

Artist Commission for 'Blood' - an exhibition about blood donation at Thackray Museum of Medicine

Who are we looking for?

We would like to commission a visual artist to design and create a piece of art (or artworks) that will be the main visual focus of our upcoming exhibition about blood donation, opening at the beginning of February 2025.

We are interested in how you respond to and interpret the themes and ideas in the exhibition through your own creative practice. We would like the artwork or artworks to be a cohesive and fundamental part of the storytelling of **Blood**.

We want an artist to create something surprising and visually striking that will unlock or illuminate something for our visitors about their relationship with blood.

We are particularly interested in work that is 3D in some way – i.e. sculpture, textiles, installation.

We are open to the work also engaging with the artist's own cultural or personal relationship with blood, if they wish, although that isn't a requirement.

We are interested in hearing from artists who have a socially engaged practice, and who would be open to potentially contributing to, or collaborating on some co-creation work with our communities local to the museum in Harehills.

About the exhibition

Blood is a collaboration between Thackray Museum of Medicine and socio-cultural anthropologist [Dr Jieun Kim](#) at the University of Leeds, whose research project is funded by the Wellcome Trust and the Arts and Humanities Research Council. We will also be collaborating with local and global communities.

This exhibition will explore the idea of 'Giving Blood' and share different social, cultural and personal attitudes to blood and the act of giving it. Blood unites us. We all rely on it to live. We perceive that it represents our shared humanity beneath skin deep differences: "If you prick us, do we not bleed?" But it also divides. It can flow, but also clot. Societies and cultures do not always place equal value on all blood and just as people's bodies can reject transfused blood, so can society reject certain types of blood donors.

The exhibition will follow the threads of the feelings and emotions that the idea of giving blood can weave, from duty, pride and belonging to trust (and lack of it), guilt and shame.

About Thackray Museum of Medicine

The Thackray Museum of Medicine is the UK's largest independent medical museum, and a place that inspires people with the passion and purpose of medicine and healthcare – past, present and future.

Situated in the bustle of a lively East Leeds inner-city community, and adjacent to St James's Hospital – Europe's largest teaching hospital, the Museum showcases innovation and collaboration in medical endeavour through its collection of over 50,000 objects and some 23,000 written works, covering all aspects of the history of medicine.

What we would like you to do

- Work with the Curator and Lead Producer to understand the research and stories the exhibition is telling.
- Design an artistic concept for the theme and stories around giving blood.
- Design and create an artwork or artworks.
- Source materials for the design, manufacture the work.
- Respond to personal stories from local communities.
- Work with Thackray Museum of Medicine estates team re safety and installation and deinstallation.
- Working with Thackray's appointed graphic designer to agree the look, feel, and colour palette for the exhibition.
- Support the museum's marketing team in promoting the exhibition, including a hero image from the artwork.
- Attend the launch event for the exhibition.

What we will do

- Create or print interpretation, exhibition text and labels.
- Conduct research into blood history and personal stories.
- Identify a graphic designer to work with.
- Layout and display of museum objects within display cases.

The work will remain the property of the artist, including storage or disposal after the conclusion of the exhibition in June 2025.

Design challenges

- The exhibition has a commitment to using sustainable materials. Can the artwork(s) be made using materials that are recycled and/or recyclable?

- We want to prompt thoughts, emotions and discussions around potentially difficult or sensitive subjects. Can the art and design be provocative without being traumatic?

Who are we doing this for?

Although all our exhibitions are for everyone, we usually aim our Winter exhibition towards our Experience Seeker audience.

“An important and significant part of urban arts audiences, these highly active, diverse, social and ambitious singles and couples are younger people engaging with the arts on a regular basis. Students, recent graduates and in the early to mid-stages of their careers, live close to city centres, have easy access to and attend a wide variety of arts, museums, galleries and heritage. Interests cover mainstream, contemporary and culturally diverse offers and attending is at the heart of their social lives. They are mostly in search of new things to do and have disposable income to spend on a variety of leisure activities like sports/arts memberships and frequent visits to cafes, bars and restaurants. Digitally savvy, they will share experiences through social media on their smart phones.”

<https://www.theaudienceagency.org/audience-spectrum/experience-seekers>

We also hope that the exhibition will speak both from and to our local community in Harehills, both people who live in the hyperlocal community on our doorstep and those who work in St. James’s Hospital.

We will be featuring these star objects in the exhibition



1940s Army Blood Transfusion Service poster by war artist Abram Games



Victorian blood transfusion set



Blood bag sewn by an American blood bank specialist as part of the community arts '[Blood Bag Project](#)'



Blood sample tubes with “Biohazard: Danger of Infection” labels, used for patients with HIV/AIDS

Budget

£8,000 incl. VAT if applicable (inclusive of fees, materials, travel)

Schedule

This is an initial outline schedule. A more detailed version will be agreed upon in collaboration with the artist.

Prior to the submission deadline, if you wish to discuss the project or have any questions about this commission or application process, please email daisy.orton@thackraymuseum.org.

Submission deadline: Friday 4th October

Interviews: Wednesday 9th October

Initial meeting: Monday 14th October

Design concept presentation: Thursday 28th November

Final presentation of work: January 2025 (date to be decided with artist)

Installation: Week commencing 3rd February 2025

Exhibition opens: Saturday 8th February 2025

How to apply

To apply please send us:

- CV and bio
- Examples of relevant work with links/images
- An outline proposal with ideas/approach for commission - no more than 2 pages. Consider including:
 - o Where you are based.
 - o Tell us about your current practice
 - o Tell us about what you want to explore with us and what you would create for this project.
 - o How do you best work?
 - o Do you have any specific access or support needs?
- Indicative budget breakdown
- Please state your day rate

If you would prefer, you can also apply by uploading video or audio formats (no more than 5 minutes).

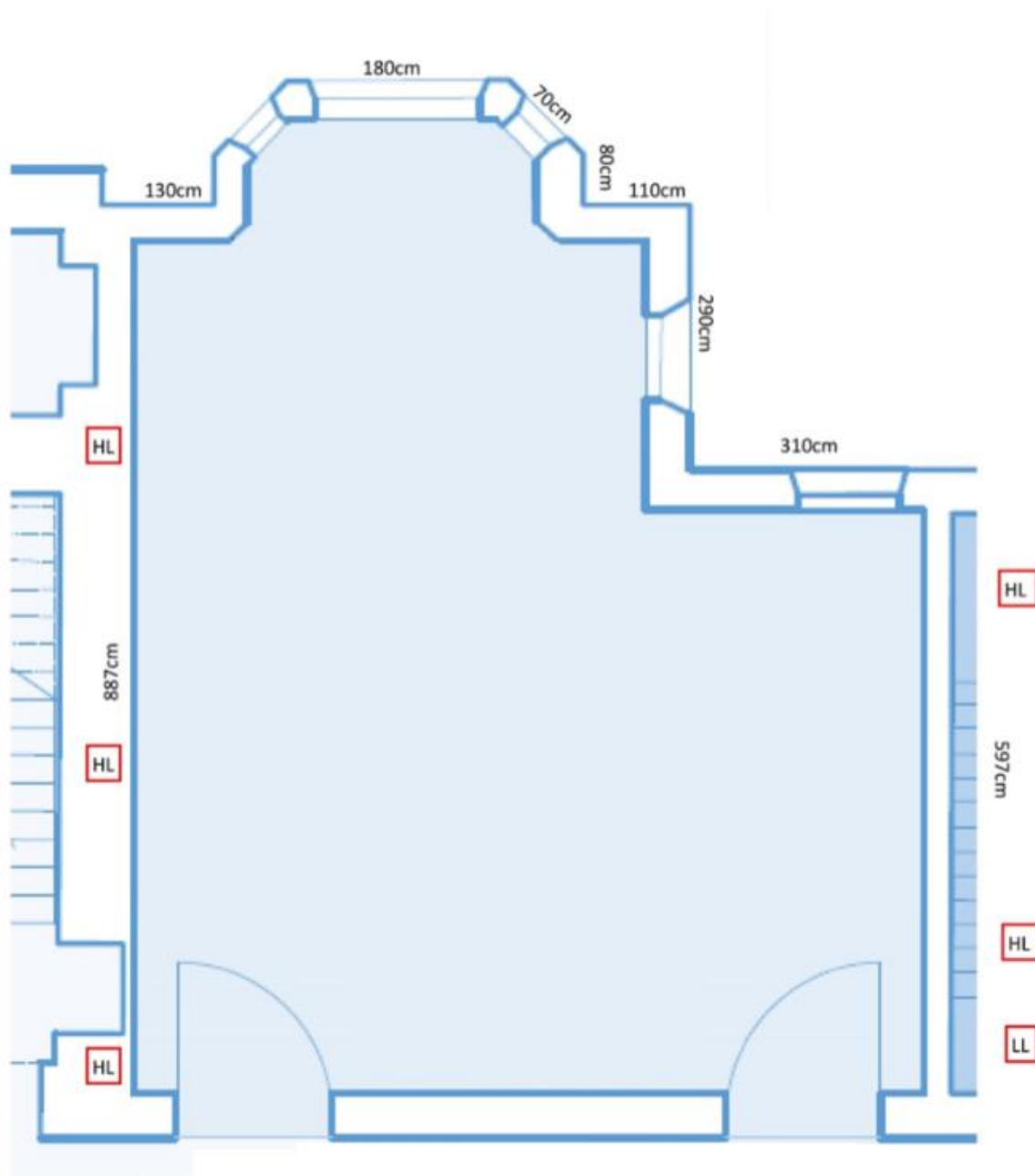
Please send applications to daisy.orton@thackraymuseum.org.

Gallery information

The temporary exhibition gallery is on the ground floor of the museum to the left of the main entrance. The gallery itself is approximately 9m x 7m in an L-shaped room with two entrances. Exhibitions take place within the gallery space and on the wall outside.

Power is predominantly from high level sockets and there is a lighting track approximately 3m above the ground with the ceiling roughly 1m above.

Gallery floorplan:



HL= High level power sockets

LL= Low level power sockets

A 3D scan of the gallery showing the current exhibition is also available, which can be navigated digitally here: <https://my.matterport.com/show/?m=YLv8zPpQcXs>

Past exhibitions have made use of this space in a variety of ways.

“Private Parts”



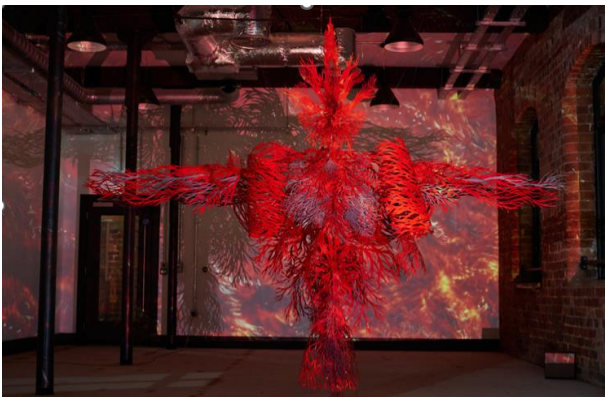
“Fragile Microbiomes”



“You Choose”



Mood Board





Main contact

Daisy Orton – Lead Producer

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