

LEGACY (Working Title)

Artist Brief

If Lord Berwick left the Park and the Mansion specifically ‘for public benefit’, what does this mean in the 21st Century?

Pentabus Theatre and Attingham Park are looking for a **socially engaged sound / digital artist** to work with us on an arts project in 2020 to explore what Attingham’s ‘legacy’ means for a number of different local communities.

About us

Attingham Park is the single most generous gift to the National Trust, its mansions and grounds left by Lord Berwick “for public benefit.”



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Attingham Park, near Shrewsbury, is one of the greatest estates in Shropshire and includes an impressive late-18th century mansion and collections, landscaped parkland by 18th century designer Repton with views across ancient countryside, a deer park, a productive organic walled garden and orchard with farmland of some 4000 acres. The parkland at Attingham is one of the richest and most important nature conservation sites for veteran trees and invertebrates in England and is designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest. Attingham has experienced the highs of huge wealth as well as the lows of benign neglect. Formerly owned by five generations of the Berwick family, it was gifted to the National Trust in 1947 and now welcomes over half a million visitors each year.

Pentabus is the nation's rural theatre company. We tour new plays to village halls, fields and theatres. We seek out communities with least engagement to the arts, telling stories with local relevance and national impact. Our work digs deep into the psyche of the English countryside and the complexities it throws up. Our shows are playful, audience led, provocative and compassionate, offering rural audiences theatre made for them and with them. We connect artists, participants and audiences from the beginning of the creative process, developing ideas together to ensure our work is relevant and meaningful. We are creatively accountable to our audience, responding to them, learning from them, validating their experiences. Based on a farm, we are committed to the creative health of the countryside. The rural world is largely invisible in modern culture and we provide a vital national platform for its voices and stories. We play a critical role in the national theatre ecology, injecting rural narratives into the urban mainstream and nurturing artists from rural backgrounds, giving them opportunities to enter the wider sector. We balance this by working with artists from across the UK and Ireland.

The Project – Context and Vision.

Pentabus Theatre, in partnership with Attingham Park, will develop and deliver a participatory programme of workshops with communities, NT volunteers, NT staff and artists. The workshop programme will lead to the co-creation of a response to the following provocation:

If Lord Berwick left the Park and the Mansion specifically 'for public benefit', what does this mean in the 21st Century, and how does the public of today benefit from this generous gift to the National Trust?

There are many people who already benefit from using Attingham; through visiting and volunteering many have discovered their own personal 'Attingham memory' or 'Attingham moment'. There are also many local people and communities who have never been to Attingham, who are yet to create an 'Attingham memory'. We want to explore how we bring people together to share existing memories and create new ones.

Proposed Project Activity

Pentabus and Attingham will identify two local communities who do not currently engage with Attingham or the arts. These communities will include but not be restricted to a rural community, a community of young people and a community from an urban area of high deprivation.

We will work with three artists – the lead artist will be Andrew Sterry of Pentabus Theatre (socially engaged theatre maker), in collaboration with a socially engaged sound / digital artist and a visual artist / designer.

Andrew and the sound / digital artist will lead the programme of workshops with communities, and the visual artist / designer will work with them to respond to the workshop programme and communities, creating a final output to be shared at Attingham. This will be a process of co-creation. The final output will be a physical response to the work of all artists and community members.

From January to August 2020 we will run 8 workshop sessions with each of the two identified communities, Attingham volunteers and the two socially engaged project artists.

Workshop sessions will take place both in community spaces and at Attingham. Participants will get to know the place, meet NT volunteers and other collaborating artists, and begin to respond to the provocation and the idea of a personal Attingham moment or memory.

This will lead to a visual and creative response bringing together the two engagement processes. It will be a temporary installation in the grounds and/or the Mansion.

A production manager will be employed by Attingham and Pentabus to logistically manage community engagement, workshops and the build and presentation of the final output.

The output will:

- Respond to the process of engagement.
- Create a legacy reflecting the process of engagement.
- Be sympathetic to the conservation needs of Attingham and the National Trust.
- Take place in two or more environments across Attingham; for example - the stables, the grounds and the mansion.
- Be presented in Autumn 2020 (Oct-Dec)
- Remain in situ for up to six months if not longer.

The aim of this project is to:

- Work with artists to bring different communities together
- Explore the barriers that exist, both real and perceived, that prevent community members from visiting Attingham.
- Work with artists to create an output that celebrates the process, and shares the stories of the participants engaging in the project.
- Work with Attingham volunteers and identified groups to find a new shared portrait/vision idea of Attingham
- Make Attingham more accessible for the identified communities

Community Engagement Aims:

- To engage with communities of little or no engagement with the Arts.
- To provide access to the arts for areas of multiple deprivation, according to the English Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2015 (IMD)
- To engage with isolated rural communities
- To deliver work which has a legacy – ie there is opportunity for participants to connect to the work and to the National Trust beyond the activity scheduled.

The artists' role

We are commissioning a socially engaged sound / digital artist to collaborate with Pentabus Theatre and Attingham's staff and volunteers, working specifically with the two identified communities over a series of 8 workshops (per community) during 2020. The artist will also lead 6 taster workshops with potential communities in the lead up to the project's beginning at the end of 2019.

The project will be led by Andrew Sterry, Pentabus Audiences and Engagement Manager. Andrew is also an associate at Sherman Theatre. As a writer and director, Andrew makes original theatre and performance with and about the people who are in it. He collaborates with artists, performers and musicians, museums, charities and schools, and creates work in a range of spaces from care centres and day homes to community centres and theatres.

This collaboration between artists and communities will lead to the development and creation of an installation, which will be installed at Attingham for up to 6 months from Autumn 2020. The artist will collaborate with Andrew in planning and delivery of workshops, and aims and objectives for each community. The artist and Andrew will also collaborate with a Visual Artist / Designer who will join the project to observe at least three workshops with each community, designing the final output.

Scale and location

The final output will be created by all collaborating artists in response to the series of workshops and the mansion and grounds of Attingham.

The scale of the final work should balance the need for impact in a variety of locations across the park and mansion with the restrictions of the budget and the needs of the community engagement process. This part of the project will involve working closely with the National Trust team to carefully consider and meet conservation needs of the mansion, interiors and parkland. The work will be installed for up to 6 months.

Media & Art Form

We are open to proposals in a range of media and approach from verbatim recording, film, audio, music/composition to sound and digital art.

What we are looking for

We are looking for a socially engaged artist with a strong vision for how to meet the brief, and an interest in the project's themes. We envisage the artist to be based in the West Midlands or Mid Wales, and able to reach Attingham, Shrewsbury or rural Wales for. Collaborative applications with a visual artist / designer are welcomed, as are single applications from digital artists who feel that they can encompass both roles.

In particular you will be able to demonstrate:

- Experience of working with communities of place and interest
- Experience working with vulnerable people
- A collaborative approach
- An ability to lead workshops and respond to different communities
- Experience of socially engaged practice
- Imagination
- Experience of working in a participatory theatre context.

Schedule

Volunteer Introduction to the project via newsletter
Volunteer gauge of interest (newsletter)
Information session with Pentabus and volunteers

June 2019
August 2019
September 2019

Artists contracted to project.	October 2019
Initial training session with volunteers	October 2019
Identifying and first meetings with communities - <i>Pentabus and Attingham only</i> .	October 2019
Taster workshops with potential communities	Oct & Nov 2019
Communities confirmed	end November 2019
Discussions and planning of workshop process	October, November 2019
Workshops begin	January 2020
Design research and initial ideas	January 2020
Workshops break for holidays	Easter 2020
Preliminary Design Proposal	April 2020
Final Design proposal signed off by Attingham & Pentabus	July 2020
Recording communities, Building and Presentation of final output	September - November 2020

Fee

The artist fee is £4800. Travel and accommodation will be provided additionally as required. This fee includes workshop tasters, preparation and delivery, (alongside Pentabus Audiences and Engagement manager Andrew Sterry), consideration, planning and delivery of final output, alongside a Visual Artist/Designer and Production Manager.

Submissions and selection

How to apply

To be considered for this commission please send an Expression of Interest by **9am on Friday 30 August**, to include:

- CV no more than 2 pages
- Up to 5 links to examples of your work (please don't send large files as attachments)
- An Expression of Interest statement (2 sides A4 maximum) that outlines why you are interested in working on the project, the approach you would take and any initial thoughts, showing a clear connection to the brief.

Please email your application (subject LEGACY Project) to claire.tafft@nationaltrust.org.uk

Shortlisted artists will be invited to interview at Attingham on **Wednesday 25 or Friday 27 September 2019**

For further information or an informal chat about the project please contact Sophie Motley or Claire Tafft on the details below. We are sorry we are unable to give feedback if you are not shortlisted at the Expression of Interest stage and are unable to accept postal applications.

Contacts

Joint leads for project

Sophie Motley (Artistic Director Pentabus) sophie@pentabus.co.uk 01584 856564
 Claire Tafft (Visitor Experience Manager National Trust Attingham Park)
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Find out more about the project at www.nationaltrust.org.uk/thelegacyproject or visit <http://www.pentabus.co.uk/>



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