
OPEN CALL: CURATOR BRITISH PAVILION AT THE 58TH INTERNATIONAL ART BIENNALE VENICE

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1. INTRODUCTION

This open call invites UK-based curators that meet the eligibility requirements (see section 4) to apply to become the Curator for the British Pavilion at the 58th International Art Exhibition, La Biennale di Venezia, which takes place from May to November 2019.

This is the first time that the British Council has offered this unique opportunity to an external UK-based visual arts curator. 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.

This opportunity gives a UK-based mid-career curator the chance to launch or enhance their international career and gain valuable experience working with a broad range of stakeholders and audiences. The successful applicant will work closely with the artist selected to represent Britain and the British Council team, through the presentation of an exceptional exhibition and associated programme in Venice. The Curator will be expected to participate in media interviews and promotional activities as well as contribute to the Fellowship programme and related fundraising activity. They will be an ambassador for the exhibition held at the British Pavilion on the occasion of the 58th International Art Exhibition, La Biennale di Venezia.

2. THE INTERNATIONAL ART EXHIBITION AT LA BIENNALE DI VENEZIA

Established in 1895, The International Art Exhibition - La Biennale di Venezia is the oldest regular contemporary art exposition in the world and attracts an audience of over 500,000 visitors to each edition. It is arguably the most important visual arts event in the international arts calendar. 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 national representation from countries across the globe.

The Art Biennale takes place every other year at two official sites in Venice: the Arsenale and the Giardini della Biennale. The Giardini houses the Central Pavilion and 29 national pavilions, one of which is the British Pavilion. The British Pavilion has one of the most prominent positions in the Giardini, at the end of a principle vista between the French, Canadian and German Pavilions.

The Venice Biennale appoints a guest curator for each International Art Biennale to co-ordinate, in association with an advisory panel, an exhibition organised around an overarching theme. It includes artists from around the world and is a major component of the Biennale event, which receives a significant amount of critical attention from arts professionals and media.

During the six and a half 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.

3. THE BRITISH COUNCIL

The British Council is the UK's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. We create friendly knowledge and understanding between the people of the UK and other countries. We do this by making a positive contribution to the UK and the countries we work with – changing lives by creating opportunities, building connections and engendering trust.

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.

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, Zaha Hadid, Steve McQueen 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.

We are dedicated to sharing the very best of UK arts with the world and the British Pavilion in Venice offers us an exceptional opportunity to do this with a solo exhibition by a prominent and accomplished contemporary artist, which in turn enhances the reputation of the UK as a global leader in contemporary visual arts practice. Additional programming will extend current debates within contemporary practice and provide enhanced international networking opportunities and engagement with key cultural stakeholders at the highest level. 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 also runs a successful Fellowship Programme which creates opportunities for 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.

For further details about the British Pavilion, please visit:

<https://venicebiennale.britishcouncil.org>

4. ELIGIBILITY & SELECTION CRITERIA

We are looking for a curator to lead on all curatorial aspects of the exhibition. The appointed Curator will work closely with the British Pavilion Commissioner, Director of Exhibitions and the Venice Senior Project Manager to deliver the exhibition in Venice.

- Applicants should live and/or work in Britain and have an excellent knowledge of contemporary British art. Applicants do not need to have been born in the UK.
- Applicants must have significant exhibition curating experience in the UK and/or some experience internationally. Priority will be given to those with established profiles within the UK's contemporary visual arts sector.
- Applicants must be employed in the non-profit arts sector by at least one organisation in the UK (England, Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland) and have the right to work in the UK. Applicants should arrange time away from their current responsibilities in order to undertake the work outlined for the Curator role.

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- Applicants must be able to demonstrate that they have a history of working collaboratively on significant projects.
 - Applicants must be able to demonstrate that they have published critical writing on contemporary art.
 - Applicants must demonstrate experience of media interviews, including for broadcast, and participating in promotional activities. Support and training for media interviews is available.
 - Applicants must demonstrate that they have had experience of working with established artists on new/commissioned projects.
 - Applicants must have an existing social media profile which they are confident to use for the Curator role as per agreed guidelines.
 - The appointed Curator must be the Curator for the British Pavilion in Venice only. They cannot perform any other role within the Venice Biennale's 58th edition such as working for other National Participations or Collateral Events in Venice.

5. EXPECTED DELIVERABLES

The Curator will be expected to deliver the following to deadlines that will be agreed in advance with the British Council:

- Attend the artist selection meeting to observe the artist selection committee's discussions.
- Attend a recce trip to the British Pavilion in Venice with the British Council team and the selected artist.
- Attend an agreed schedule of team meetings at the British Council office in London. The schedule will be agreed with the appointed Curator.
- Liaise with artist(s) to support the development of the new work specifically for the exhibition at the British Pavilion.
- Provide advice on the selection of artworks and the exhibition design.
- Write all exhibition text, including, but not limited to, a catalogue essay (2,000 words minimum), leaflets, wall text, press releases and digital collateral, working with the British Council appointed copy editor to ensure all texts are accessible to maximise audience engagement and understanding.
- Undertake at least one visit to the Pavilion during artist installation to support the artist and British Council in Venice team.
- Attend Vernissage Week (the Biennale's launch week) in Venice to promote the exhibition to the press, lead tours for external partners and key stakeholders and take part in all associated programming, including communications.
- The Curator will also be expected to contribute to the development and delivery of an Audience and Marketing Development Plan to publicise and promote the British Pavilion exhibition in the UK and Venice. This could include, but is not limited to, media launches,

press conferences, interviews, official functions and social media activity. This requires availability for select media interviews and events before launch.

- Contribute to the Fellowship programme, for example attend the induction day/ training and be prepared to talk about the exhibition content and curatorial process.
- Contribute to the films made by British Council to promote the exhibition.
- Collaborate with the British Council in Venice team to develop a public programme of events, talks and other engagement activity in relation to the artist's proposal and exhibition.
- Give tours of the exhibition for key audiences at the British Pavilion.
- Be an ambassador for the exhibition at fundraising events to help garner support for the exhibition and associated programme among British Council external stakeholders, including patrons.

6. WORKING WITH THE BRITISH COUNCIL

Reporting to the Venice Senior Project Manager, the successful applicant will work closely with the British Council's commissioning team to deliver the exhibition, publication and associated public engagement and promotional activities in London and Venice.

The British Council has a dedicated project team and works closely with colleagues in marketing and press. The key personnel for Venice 2019 are as follows:

- Director of Visual Arts – Emma Dexter (Commissioner)
- Director of Exhibitions – Gemma Hollington (Deputy Commissioner)
- Venice Senior Project Manager – Sara Black
- Touring Exhibitions Manager – Rohan Stephens
- Venice Fellowships Programme Manager – Laura Broderick

The British Council's communications team, working with a PR consultancy, will support the successful project. A focused and dedicated integrated campaign will publicise the project to a wide range of media, including national outlets from the UK and the international arts media.

The successful applicant will be expected to sign a contract with the British Council and will receive a fee of £10,000. This fee is to cover the time and work required to meet the deliverables outlined in Section 5.

The successful applicant will be issued with 25% of the fee, on receipt of an invoice immediately upon appointment and signature of contract, 50% payable upon the exhibition opening and the remaining 25% payable at the close of the exhibition.

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

The successful applicant will be an independent contractor and nothing in this Open Call will render the appointed Curator an employee, worker, agent or partner of the British Council.

7. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Each application should comprise the following:

- Application form (see Appendix A)
- Current up-to-date CV
- Personal statement outlining how your skills and experience match the eligibility and selection criteria
- Letter of support from your employer(s)
- Submission of a minimum of five examples of recent published writing on contemporary art

All submitted documents should be in English and clearly labelled with your name and contact details.

Applications should be submitted by email, and all documents should be in PDF format.

Emails should be sent to UKVenice2019@britishcouncil.org by **midnight on Sunday, 3 December 2017**.

A successful shortlist of applicants will be invited to an interview that will take place on either the 11 December 2017 or 12 December 2017.

8. SELECTION PANEL

A Selection Panel chaired by the British Pavilion Commissioner, Emma Dexter, Director Visual Arts will select the Curator through the open call submission and interview.

The Selection Panel will include the following people:

- Emma Dexter, Director Visual Arts, British Council
- Gemma Hollington, Director Exhibitions, Visual Arts, British Council
- Sara Black, Senior Project Manager Venice, British Council
- A member of the Venice Art Biennale Selection Committee

A. OPEN CALL APPLICATION FORM

The British Pavilion at the 58th International Art Biennale in Venice

FULL NAME AND TITLE: _____

ADDRESS

Street: _____

City: _____ Postal code: _____

Country: _____

Email address: _____

Telephone number: _____

ORGANISATION(S) CURRENTLY EMPLOYED BY: _____

DO YOU HAVE AGREEMENT & SUPPORT FROM YOUR EMPLOYER TO APPLY FOR THIS POSITION?

IF YOU HAVE ANSWERED YES TO THE ABOVE PLEASE SUPPLY EVIDENCE IN THE FORM OF A LETTER FROM YOUR EMPLOYER.

HOW DID YOU HEAR ABOUT THE BRITISH PAVILION CURATOR OPEN CALL?

SUBMISSION CHECKLIST:

- Application form
- Current CV
- Personal Statement (max 750 words). In this statement please include how you will manage this role with your current commitments.
- Letter(s) of support from your employer(s)
- Five copies of recent published writing on contemporary art

DATE: _____

SIGNATURE: _____

B. PROJECT DELIVERY TIMELINE/ SCHEDULE

Dates are for indication only and are subject to change

3 December 2017	Closing date for Curator applications
11 and 12 December 2017	Interview dates for Curator shortlist
22 December 2017	Curator appointed
8 January 2018	Curator post start date
Late January 2018	Selection Committee Venice 2019
March 2018	Press event to announce the artist selected to represent the UK at the 2019 Venice Biennale
June 2018	Recce trip to Venice (3 days)
January 2019	Catalogue and exhibition text submission
March 2019	Installation in Venice (5 days)
Mid-May 2019	Vernissage and opening events, Venice (7 days)
May – November 2019	Public exhibition, Venice with the opportunity for participation in lectures/ events in Venice.
November 2019	Curator post end
Late November to mid-December 2019	De-install exhibition, Venice