

MAGNET Anthropocene Exhibition Exhibition and Interpretation Producer Brief

Context

MAGNET (the Museums and Galleries Network for Exhibition Touring) was established in 2020 with the support of the Art Fund. It consists of twelve museums and galleries who aim to pool resources, develop curatorial expertise, and share their collections with diverse national audiences, and encourage experimentation and risk in exhibitions, in subject matter and approach. The Art Fund pilot project culminated in the inaugural exhibition *Hair: Untold Stories*.

In May 2023 MAGNET 2.0 received funding from Arts Council England (ACE) and Art Fund to continue the work established by the *Hair: Untold Stories* exhibition and subsequent tour. The second phase will see Anthropocene, Colour & Gender themed exhibitions realised, with each touring to between three and five partners nationally. Each exhibition partnership is co-curating collections-based exhibitions with high-quality inter-disciplinary content.

The Anthropocene exhibition partnership is led by Manchester Museum and includes Derby Museums, The Great North Museum: Hancock, the Horniman and Norfolk Museum Service. The first iteration of the Anthropocene exhibition is scheduled to open in Derby in October 2025.

The exhibition partnership has collaboratively developed a 'Big Idea' for the exhibition:

In the Anthropocene, humanity's connection to the natural world is both our greatest challenge and our most powerful tool for change.

Dan Gordon of the Great North Museum: Hancock has taken on curatorial leadership of the show and has undertaken substantial research during 2025, deepening ideas of what the exhibition could be. Each of the other partners has nominated a curator to apply the exhibition concept to their own collections and locality.

Brief and scope of work

We are heading into a six-month phase of accelerated content development and are looking to appoint a freelance Exhibition and Interpretation Producer to drive this work and help us arrive at an Interpretation Plan and Design Brief which are owned by the whole Anthropocene exhibition partnership, and which are confident to deliver together.

The Producer will be appointed and managed through Manchester Museum, the Lead Partner, and will support the management of the Anthropocene exhibition partnership, and co-ordinate Manchester Museum's contribution through this content development phase.

The scope of work includes:

- Co-ordinating Manchester Museum's contribution to the 'Anthropocene' touring exhibition through the content development phase and providing advice and support to Georgina Young, Head of Collections and Exhibitions
- Working with the Lead Curator (Dan Gordon, Great North Museum) to convene the curatorial sub-group and draw together key aspects of content, including consolidating the central narrative and themes, gathering and refining object lists, and developing the Interpretation Plan for the Anthropocene exhibition.
- Working with first venue representative (Sadie Scott, Derby Museums) to involve all partners in agreeing and issuing the *Anthropocene* exhibition design brief and selecting and appointing a design team.
- Tracking and reporting budgets on behalf of the *Anthropocene* partnership; supporting oversight by the exhibition partners, keeping financial records in line with the needs of the Horniman, Arts Council England and Exhibitions Tax Relief.
- Holding and driving the programme for *Anthropocene* exhibition development and delivery; arranging regular meetings of the partner museums, monitoring completion of actions arising and maintaining progress against agreed milestones

Skills and Experience

- Knowledge of museum interpretation and design, with ability to support curators and participants to hone and materialise ideas
- Strong audience awareness and experience of co-developing content with community partners
- Project management and coordination skills
- Experience of exhibition production, including working with museum collections
- Experience of partnership development and maintenance
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills
- Experience of budget management

Deliverables

Object List and Interpretation Plan (December 2024)

Brief for any artist commissions and/or community co-development (January 2025)

Design Brief (February 2025)

Design Appointment (April 2025)

Budget and award criteria

We anticipate responses around a budget of £10,000, **inclusive/exclusive of expenses, and inclusive/exclusive of VAT**, with the work to take place from November 2024 to April 2025.

Respondents should demonstrate their ability to meet the criteria by supplying the following, listed as below. *Submissions will be assessed against the following Criteria:*

Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A CV and narrative outlining project personnel expertise in this area • At least 2 examples that demonstrate experience of working on similar projects • Please also provide contact details for 2 referees that demonstrate your ability in these areas. 	40%
Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggested methodology to collaboratively develop the exhibition interpretation plan and design brief 	20%
Resource allocation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A fixed fee for the work including expenses • A breakdown and indicative timetable that outlines the number of days you will commit to the project and when • Breakdown of what you have and have not included in the scope of your response 	40%
Contact	Contact details for all correspondence, including email address, postal address and telephone number(s).	

Selection process and timeline:

We're asking for submissions and references to be returned by **5pm on Wednesday 23 October**.

Please send questions and submissions electronically to Georgina Young (Manchester Museum, Anthropocene Lead partner) – Georgina.Young@manchester.ac.uk. Receipt of submissions will be acknowledged by email.

Submissions will be evaluated by Dominic Neergheen (Horniman), Georgina Young (Manchester), and Sadie Scott (Derby)

Shortlisted submissions will be invited to a clarification meeting, that will take place in the week commencing **Monday 28 October**.

The contracted freelancer will be encouraged to attend the Anthropocene partner meeting focussed on content development in Derby on **Tuesday 5 November**.