



## Open Call for Applications from UK-Based Artists for a Three-Month Residency and Commission

In partnership with the Delfina Foundation, the Horniman Museum and Gardens is offering a three-month residency opportunity to a UK based artist, as part of the institution's ongoing decolonial work, to engage with its Natural History collection and produce a new commission for the museum's 'Inspired by Nature' space.

### Partners

#### **The Horniman Museum and Gardens:**

The Horniman Museum and Gardens in south east London welcomes over 900,000 visits a year. It contains important collections of Anthropology, Musical Instruments and Natural History, an acclaimed Aquarium and 16.5 acres of award-winning Gardens, providing a unique opportunity to understand and explore the world around us.

Our mission is 'the Horniman connects us all with global cultures and the natural environment, encouraging us to shape a positive future for the world we all share'. This has never resonated more as we embark upon a co-ordinated programme of work to acknowledge and address global environmental and social issues, and how these link to our collections and communities.

We aspire to embed a decolonial approach to rethink the way we work at the Horniman to better acknowledge and understand our colonial legacy, and what this means going forwards. This includes returning to our collections, working in new ways to research and learn about their colonial past and present, and linking this to our work addressing the ongoing climate and ecological emergency and its connections to inequality and social justice. We are also working to develop our audiences, workforce and the people we work with, so that they become more representative of our communities today.

#### **Delfina Foundation:**

Delfina Foundation is London's largest provider of international residencies, promoting artistic exchange and experimentation around common practices and ideas. Delfina Foundation's residency programme is structured around the four seasons of the year. During each three-month period, we support cultural practitioners to pursue independent projects or to collectively engage in a shared thematic area. Our recurring themes include: The Politics of Food, Performance as Process, The Public Domain, science\_technology\_society and Collecting as Practice. Each year, Delfina Foundation's UK Associate Programme offers up to ten

UK-based practitioners the opportunity to develop their practice through a bespoke programme of activities around specific themes.

## Background

### Colonial Collecting

The Horniman's early collections, assembled by Victorian tea trader Frederick Horniman were mostly acquired in the mid-late 1800s and early 1900s during the peak of British colonial rule. This includes thousands of specimens still held in our Natural History collection. Collections of plants and animals laid the foundations of the natural sciences and also reflected the broader understandings, values, social hierarchies and societal structures of the time. Millions of specimens were brought back to Europe from former colonial territories to be sold and disseminated, studied, renamed, categorised, exhibited and used for a myriad of purposes in institutions and private collections such as the Horniman.

Collections were key to the advancement of Western scientific knowledge and understanding. Many also served to control, promote and justify the expansion of the colonial enterprise. Colonial collecting was not always equitable, or often acknowledged, even today. This has led to calls for greater acknowledgement and representation for those whose voices and contributions were often left out. See the [work of Das & Lowe](#) in 2018 as a starting point for discussion around this topic.

### About the Residency and Commission

This residency will be twelve-weeks, and take place in spring 2021 (29 March – 18 June 2021) during Delfina Foundation's **Collecting as Practice** season, with the engagement between the selected artist and the Horniman museum running from 29 February – early December 2021. Artwork for the commission needs to be completed by October and ready for installation in early December 2021.

The artist will be expected to work with staff at the Horniman Museum and Gardens to re-interpret, reimagine and develop new critical narratives surrounding its Natural History collection to produce new work which addresses this historical imbalance.

The work will be displayed in the 'Inspired by Nature' area at the entrance to the museum's Natural History Gallery. The commission should expand and develop the artist's existing practice and specific interest around decolonisation and environmental issues, and open up dialogue and discussion within the Horniman and with its visitors.

The final work should:

- Take a fresh, creative look at the Horniman's Natural History collection, its historical narratives and legacies
- Shed new light and perspectives around:
  - colonial Natural History collecting

- the scientific and cultural function and use of Natural History collections
- Make links to the climate and ecological crisis
- Engage a diverse range of visitors in new and stimulating ways

The resulting installation, made up of existing or new work, or a combination of the two, could potentially incorporate any of the following: items from the Horniman Museum and Garden's collection and library, two or three-dimensional work, film or other digital work that is accessible and appropriate to the space concerned. (Please note: sound does not work well in this space).

The space available for the installation includes a glass showcase suitable for the display of two or three-dimensional work, and a wall space, suitable for displaying two-dimensional work or display screens to show film or other types of digital artwork. (Further images of work in the space can be viewed on the website.)

The practitioner will also be expected to feed into Delfina Foundation's Collecting as Practice theme and public programme, and have opportunities to feed into wider programming at the Horniman.

### **Collecting as Practice**

Collecting as Practice was initiated in 2016 by Delfina Foundation to explore the philosophy, psychology and politics of collecting through exhibitions, events and residencies for artists, curators and for the first time, collectors. More information on the [Collecting as Practice programme](#).

In light of the timely debates around racism, social justice and diversity the third edition of Delfina Foundation's recurring programme Collecting as Practice will unpack issues of commemoration, restitution and social inclusion, addressing the challenges of representing multiple perspectives within evolving public collections and how organisations are engaging in decolonising practices. The season will also explore collecting in relation to communal ownership, cultural memory and education.

Through residencies for international and UK based artists and curators, the programme aims to commission new research and productions that reimagine collections as well as the institutions that house them: museums, libraries and public archives. The programme will be complemented by a dynamic and critical public programme featuring workshops, panel discussions and events on and off site in collaboration with UK-based institutions.

### **The Selected Practitioner Will Receive**

- A three month residency at the Delfina Foundation and the opportunity to develop a new commission to be displayed in the Natural History Gallery 'Inspired by Nature' space at the Horniman Museum and Gardens.

- Opportunities to engage with artists, curators, academics and researchers through organised studio visits, events and meals.
- Professional development activities including:
  - Peer-to-peer presentations and crits;
  - Portfolio reviews with external curators and experts.
- A stipend of £1,500.
- Workspace at Delfina Foundation, including access to the project space and library. If the UK Associate is based outside of London, a travel budget will be provided for several trips to London, as needed, and occasional overnight accommodation. There is potential scope for a longer accommodation.
- A fee of £3,000, paid in two instalments by the Horniman Museum and Gardens.
- A production budget of up to £6,000 (this will cover all costs including: materials, manufacture, equipment, transport in and out of the Museum, mounting and installation / de-installation costs, related artist travel / accommodation expenses, subject to final agreement), paid by the Horniman Museum and Gardens.
- Support from the Horniman Museum and Gardens for the installation, conservation, interpretation, and marketing of the work, and desk space to carry out research related to the commission.

**Please note** that applicants will be expected to produce artworks in their own studio / workspace.

## Requirements

- Applicants must be based in the United Kingdom;
- Working professionally as an artist in a relevant field with proven experience and previous, completed projects in relation to their practice;
- Seeking an opportunity to develop the practice and philosophy of their work
- Interest in researching and working with archives and collections
- Able to explain how the experience of this programme may benefit their career and project development.

**We particularly welcome proposals from artists of African, Caribbean, South and South East Asian heritage as these backgrounds link closely to the Horniman's colonial history and legacy.**

## Selection Process and Timeline

The selection and interview panel will include members of the Horniman's and Delfina Foundation's teams. The deadline for submissions is **5pm 5 February 2021**. Artists will be invited for interview to discuss their application in more detail (most likely using digital platform Zoom) w/o **22 February 2021**. The artist will begin working on the commission as soon as possible thereafter. All artwork to be completed by October 2021, ready for installation in early December 2021. The artwork will be on display for at least 12 months.

## How to Apply

Please send:

- your CV;
- an expression of interest including examples of your existing work; and a
- **proposal** (maximum 2 sides of A4, **including an outline budget breakdown and timeline**) explaining how you might approach this commission

Send these by email using the subject line 'Decolonising Natural History proposal 2021' to Jo Hatton, Keeper of Natural History [jhatton@horniman.ac.uk](mailto:jhatton@horniman.ac.uk).

**Please Note:** Applications will only be accepted in PDF or Word format and images of work or audio/films via accessible weblinks (our servers do not accept attachments of more than 8Mb). We very much look forward to receiving your application.