

projectart works

JOB DESCRIPTION FOR ARCHIVE & RESEARCH ASSOCIATE

The Project Art Works Archive & Research Associate is a part-time role who will work across two strands:

- Support the organisation on archiving and storage of artworks, both digitally and physically in our buildings, as well as increasing public access to the archive.
- Work with the CEO and other members of the team to support the development and delivery of a new research project focussing on creative practice, disability rights, and neurodiversity.

About Project Art Works

Project Art Works is a visual arts organisation and an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation. We are a collective of neurodiverse artists and activists based in Hastings. Our programmes evolve through creative practice and radiate out to awareness raising in the cultural and care sectors, promoting more diverse representation in programming and relevancy for audiences. We disseminate the work of neurodivergent artists and makers through a wide range of projects, exhibitions, co-commissions, films, publications and digital platforms, increasing neurodiverse representation in programming, and deepening understanding and visibility.

From our studio base in Hastings and in temporary studio set-ups during off-site projects and workshops, we facilitate personalised creative pathways for artists and makers. The studio spaces are without hierarchy where events and happenings unfold, and artists work together in purposeful collaboration using total communication. Gesture, sound, signing and empathy allow for more expansive and freeing forms of connection.

About the Archive

Project Art Works' archive of neurodivergent people's creative practice is both a record of the creative contribution of the individual artists who make art at Project Art Works, and of our collective practice.

A physical archive of over 4,000 paintings, sculpture and other forms of art, and a digital archive of 20,000+ photographs of the artworks and the people who made the artworks.

The collection goes back to 2004 and continues to be added to.

All images are professionally photographed and catalogued as a record and as a testament to the quality and value of the creative contribution made by neurodivergent people.

The archive reflects societal changes of the lives of people with learning disabilities over the last 20+ years spanning the closing of asylums, the introduction of Personal Budgets and Government policy Valuing People Now, allowing greater freedom, choice and control.

The artworks and the archive have been shown in major exhibitions across the world including at [Tate Modern](#), [Baltic Centre of Contemporary Art](#), [Copenhagen Contemporary](#), [Turner Prize 2021](#), [Documenta Fifteen](#), [De La Warr Pavilion](#) & [Hastings Contemporary](#).

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We also loan artworks to corporations and individuals through the [Art on Loan scheme](#), and license artworks from the Archive for reproduction in Premier Inn hotel rooms across Europe. Selected works are for sale via our Shop.

About Research

Whilst Project Art Works has effectively mined the archive for exhibition purposes and for sales, we are now in a position to assess its value both as an artwork in and of itself, as material for research and as a potential resource to better understand non-speaking artists and makers. This is a radically new way to consider the archive.

From our work, we know that creative practice has a wide-ranging and long-term positive impact in the lives of people with complex needs. To evidence this we are pursuing a new research programme informed by questions such as:

- What does process and the production of objects that look like and mirror art tell us about the maker if they do not use language to communicate?
- What is the value of creative engagement for non-speaking people?
- What is the value of objects made by non-speaking people through art processes if they do not articulate intention?
- What value do caregivers place on the creative practice of and works created by non-speaking they support?

We want to explore and refine these questions through our practice and through developing a research programme with The Challenging Behaviour Foundation and The Tizard Centre, University of Kent, Goldsmiths University, Visual Cultures Department via PhD study currently being undertaken by PAWs' CEO, Tate (early discussions in progress) and non-speaking contributors and their families and caregivers.

We intend to build a major proposal and application to the Arts & Humanities Research Council (AHRC) for submission no later than September 2025.

About the role

This role is flexible but does requires on-site presence for archive work but could also include home working for areas of research. The contract is specifically to support our capacity building programme between 2025 and 2028 and will focus on:

- cataloguing of the archive
- preparation of artworks for digital and physical archiving
- supporting public access.

The research element of the role includes:

- literature reviews and support
- coordinating partner events and the research funding programme (supported by the senior team at Project Art Works)
- liaison between stakeholders
- supporting the communications with and involvement of neurodivergent contributors, caregivers and families in the on-going research programme.

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The two aspects of this role will be complimentary and supported by training in Health and Safety, Total Communication, Conservation and digital cataloguing.

Responsibilities

- Adhere to systems and methodologies for good collections management.
- Work with our inhouse archive team on all technical matters, ethics, national and international standards relating to conservation and collections care.
- Develop a deep understanding of the database, how it's used and its strengths and limitations.
- Organise the artworks for photographing and archiving – meta tagging, condition reports, recording where the artworks where the artworks have been shown in exhibitions, consent information, descriptions i.e. materials used, size, artist name, date, location in archive or offsite.
- Digitisation of artworks including working with the freelance photographer.
- Indexing and correcting data relating to documentation type, dates, object titles.
- Creating glossaries to aid usability and accuracy.
- Working within a small team to call on expertise when required and consult as to user experience.
- Support the organisation with liaison with software engineers/coders to develop improvements in the backend and frontend of the database software.

Requirements

- Demonstrable relevant learning from work experience, academic study or external interest in the field of archives, data entry, organisation of collections.
- A demonstrable knowledge or interest in art and/or social care is desirable but not essential
- A demonstrable knowledge of research methodologies
- MS Office. Exceptional attention to detail in all aspects of work.
- Highly motivated and able to demonstrate initiative. Good time management skills. An ability to set priorities, manage a number of tasks concurrently and function with limited supervision.

Contract: 2 year fixed term contract. 16 hours per week. Based in Hastings with flexible working / working from home as required. We are open to discussion on the hours and working pattern for the right candidate.

Salary: £15,135 / FTE £35,000. 16 hours per week

How to apply

Please send your CV with a cover letter detailing your suitability for the role and how you meet the Person Specification. Please email this to the Development Director: helen@projectartworks.org by Tuesday 30 September.