



TOMORROW'S OXFORD HEADS: ARTISTS' BRIEF

We are seeking artistic input (any medium) for our diversifying sculpture project funded by The Diversity Fund of the University of Oxford. At the focus of this call are the Head sculptures that ring the Sheldonian Theatre and front the Museum of the History of Science.

The Heads

At the front of the Museum of the History of Science (the Museum) and the Sheldonian Theatre on Broad Street, Oxford, sit 17 stone heads depicting bearded men, generally known as the Emperors' Heads. They look out over a significant public space, where the historic Oxford University – museum, library, ceremonial and administrative buildings – meets the public highway and commerce.

They are the 3rd generation of Heads installed since 1669. Their identity is obscured, and their history, predecessors (which are still around in the area, retired in gardens) and state of conservation are being investigated by a team of heritage scientists at Oxford University. The research delves into archival records and scientific analysis of the stone used over the centuries, and invites public engagement in the Hunt for missing Heads from the 1st and 2nd generations, in order to uncover more of their history and inform future management and heritage conservation practice.

The outcome of the Head Hunt and research will be presented in an exhibition and accompanying public engagement activity at the Weston Library in May/June 2019, marking 350 years since the first installation of the Heads.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a book, to be published by Bodleian Publishing, in which the last chapter will be dedicated to future prospects, including discussions on diversity, and the impact of urban space and built heritage on health and identity.

Tomorrow's Oxford Heads: Aims

The 350th anniversary of the unveiling of the original Heads presents an opportunity, not only to explore their history and conservation, but also to look forward to Tomorrow's Oxford Heads.

The successful 'Diversifying Portraiture at Oxford Project' resulted in the commissioning of 21 portraits of current and former staff and students for display in University buildings, representing different genders, ethnicities, disabilities, socio-economic and class backgrounds, and LGBTQ+ communities. (<https://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/inpractice/portraiture/>).

Turning to externally-facing public sculpture, the aim of the Tomorrow's Oxford Heads project is to enhance the visibility of women and under-represented groups in or associated with the University of Oxford, as outlined above. In particular, we wish to explore new, more diverse representations of Heads, fit for display around the Museum of the History of Science and the Sheldonian Theatre sites in the 21st century.

The current Heads are not accurate portrayals of real people, but rather enigmatic expressions of bearded men, based on classical notions of the look of gods, apostles, emperors and other 'important men'. We would like to explore suitable imagery to represent more diverse views of people which better reflect the aspirations of today's University and its staff and students, without focusing on identifiable individuals.

With the support of the Oxford Diversity Fund, we propose a temporary display of artistic installations in the outdoor area around the Museum and the Sheldonian to coincide with the Heads' exhibition inside the Weston Library, in order to stimulate discussion about a better portrayal of the diverse spirit of the University through public statuary, to lay the ground for more permanent installations, subject to evaluation of this project and further funding being raised, and to contribute to the proposed book publication.

New Artists' Commissions

We are inviting artists to submit expressions of interest for creation and installation of temporary artistic installations which meet the project aims set out above. We are keen to hear from artists from both contemporary and traditional backgrounds ranging from sculpture, metal work, textiles, glass, ceramics through to photography, lighting, projection and digital arts.

From the expressions of interest submitted, up to four artists will be selected to produce detailed proposals and then to create their installations for display in May and June 2019.

Some community engagement and consultation would be expected as part of the design and development of the work, in order to reflect and/or test public perceptions about representations of diversity. This could be in collaboration with or complement public engagement activity by the Museum, and/or a presentation or other public engagement activity during a weekend event associated with the Heads exhibition at the Weston library in June 2019.

Consideration should be given to the Grade 1 listed nature of the Museum and Sheldonian Buildings, the existing Heads and the structures around them, which would allow for addition or modification, without causing any damage to existing structures.

Consideration should also be given to the public nature of the space and the health and safety of the public in the area.

From the expressions of interest submitted, up to four artists will be selected and may be interviewed.

The brief for the artists is:

- To create temporary installations which encompass the aims of the project as set out above, and which invite or allow for engagement with the public, visitors to the Museum, and staff and students of the University
- To install the temporary installations in the outdoor space around the Museum and the Sheldonian Theatre for display during May and June 2019 and to remove the installations by an agreed date, without causing damage to the existing Grade 1 listed structures
- To be available for up to four days during the display period for presentations or participation in public engagement and consultation activity, as appropriate to the work and as agreed with the project leaders

Process

The project will be led by Professor Heather Viles, Professor of Biogeomorphology and Heritage Conservation and Head of the School of Geography and the Environment at Oxford University, in association with a researcher in her School and staff from the Museum.

Stage 1: Expressions of Interest

This call for Expressions of Interest (see 'How to Apply' below for details) will be distributed through groups representing diverse identities and interests within Oxford University and Oxford more widely, and will be advertised and disseminated through arts networks within and beyond Oxfordshire.

Expressions of Interest will be reviewed by a panel representing diverse identities and areas of expertise, chaired by Professor Heather Viles. Applications will be judged on the basis of:

- Clarity of proposal
- Artistic quality of work
- Approach to the project aims and public engagement
- Strength of previous and similar work
- Strength of references

The panel will select up to 4 Expressions of Interest to be developed into a Detailed Proposal (see below for details) for design and any related activity.

Stage 2: Artists' Proposal for Design and Related Activity

The selected artists will be required to prepare a Detailed Proposal including the following:

- A description of the proposed temporary installation. The level of detail required will depend on the scale and complexity of the installation but should cover the design concepts, any access issues, and any issues related to light levels or other environmental factors
- A description of any related activity, including people to be involved, proposed location, proposed timing, and any supporting materials or resources required
- What the installation is about (what it says/represents)
- How it responds to the brief and the site
- Factual information – size, dimensions, weight, any power requirements, etc.
- Proposed location/s of the installation (please note that preferred location cannot be guaranteed)
- Materials and their suitability for installation in an outdoor location
- The installation and removal process, transport and any related factors
- A risk assessment
- Any maintenance or care issues

Fee

The fee available for each of the successful artists is £1,000, to include planning, any public engagement or consultation, creation, installation and removal of the art work, and any other expenses. The fee would be payable in stages, including approval of the detailed proposal for design and any related activity, installation and removal of the art work.

How to Apply

Expressions of Interest should be sent by email to head@ouce.ox.ac.uk by 12 noon on Monday 7 January 2019 including the following:

- A CV and artist's statement
- A statement of why this commission appeals to you and how you would approach it (maximum 1 side of A4)
- A statement of what you would produce, how you would endeavor to undertake research and design, and any public engagement or consultation you would propose once the temporary installation is in place (maximum 1 side of A4)
- A representative sample of images of previous/similar work done by you
- Confirmation of whether you have Public Liability and Professional Indemnity Insurance
- Names and contact details for two referees we could contact

Timescale

Call out for artists	From 22 November 2018
Deadline for submission of Expressions of Interest	Monday 7 January 2019, 12 noon
Selection process including inviting shortlisted artists to submit Detailed Proposals and for interview	By 31 January 2019
Artists create work	February – April 2019
Install work	Late April/early May 2019
Artists give presentations and/or take part in public engagement activities during weekend event in association with Heads exhibition at Weston Library to showcase the installations and invite public responses	Early to mid-June 2019 – date to be confirmed
Remove installations	July 2019 – date to be confirmed

Contact

For any queries in relation to this brief, please contact head@ouce.ox.ac.uk

Privacy Notice

Information provided about yourself ('personal data') as part of an Expression of Interest will only be used for the purpose of selecting artists to participate in the Tomorrow's Oxford Heads project. If we need to use your data for an unrelated purpose, we will seek your consent to use it for that new purpose. We are processing your data only because you have given us your consent to do so by submitting an Expression of Interest. You can withdraw your consent at any time by contacting us. In this event, we will stop the processing as soon as we can. However, this will not affect the lawfulness of any processing carried out before your withdrawal of consent. Access to your data within the University will be provided to those who need to view it as part of their work in carrying out the purposes described above. We will only retain your data for as long as we need it to meet our purposes, including any relating to legal, accounting, or reporting requirements. Your data will be held securely in accordance with the University's policies and procedures. Further information is available on the University's website (<https://www.ox.ac.uk/about/organisation/governance/dataprivacy?wssl=1>). Information on your rights in relation to your personal data are explained here (<http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/councilsec/compliance/gdpr/individualrights/>). We (the University of Oxford) are the 'data controller' for this information, which means we are responsible for looking after it in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation and associated data protection legislation. If you wish to raise any queries or concerns about our use of your data with respect to the purposes described above, please contact Prof Heather Viles in the first instance.