

Creative Writer in Residence

Methodist Modern Art Collection Bradford 2025

Introduction

We're looking for a Creative Writer to respond to *Everything is Connected* the exhibition of artworks belonging to the Methodist Modern Art Collection (MMAC) during Bradford 2025 City of Culture.

Background to the Methodist Modern Art Collection (MMAC)

The Methodist Modern Art Collection is one of the Methodist Church's greatest treasures. It is an outstanding collection of 20th and 21st Century religious art, founded in 1962 by Dr John Morel Gibbs during the post-war revival in British religious painting. Since then, it has grown to comprise more than 60 paintings, prints, drawings and sculptures by artists from across the world including some by well-known artists such as Graham Sutherland, Elisabeth Frink, Patrick Heron and Maggi Hambling. It has enhanced worship, opened faith conversations, amazed visitors, and inspired different art forms including poetry and dance.

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/faith/the-methodist-modern-art-collection/>

Bradford City of Culture 2025

As part of the Bradford City of Culture 2025 celebrations, in the early Autumn, five venues in the Bradford District will be exhibiting artworks held in the Methodist Modern Art Collection (MMAC). Whilst they all will have their own theme, they will all be linked via an Art Trail and the overall theme for the exhibition, *Everything is Connected*. The exhibition is being coordinated under the care of Yorkshire West Methodist District which covers Bradford and the surrounding area.

Venues and Themes

Ben Rhydding Methodist Church – '*Faith in times of Peril*' - in relation to the environment, climate change and the impact of conflict around the world.

Bradford Cathedral – '*Jesus: Guru, Avatar, God?*' South Asian arts and heritage

South Square Centre, Thornton – "Its Wings Are Almost Free" Women artists and the legacy of the Brontes

St James Church, Thornton – '*Women in the Bible*'

Woodhouse Grove School – '*Hope*' and what that means to the school community on an international level.

There will also be a series of reproductions of some works in the collection at several bars and cafes in the North Parade area of Bradford.

There will be an Art Trail linking all five venues in the exhibition – an Art Trail leaflet will provide more information for visitors on each venue and the associated programme of events. We are working with local communities, groups that relate to the themes, organisations, schools and individuals who would like to creatively respond to any of the artworks on display. We're also hearing from those who would like to volunteer their time to steward at venues and support creative activity during the exhibition period.

Audience

The audience is likely to be very varied; visitors local to the District, some of whom will know of and be supporters of the Collection, but as with previous City of Culture locations, we are also expecting a significant proportion of visitors from outside the region who will be discovering Bradford and the region for the first time. At each venue there will be connections with local communities.

The Commission

Are you a writer who enjoys engaging with a wide range of people at different venues? Do you have experience of working with communities as part of your creative practice? Have you experience of spoken word performance? This is a wonderful opportunity to spend six weeks this autumn as the Creative Writer in Residence responding to the paintings on display, the themes the venues are exploring, the people who engage with them, the inspiration the paintings provide for creative written responses. The appointed writer will be able to immerse themselves in our exhibitions, working across all six of our venues, collaborating with broad audiences across all ages and with the volunteers who have helped bring these exhibitions together.

There will be opportunities for the writer to share their work and practice, providing creative and intellectual experiences during workshops and pop-up events engaging with a wide range of community partners. At least two writing workshops at different locations will be required.

We're looking for a candidate who will be a published or performed writer with experience of leading workshops and creative sessions.

- You'll be confident and curious and enthusiastic to make the most of this opportunity
- Willing to spend time at each venue, talking and exploring responses with visitors and volunteers.
- Outputs will include leading creative writing sessions, spoken word pop up events, writing and poetry sessions, spoken word performances.
- Familiarity with the city of Bradford / the surrounding District

As part of your introduction to the project you will be asked to attend two training sessions in August and to attend as an observer the hanging of one exhibition and to deliver a short-spoken word performance at one of the evening opening events.

The culmination of the residency will be a commission to create a piece of spoken word to feature in an evening performance potentially working with the Artist in Residence as part of an 'In Conversation' event towards the close of the exhibition. The writings produced during the residency will be printed in a booklet providing legacy for the exhibition.

Exhibition Period

Duration: 6 weeks.

The overall exhibition held across the five venues will open across w/c 1st September 2025 and run until Sunday 12th October 2025.

There is potential for the writer's and workshop participants' work to be displayed for a further few weeks up to late November 2025.

Start date: August / September 2025

Budget and working time

The core fee is a maximum of £6000 based on up to 20 days work (18.5 hours a week on average). The writer for this residency will be engaged on a self-employed basis. We will pay 50% of the core fee at the start and 50% at the end of the contract.

Expenses will be covered in addition to the core fee for travel (and any accommodation), any necessary equipment, and the making, display and (de)installing of the work where applicable. This must include VAT if applicable. Reimbursement for expenses can be made on receipt of an invoice, separate to that of the writer fee, at the end of the exhibition period.

It is expected that the Writer in Residence will be a presence in the exhibitions, and the individual will be willing to travel between the venues.

How to apply

The Yorkshire West Methodist District, together with the Management Committee of the Methodist Modern Art Collection is inviting responses to this brief and remains open to ideas from all writers across all forms. Your proposal should be no more than two sides of A4, briefly outlining your practice and how you feel it relates to MMAC Bradford 2025. It would help us understand what it is about the Collection that interests you. Please also include an outline of your idea for how you would approach this residency at a multi venue exhibition over a short, concentrated period and how this residency will help develop your own career. This can include ideas you have about engaging audiences and collaborating with volunteers at each venue through workshops.

Please include the following in your application:

1. Your contact details (name, phone number, address, email).
2. Full CV
3. Tell us about your connections and commitment to Bradford and the City of Culture 2025.
4. An example of your work (weblink or an attachment) including public performance if possible.
5. A brief project timeline.
6. An indicative budget for how you will spend the budget.
7. Any access needs you may have and costs relating to this.
8. Any other support you need from us where relevant.

The contact details of two references, at least one professional (*e.g. an organisation you have worked with before / in the last 2 years*). These can be on a separate page to your core application.

Please send your application by email to Verity Smith, Faith & Arts Development Lead, at verity.smith@touchstone-bradford.org.uk by **Monday 31st March 2025 at 5pm.**
Applications sent after this time will not be accepted.

For a list of the artworks that will be on display during the exhibition, and for any queries relating to the brief including more details on the venues, please contact Verity using the email address above, or on 07507 790819.

Shortlisting & Interviews

The shortlisting and interview panel will include the following individuals:

Verity Smith – Faith and Arts Development Lead, Bradford 2025
Prof. Ann Sumner – Chair of the MMAC Management Committee
Another member of the MMAC Management Committee and/or an exhibition venue representative.

We aim to shortlist during w/c 31st March. The shortlisted applicants will then be informed and offered an informal interview. Candidates are welcome to visit the venues prior to this – conversations may be held online rather than face to face, but this will be confirmed if, and when you are invited to an interview. These are likely to be held in early to mid-April. If you have any access requirements, please do not hesitate to contact us with the details. There is disabled parking, step-free access, and hearing loops at all venues.

The Methodist Church is an inclusive and supportive organisation. We are actively committed to encouraging applications from people of all backgrounds. We welcome applications from people of Black, Asian and other Minority Ethnic groups. We also welcome applications from people living with disabilities.