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**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

DRAWING IN NATURE

Application Briefing for an Artist in Residence relating to the exhibition *Unto This Last: Two Hundred Years of John Ruskin* (10 March – 31 May 2020)

The Watts Gallery Trust in partnership with The Big Draw are seeking an Artist in Residence to respond to its forthcoming exhibition, *Unto This Last: Two Hundred Years of John Ruskin* (12 March – 31 May 2020) and to produce new, participatory work for the Watts Gallery - Artists' Village. The exhibition was first shown at the Yale Center for British Art in 2019 and has been co-curated by Professor Tim Barringer and three PhD candidates at Yale University's Department of the History of Art.

We are interested in hearing from artists primarily working in drawing practices and inspired by the work of John Ruskin, engaged in exploring the natural world and issues currently affecting the environment. This could take many different forms, but some possible themes for consideration include:

- Art in an age of climate change
- Ecologies under threat
- Nature vs the built environment
- Representation vs reality of nature

There will be opportunities during the residency to collaborate with four key groups:

1. Visitors to the Watts Gallery – Artists' Village, which might include families, special interest groups and local creative professionals
2. Schools and young people
3. Community groups local to Surrey
4. Watts Gallery Trust's Curatorial and Public Programming teams

We are open to how and in what form collaborations take place; it may be through participatory practice, discussions in the exhibition or another form of interaction. But we envisage that these collaborations will contribute in some way to the artist's creative practice and thinking during the residency.

EXHIBITION CONTENT

The artist should propose and produce a drawing-based work or series of works for the Watts Gallery Artists' Village in response to the exhibition, *Unto This Last: Two Hundred Years of John Ruskin*.

A complex and often contradictory figure, John Ruskin (1819-1900) stands as one of the most influential thinkers of the nineteenth century. As a pioneering art critic and accomplished draughtsman, Ruskin believed that art had the power to transform society and that nature inspired the most meaningful art. The exhibition examines Ruskin's legacy as a social reformer, ecological thinker and educator through an array of diverse materials, including paintings, manuscripts and a large number of drawings, on loan from the Yale Center for British Art and Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library. In addition, the exhibition also features works by J.M.W. Turner, John Everett Millais and Edward Burne-Jones. Many of the works will be on view for the first time in the UK.

The exhibition is accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue published by Yale University Press, with an introduction by Tim Barringer and essays by Tara Contractor, Victoria Hepburn and Judith Stapleton.

The exhibition is also supported by a varied public programme of talks and lectures at the Watts Gallery - Artists' Village, including a History of Art Course 'Hand, Head & Heart: John Ruskin and Art' and talks by Ruskin experts including Dr Suzanne Fagence Cooper, Andrew Hill and Professor Tim Barringer.

OUTCOMES

We will support the selected artist by:

- Ensuring full access to the exhibition and wider museum collections.
- Provide a purpose-built drawing studio from which to work and engage the public.
- Promotion of work through website, social media channels and blogs.
- Digital and physical avenues to exhibit final work and other outputs of the residency.
- A budget for materials and technical assistance.

TIMESCALE

The residency will take place between 16 March and 31 May 2020. We seek to appoint artists in March 2020 to allow time for scheduling any site visits or planning meetings prior to the start of the residency.

STUDIO

The selected artist will be given our purpose-built Artist in Residence studio on site as a base for their creative practice. For the duration of the exhibition season, this space will host a Nature Library – with a sensory display of feathers, moss, bark and stone.

Members of the public will be able to visit the studio and pick up drawing materials to create their own art in response. It will be the responsibility of the selected artist to ensure the studio is a participatory space and can remain open even when they are not on site.

The Studio is at ground level and fully accessible.

BUDGET

The fee for the residency is £3000. Please note that the fee doesn't include travel expenses or accommodation.

SELECTION CRITERIA

We are seeking an artist:

- Who is interested in exploring the legacy of John Ruskin in relation to the natural world
- Who uses drawing as a central part of their practice
- Who is confident in engaging with members of the public and has some experience of participatory practice
- Who is able to commit to at least two on-site days a week during the exhibition

We are interested in supporting artists at any stage of their careers. All selected artists must have Professional Indemnity and Public Liability in place prior to accepting the residency.

Watts Gallery Trust is committed to diversity and equality in our workforce, amongst our visitors and in our cultural offer. We welcome applications from suitably experienced artists /creatives from all backgrounds regardless of age, colour, sex, gender, religion, pregnancy or disability. We are particularly keen to receive applications from BAME and disabled artists / creatives.

HOW TO APPLY

Selection of the successful artist will be based on the strength of the artist's work and written statement. Your application should include:

1. Your name and contact details (phone, email and address)
2. An artist statement of up to 250 words, which should include reference to the art form(s) you work in
3. A short statement of up to 250 words about how you would like to engage with the John Ruskin exhibition and the themes of the natural world
4. Images, film or examples of previous work

APPLICATION SUBMISSION

Applications should be clearly marked 'Drawing in Nature: Artist in Residence Application' and should reach us no later than 5pm on Monday 9 March 2020.

Please email your completed application to nerissa.taysom@wattsgallery.org.uk.

We aim to contact shortlisted applicants by Wednesday 11 March 2020.

Interviews (including virtual/digital interviews) will be held on Monday 17 March 2020.

ENQUIRIES

If you have any questions about the residency or application process, please contact:

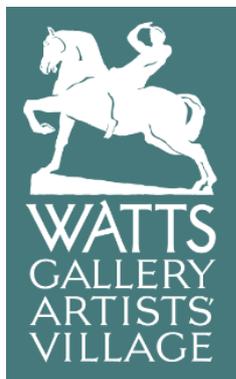
Nerissa Taysom

Adult Programme Curator

Email: nerissa.taysom@wattsgallery.org.uk

01483 910751

WATTS GALLERY – ARTISTS' VILLAGE



Watts Gallery - Artists' Village is an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation, located in Compton, near Guildford, in the Surrey Hills. Founded in 1904, Watts Gallery Trust promotes the enjoyment and understanding of the art of George Frederic Watts (1817-904) and Mary Watts (1849-1938) who established a home and studios here in the 1890s. Watts Gallery - Artists' Village encompasses a unique group of Arts & Crafts buildings: Watts Gallery, Watts Studios, Watts Chapel and the Pottery Buildings. At the centre of all our work is a commitment to an **Art for All** ethos – opening up the collections and creative opportunities for everyone, regardless of background, disability or challenging circumstances.

THE BIG DRAW



The Big Draw Festival's 2020 theme, *A Climate of Change*, is important to address in our 20th anniversary year as we mark and capture this pivotal moment in our society and for our organisation. This important and timely theme encourages and underlines the relationship between people and our living environments and ecosystems; highlighting how we live today and the ways in which we do and do not harmonise with nature.

The rapid current state of environmental change, socio-political and economic flux spur us to consider our relationship with the planet and humankind in tandem. Working and living sustainably has become more necessary than ever. The Big Green Draw is eager to help showcase mindsets and actions that proactively support positive symbiosis between people and the Earth.

Social justice and cultural capital are the underpinnings of The Big Green Draw with an aim to create a kinder more collaborative society with drawing as a catalyst. Through festival events, organisers will aim to introduce links between drawing and science; promoting the polymathic nature of great thinkers who used art as a tool to understand the world.

around them. Drawers and doodles across the globe will join in engaging the public realm in a campaign promoting sustainable materials and approaches for healthy built environment and public spaces, subsequently highlighting the impact on this on our wellbeing and productivity.

Every year, event organisers from museums, galleries, civic centres, businesses, universities, schools, community centres, parks, heritage sites, cultural institutions and artists take on The Big Draw Festival theme as part of a global family celebrating drawing - in all it's forms.

#ClimateofChange #BigGreenDraw #BigDrawTurns20 #TheBigDraw