

Eligibility

Criteria for eligibility to apply as a Partner:

- Be a HEI in the UK - England, Wales, Scotland, NI – open to a broad range of Arts, design, creative and cultural courses
- Able to commit and pay £2k per Fellowship place, which includes a £1,600 travel grant awarded to each Fellow and contribution of £400 towards programme costs
- Cover travel expenses for Fellow(s) up to £150 to attend training in February 2022 – UK location TBC (in 2020 we were hosted by Coventry University)
- Commitment to Equality Diversity Inclusion (EDI) demonstrated in application (Questions 4&5).

In addition, to help the British Council select Partners there are questions in the Partner Application Form (Questions 1,2&3) in which HEIs can state the outcomes and impact they are looking to achieve in line with the stated Programme Outcomes and Outcomes for Fellows.
**Covid-19**

As face-to-face activity is planned next year, the British Council, partners and fellows must follow latest guidance provided by the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office for the relevant country/countries before any travel: https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice

Travel will be risk assessed according to latest FCO guidance and British Council policy.

**Submission**

The following materials should be included in your application:

- **Completed Partner Application Form**

Submissions should be emailed to venicefellowships@britishcouncil.org by **Thursday 15 July**.

For any queries or expression of interest, and to return completed applications, please contact:

**Laura Broderick**
Venice Fellowships Programme Manager
venicefellowships@britishcouncil.org

**Selection**

Applicants will be notified of the outcomes by **Thursday 29 July**.

**Notes**

**British Council**

The British Council was founded in 1934 to create ‘a friendly knowledge and understanding’ between the people of the UK and wider world by making a positive contribution to the countries we work with, and in doing so making a lasting difference to the UK’s international standing, prosperity and security. The programmes we use to do this are wide-ranging and cover the arts, education, English, science and society.

Our UK Arts team works with the British Council’s global network of offices to achieve significant impact and change by finding new ways of connecting and seeing each other through the arts. Our team in the UK has three main groupings: We have six art form teams; three cross-disciplinary teams; and three country-specific teams in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Our aim is to see stronger creative sectors across the world that are better connected with the UK. We believe arts and culture are vital to prosperous, secure societies, and that offering international cultural connections and experiences strengthens their
resilience. We are uniquely able to make a difference thanks to our extensive and diverse networks in the UK and internationally, enabling us to respond to the individual context of each place we work in.

Last year we reached over 65 million people directly and 731 million people overall including online, broadcasts and publications. We make a positive contribution to the countries we work with – changing lives by creating opportunities, building connections and engendering trust. Founded in 1934 we are a UK charity governed by Royal Charter and a UK public body. We receive 15 per cent core funding grant from the UK government. For further information about the British Council, please visit www.britishcouncil.org.

Find out more about Venice Fellowships:
Please refer to the partnership pages on our website and the read about the Fellows via our blog:

https://venicebiennale.britishcouncil.org/fellowship/partners
https://venicebiennale.britishcouncil.org/fellowship/blog

www.britishcouncil.org/venicebiennale
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