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Paid Opportunity for Artists:

Art & Action: Making Change in Victorian Britain

Watts Gallery – Artists’ Village

Deadline: Monday 30 November 2020

Watts Gallery – Artists’ Village (WGAV) is pleased to announce a paid opportunity for an artist who is interested in participating in a collaborative project, which forms part of Watts Gallery Trust’s winter exhibition *Art & Action: Making Change in Victorian Britain* (December 2020-21 March 2021).

Over the duration of the exhibition, the WGAV Curatorial and Learning teams will host a series of workshops to discuss, share ideas and explore the themes of *Art & Action* with participants from our Art for All Learning Programme. These facilitated workshops will ensure that our community can contribute responses to the exhibition. The role of the artist will be to participate in the workshops and create an artistic response informed by the workshop discussions and the *Art & Action* exhibition. Creative work could be inspired by and/or co-created with participants.

From exploitation to epidemics, the artworks in this exhibition address pertinent nineteenth-century issues that remain acutely relevant to audiences today (see ‘About the Exhibition’ section below). We welcome applications from artists at any stage of their careers, whose work engages with, communicates and challenges socio-political themes like those explored in the *Art & Action* exhibition.

We are looking for applications from artists that work in the following mediums: graphic arts, print, zine, illustration or moving image. In response to the ongoing situation regarding COVID-19, we would like to appoint an artist whose work translates into digital formats. The chosen candidate will be able to regularly share their process and progress with the public via our website and social media channels (via blog posts, Instagram or Twitter takeovers etc). At the end of the project the artist will be invited to exhibit their final work at Watts Gallery – Artists’ Village and/or online.

Whilst we hope the artist will be able to visit Watts Gallery-Artists’ Village, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, this project has been designed to be delivered remotely via digital platforms, and access or training requirements will be supported.

Fee:

The fee for the residency is £3,000. There is a separate budget of £1,000 for materials.

This fee would cover the following:

- Planning and development meetings with WGAV staff
- A creative outcome to the themes explored in these discussions and the *Art & Action* exhibition (TBC)



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- Digital engagement: producing content for our website/social media channels, e.g. an Instagram Takeover, blog post etc.
- Participation in up to two events e.g., a live digital streaming event for schools and Artist Talk.

Please note, that this fee does not include travel expenses or accommodation. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, this will be a remote role. You will, however, be in regular contact and have the full support of the teams at Watts Gallery – Artists' Village.

Time Frame:

This residency will take place between December 2020 to 22 February 2021

How to Apply:

Watts Gallery Trust is committed to diversity and equality of opportunity. We welcome and encourage applications from all individuals, regardless of age, sex, gender, sexual orientation, pregnancy, maternity, race, religion or belief.

To apply, please complete the Watts Gallery Application Form and the Equality and Diversity Monitoring Form (downloadable at www.wattsgallery.org.uk/aboutus/careers/) and submit your application via email to ellen.love@wattsgallery.org.uk.

If you have any questions about this advert or the application process or require any adjustments, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

You will receive an email acknowledging that your application has been received and only applicants who are interviewed will receive feedback on their application.

Deadline: Monday 30 November

We will aim to contact shortlisted applicants by: Tuesday 8 December

Interview will be conducted by zoom on: Monday 14 December.

Please note:

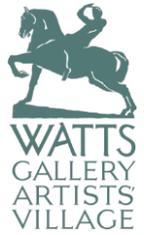
The successful candidate will be required to apply for an enhanced DBS check through Watts Gallery Trust prior to accepting this work. Successful candidate will also be required to adhere to Watts Gallery Trust's Safeguarding Policies.

About Watts Gallery – Artists' Village:

Situated in the Surrey Hills, just 40 minutes from London, Watts Gallery – Artists' Village is an independent arts charity and museum dedicated to the life and art of George Frederic and Mary Watts. The Watts estate comprises of a Grade II* listed art gallery, Limnerslease



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(the Wattses Arts & Crafts studio-home) and the celebrated Watts Chapel. The gallery holds three temporary exhibitions each year, which explore the life and art of, often underrepresented, Victorian and Edwardian artists. Driven by our founders' 'Art for All' ethos, Watts Gallery Trust also works in partnership with a number of local charities, organisations and prisons to support the empowerment and rehabilitation of young people and adults through the arts.

www.wattsgallery.org.uk @WattsGallery Facebook/wattsgalleryartistsvillage

For more information about our Art for All: Community Engagement and Outreach Programme visit:

<https://www.wattsgallery.org.uk/learn/community-engagement-outreach/>

Watts Gallery Trust is committed to supporting artists and freelancers as much as possible during the ongoing COVID-19 crisis. Please visit our website for more information:

<https://www.wattsgallery.org.uk/learn/artist-residence/artist-resources/>

About the Exhibition:

Art & Action

Making Change in Victorian Britain

17 November 2020 – 21 March 2021

Watts Gallery – Artists' Village

Can art change the future? In the mid- to late-nineteenth century, Victorian artists, viewers, and critics increasingly believed it could. Opening at Watts Gallery – Artists' Village on 17 November, *Art & Action: Making Change in Victorian Britain* will be the first exhibition to focus on the Victorian roots of art activism.

From the 1840s, as issues of poverty, hunger, and disease all became increasingly urgent in industrial Britain, a number of artists began to question how their art could benefit society. *Art & Action: Making Change in Victorian Britain* explores how artists sought not only to comment on social problems but to use their art to actively help solve them.

The exhibition features key works by Sir Luke Fildes, Thomas Kennington and William Morris, which will be exhibited alongside G F Watts's radical series of early social realist works (*Found Drowned*, *Under a Dry Arch*, *Song of the Shirt*, all 1847, Watts Gallery Trust). *Art & Action: Making Change in Victorian Britain* reveals how, in the Victorian era, art came to be recognised as a powerful tool that could enact social change, improve lives and ultimately shape the future.



G F Watts, *Under A Dry Arch*, *Found Drowned*, *Song of the Shirt*, all 1847, Watts Gallery Trust

Often working in conjunction with social movements, Victorian artists were at the frontline of reform efforts. From harrowing scenes of deprivation to idealised, sympathy-inducing images of suffering, artists believed in the power of art, which they hoped would have direct emotional effects on their viewers and ultimately lead to policy changes.

Such stark contemporary scenes were painted and exhibited on an unprecedented scale in British art of the period. The exhibition includes Sir Luke Fildes' *Applicants for Admission to a Casual Ward* (1874, Royal Holloway, University of London) - one of the most celebrated works by one of the foremost social-realist artists in Victorian Britain. While

many praised the painting, recognising it as a significant call to arms, some took offence at this panoramic portrayal of destitute families queuing for overnight accommodation in a workhouse. One critic from the *Saturday Review* deemed it 'too revolting for an art

which should be to please, refine and elevate'. Exhibited alongside works including W A Atkinson's *The First Public Drinking Fountain* (1859-60, The Museum of the Home, London) and Thomas Kennington's *The Pinch of Poverty* (1891, Coram in the care of the Foundling Museum, London), the exhibition considers how artists worked both within and outside of the boundaries of what was considered 'acceptable' in order to make their art constructive to their chosen cause.



Sir Luke Fildes, 'Houseless and Hungry', in *The Graphic*, 4 December 1869. Special Collections and Archives, Cardiff University.

Sir Luke Fildes, *Applicants for Admission to a Casual Ward*, 1874. Royal Holloway, University of London

From major Academy oils to graphic illustrations in the contemporary press, *Art & Action: Making Change in Victorian Britain* considers how and why artists chose to circulate their art across Victorian society in different ways. Emerging in the later nineteenth-century, the discourse on access to the arts led to significant changes to Victorian exhibition culture. *Art & Action: Making Change in Victorian Britain* examines the motivation behind Samuel and Henrietta Barnett's project to bring annual exhibitions to London's poverty-stricken East End – a practice that ultimately culminated in the foundation of Whitechapel Art Gallery. The exhibition explores how this was shaped by a belief that improved access to the arts could help to eliminate social inequality - a topic that continues to be just as poignant today.



Charles Green, 'Sunday Afternoon in a Gin Palace' and 'Sunday Afternoon in a Picture Gallery', *The Graphic*, 8 February 1879. The Guildford Institute.

Finally, the exhibition considers how changes in art production, promoted by artists like William Morris and the wider Arts & Crafts movement, advocated for a return to traditional craftsmanship in a stand against the dehumanising conditions enforced by factory labour. Here the spotlight also turns towards the practice of the artist and designer Mary Watts. In response to the significant rural decline that surrounded her in Surrey, and inspired by her involvement with the Home Arts and Industries Association, Watts founded the Compton Potters' Arts Guild providing a significant source of creative and economic support in Surrey for years to come.

The exhibition culminates with Watts Gallery's founders, G F and Mary Watts. This artist-couple were united in their shared belief that art had the power to create significant social change. Looking at the strategies that they employed, from community-based projects to the founding of their very own picture gallery, the exhibition considers how they strove to ensure that art and art practice could be made accessible for future generations – a legacy that continues to underpin Watts Gallery – Artists' Village today.

Art & Action: Making Change in Victorian Britain is co-curated with Dr Chloe Ward, Senior Lecturer in the History of British Art at Queen Mary, University of London. This exhibition forms part of Dr Ward's AHRC funded research project *From Protest to Propaganda: A History of Activist Art in Britain, 1845–1918*.

Dr Chloe Ward, guest co-curator of *Art & Action: Making Change in Victorian Britain* says:

Victorian social painting represented harrowing scenes of poverty and inequality, but what did it actually do to remedy these pressing issues? This exhibition recovers art's direct political contribution, revealing how it operated in conjunction with social campaigns to drive public awareness, debate, and reform.



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Abbie Latham, exhibition co-curator and Curatorial Trainee at Watts Gallery – Artists' Village says:

From exploitation to epidemics, the objects in this exhibition address a number of pertinent issues that remain acutely relevant to audiences today. Visitors will have the opportunity to explore how our present day understanding of visual activism stems from these significant Victorian art practices.

Alistair Burtenshaw, Director of Watts Gallery – Artists' Village says:

“GF and Mary Watts believed that art could be a catalyst for social change, and Watts Gallery – Artists' Village was created here in Compton to achieve exactly that. Today, Watts Gallery Trust upholds its founding ethos, and, through our Art for All learning programme, we work to ensure access to art for those who might not otherwise have this opportunity”.