

Historic England, Picturing England's High Streets

Open Call for Socially Engaged Photographer-in-Residence in Chester (over three years)

Brief

About High Streets Heritage Action Zones

Historic England is working with local people and partners through grant funding and sharing our skills to help breathe new life into high streets that are rich in heritage and full of promise. The High Streets Heritage Action Zones scheme, backed by government funding, aims to help with the recovery of local high streets from regenerating historic buildings to helping to engage local communities through art and cultural projects.

About the Chester High Streets Heritage Action Zone and Open Eye Gallery

The residency will be developed within the context of a wider programme Chester High Street Heritage Action Zone based around the Rows. The core High Street Heritage Action Zone programme is designed to secure lasting improvements to our historic high streets making them a more attractive, engaging and vibrant place for people to live, work and spend time. A Cultural Programme is being developed on each of the high streets, alongside the core programme. The priority for this programme will be to work with communities and celebrate what is unique about the rows, its stories and people.

Chester: <https://historicengland.org.uk/services-skills/heritage-action-zones/chester/>

The resident photographer can tap into the momentum being developed by *Create Chester* led by Cheshire West and Chester Council with a broad range of cultural partners developing projects across the city - not least a contemporary visual arts biennial for Chester. A pilot cultural programme is currently underway that includes a socially engaged photographer, Suzanne St Clare, working with Chester Pride, supported by Open Eye Gallery and Cheshire West and Chester Council.

Core partner Open Eye Gallery is developing a national lead on Socially Engaged Photography Practice, (SEPP) including coordinating a national network of SEPP practitioners and photography organisations, supporting international practice development, as well as managing a significant programme of SEPP residencies with a wide range of partners from neighbourhood initiatives, to the NHS programmes and Novus, a national education provider in prisons.

About High Streets Heritage Action Zones Cultural Programme

Historic England is leading the High Street Cultural Programme in partnership with National Lottery Heritage Fund and the Arts Council England as part of the High Streets Heritage Action Zones initiative funded by the Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport.

The High Streets Heritage Action Zones Programme is a nationwide scheme designed to secure lasting improvements to our historic high streets for the communities who use them. The High Street Heritage Action Zones scheme aims to transform and restore disused and dilapidated buildings into new homes, shops, work places and community spaces, restoring local historic character and improving public realm.

Developed alongside capital improvements on the High Streets Heritage Action Zones participating in the scheme, the Cultural Programme is the biggest ever community-led arts and heritage programme celebrating the high street. The Cultural Programme will unlock the potential of these high streets, fuelling economic, social and cultural recovery, helping people to feel proud of where they live. The Cultural Programme has two strands. Firstly, local grants will support the development and production of cultural programmes, and new partnerships on each of the High Street Heritage Action Zone participating in the scheme

See map here: <https://historicengland.org.uk/services-skills/heritage-action-zones/regenerating-historic-high-streets/>

Secondly, Historic England is curating a National Commissioning Programme that will engage with artists and creatives to help bring a very special and diverse set of places together. The commissions will be developed and co-created with communities, and delivered by artists to provide a creative response that documents and reflects the high streets over the period of the programme from 2020-24.

This open call is part of Historic England's National Commission *Picturing England's High Streets* run by Photoworks in partnership with photography organisations nationally.

About the national photographer-in-residence programme

Picturing England's High Streets is a three-year project which includes six photographer-in-residence programmes at six high street locations across England, as well as artist mentoring and a digital nationwide mass participation project. This Open Call is for the photographer-in-residence programme in Chester High Street Heritage Action Zone.

England's high streets have a long history and have always been at the heart of our communities. They are our landmarks, points of reference and meeting places. Across centuries people have gathered together on high streets, from market days to turning on the Christmas lights; coffee dates to national jubilees. In a recent survey, 45% of respondents indicated that their primary high street use was non-retail related. ([Research undertaken on behalf of the Mayor of London in 2017](#))

Every high street in England, whether it is in a medieval market town or a post-war city centre, has a unique and distinctive history that creates identity and a sense of place. Despite this, high streets are struggling, and need to adapt to survive. This commission will help people reconnect with their high streets, seeing them as places that can thrive and are of relevance to them and their lives.

The photographer-in-residence programmes are a key part of *Picturing England's High Streets*. The photographer-in-residence will work with local communities to reimagine the high street, producing images which will become part of the Historic England archive.

High street users and the community are at the heart of this project and we are looking for photographers whose practice is socially engaged. We are proposing a way of working rather than a thematic or visual approach.

The project starts with a simple provocation; 'Your high street: Investigate before, picture now and imagine the future.....'

This provocation will be used as a creative springboard for socially engaged, diverse, community led commissioning for the photographer-in-residence programmes for *Picturing England's High Streets*.

What are we expecting?

We are looking for a photographer who has an interest in Chester and whose practice embraces the opportunity to co-author the project with the local community. We would welcome applications from socially engaged photographers that live in or have a connection to Chester - although this is not essential.

The Socially Engaged Photographers role will include:

- Working closely with local partners to develop relationships with communities to develop visual narratives that are meaningful to them. The photographer will support participants to create photographic stories themselves, through a process of dialogue and co-authorship.
- Taking part in stakeholder planning meetings with Open Eye Gallery, Cheshire West and Chester Council and local High Street Heritage Action Zone team, around accessibility guidance and scope for showcasing work in the public realm and opportunities for safeguarding or CPD training with Open Eye Gallery where appropriate.
- Delivering a series of socially distanced physical or online planning sessions and practical photography workshops sessions that support and develop skills, ideas and photo stories with community members.
- Supporting a student, early career or amateur local photographer from the local community annually, to develop some work alongside you.
- With partner support co-producing a series of physical works for exhibition, and delivering within the public realm (e.g. pop up spaces and shopping unit windows) and accompanying works for digital or online /social media display.
- A selection of images produced to go into Historic England's national Archive.
- Supporting engagement with the wider mass participation online project.
- Adhering to all safeguarding and ethical policies associated with the programme, supported by Open Eye Gallery and local partners.
- Contributing to evaluation process with all project partners

What will the selected artist receive?

Fixed fee of 10,500 over three years - hours conditional on experience but paid using a.n. guidelines for paying artists

Open Eye Gallery holds additional budget for artist's travel, materials, DBS, and other costs associated with delivery.

Additionally the artist will receive mentoring, training, practical logistics and support from the photography organisation who are hosting them

Practical logistics and organisational support will be provided by Open Eye Gallery, with input from partners.

Key dates and timeline

Open call deadline: May 26th 2021

Short list contacted: June 4th 2021

Interviews: June 11th 2021 (TBC)

Start date: Summer 2021 High Streets Heritage Action Zone residency begins

End date: End March 2024

How to apply

1. Applications should be submitted to Open Eye Gallery at jobs@openeye.org.uk. Please put *Picturing England's High Streets - Chester* in the subject.
2. Please describe what interests you about this project and how you feel your experience as a socially engaged photographer would meet the brief.
3. Please submit a C.V.
4. Submit up to 15 images. These can be examples of your or participants previous work or the engagement process.
5. Please complete the Equal Opportunities Form and attach to your application.

Selection process

Each Open Call will have a jury involving partners representing the Chester High Streets Heritage Action Zone team, Open Eye Gallery, Photoworks and Historic England.

Get in touch

If you have any questions, please read the frequently asked questions below or contact natalie@openeye.org.uk

Is this opportunity right for me?

We have created this quiz to help you decide if this open call is right for you at this point in your practice. You should be able to answer 'YES' to all questions in the quiz with confidence.

- Q1. My artistic practice is socially engaged, and I can provide evidence of my approach to working *with* communities.
- Q2. I have an interest in Chester and the aims of the High Street Heritage Action Zones
- Q3. I am confident I can invest sufficient time to meet the expectations of this project.
- Q4. I am over 18 and not in full time education.

There is more detail about who the opportunity is for in the FAQs. If you have further questions about your suitability for the photographer-in-residence programmes open call, feel free to email natalie@openeye.org.uk and we will get back to you within 3 working days.

Equality, Diversity, Inclusion

We are committed to addressing equality, diversity and inclusion across all our work and we welcome applications from candidates of all backgrounds. The sector is experiencing one of the highest levels of loss of work in the face of Covid-19: the personal impact of this is often devastating; the loss of skilled and talented people permanently a very real worry for the future. The pandemic has disproportionately impacted the health and livelihoods of people from African, Caribbean, LatinX or South and East Asian heritage, those with disabilities or long-term health conditions, those from lower socio-economic backgrounds, and those facing intersecting barriers. These groups were already under-represented in the visual arts and photography sector and most likely to experience racism and marginalisation. We therefore particularly welcome applications from anyone from the groups above.

Why do we collect Equal Opportunities Monitoring data?

We are committed to equal opportunities, with the aim of ensuring that everyone engaging in our programme as an audience member, an artist, or those joining us for employment, receives fair treatment and we positively encourage applications from everybody regardless of age, disability, race, sex, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, religion or belief, marriage and civil partnership and caring status.

The information you provide us as part of this opportunity (if you would like to) helps us track and measure performance and progress towards our equality and diversity goals and in promoting inclusion. The information collected will help us to identify disparities in outcomes and experiences between groups, identify trends over periods of time, to investigate the reasons for these differences and put suitable actions in place. To help us achieve this aim we ask you to complete this monitoring form. We collate equality information on age, location, disability, race, sex, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, religion or belief, marriage and civil partnership and caring status. The request for this information and how it is used is within the scope of the Data Protection Act 1998 which allows for the collation and reporting of sensitive data for monitoring purposes.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a photographer-in-residence programme?

A photographer-in-residence programme is where a photographer spends an extended amount of time with a community to fully engage and understand them. The photographer will then co-produce a series of photographs in partnership with that community.

What is socially engaged photography?

When referring to the term socially engaged photography, we mean activities or projects where photographers and communities/individuals come together to co-author or co-produce visual representations of the world around us. The process behind the work produced is often as important as the final photographic work, and projects are often reliant on collaboration and discussion. The work often reflects multiple voices about a particular social, political, economic or environmental issue, rather than that of a single artistic voice.

Where can I find out more about socially engaged practice?

We've gathered some useful links here

<https://openeye.org.uk/socially-engaged-photography-network/>

<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/s/socially-engaged-practice>

<http://www.asocialpractice.com/about/>

Do I have to have a degree to apply?

No, you do not need a university degree to apply.

Who is running the photographer-in-residence programmes?

Historic England has appointed Photoworks to run *Picturing England's High Streets* in partnership with photography organisations nationally. Each photographer-in-residence programme is run by a different organisation who has links in the local area, working in partnership with Historic England and Photoworks.

Coventry, GRAIN Projects

Stoke, GRAIN Projects

Prescot, Open Eye Gallery

Chester, Open Eye Gallery

Leicester, QUAD/FORMAT

London, Photofusion

How many photographer-in-residence programmes are there?

There are six photographer-in-residence programmes delivered as part of *Picturing England's High Streets*. The Open Calls for Coventry and Stoke (run with GRAIN Projects) and Chester and Prescot (run with Open Eye Gallery) are now live and open for applications. The remaining two Open Calls for Leicester and London will be launched later in the Spring.

Who is delivering the mentoring for the photographers-in-residence?

The photographer-in-residence programmes will include mentoring support delivered by partners Impressions Gallery, PARC (Photography and the Archive Research Centre), Redeye, ReFramed and The Photographers' Gallery.

What is Historic England?

Historic England is the public body that helps people care for, enjoy and celebrate England's spectacular historic environment, from beaches and battlefields to parks and pie shops. We protect, champion and save the places that define who we are and where we've come from as a nation. We care passionately about the stories they tell, the ideas they represent and the people who live, work and play among them. Working with communities and specialists we share our passion, knowledge and skills to inspire interest, care and conservation, so everyone can keep enjoying and looking after the history that surrounds us all.

<https://historicengland.org.uk/>

Where can I find out more about the High Streets Heritage Action Zones?

More information about the high streets taking part in the programme and a map are here:

<https://historicengland.org.uk/services-skills/heritage-action-zones/regenerating-historic-high-streets/>

Where can I find out more about the High Streets Heritage Action Zones Cultural Programme?

More information about the Cultural Programme and other national commissions can be found here:

<https://historicengland.org.uk/get-involved/high-street-culture/>

Why this amount?

This amount is a fixed fee over the 3 year period based on P/T engagement, the number of days worked for this amount will be agreed with the artist based on recommended daily fees published by the artists information company (www.a-n.co.uk), dependent on experience.

During the residency where will the photographers work?

The artist and Open Eye Gallery will agree the number of days to be worked with communities in local area over the 3 year period. We recognise that photographers may not live locally and Open Eye Gallery will provide all reasonable practical, logistical and organisational support to facilitate the residency.

If the photographers are not from the areas, are they expected to re-locate there?

There isn't any funding for relocation. Through taking part in a 3-year-long artist residency, the artist is expected to have the flexibility to work with local communities - often this does involve negotiating time frames that work for both parties.

The HS Cultural Programme is 'community led' - how will the artists interact with local communities when creating their projects?

We hope for the photographers to adopt a socially engaged approach where they will co-produce their work with local communities. The exact approach and way this is done will depend on the individual artist.

Which community groups will the artists interact with? Will this be representative of the area as a whole?

Details such as the community groups that may wish to engage, will develop out of discussions between partners, the artists and communities. We do hope to engage people who may not normally have a 'public' voice.

How can local people get involved in the project?

The photographer will be introduced to partners working with communities locally. Opportunities for local people to be involved will be developed over the three year period.

What if local people on the high streets don't want to be photographed?

The photographer will seek permissions, as per normal legal requirements. Anyone who does not want to be pictured just needs to inform the photographer.