

# HUMAN NATURES

## TOURING EXHIBITION DESIGN AND BUILD BRIEF

**HUMAN NATURES** is a touring exhibition that will ask how humans shape the natural world, for better or worse. It will explore our complicated relationship with nature through the lenses of need, greed, desire and meaning-making. It will invite visitors to imagine new ways of being together with nature, as a species, within our different cultures and communities, and as individuals.

The exhibition has grown out of a partnership between five museums and museum services: Derby Museums, Manchester Museum, North East Museums, Norfolk Museums and the Horniman Museum. It is supported by Art Fund and Arts Council England as part of MAGNET, the Museums and Galleries Network for Exhibition Touring.

### PROJECT OVERVIEW

**Commission** We are looking to appoint a design and build team to develop the exhibition up to opening in Derby in late September 2025, and to provide additional support to adapt the exhibition across the second and third legs of the tour in Manchester and Newcastle. We are very happy to consider proposals from specialist design teams that prefer to subcontract fabrication.

To date, we have developed a high level Interpretation Plan and draft exhibition briefs that will guide the design work. Now, we are excited to give a creative design team the freedom to invent and take our plans to the next level.

**Audiences** There are four main target audiences for the exhibition: young people aged 14+ becoming independent; families with children aged 10+; school groups, in particular at KS3 and above; and university and college students.

**The Tour** The exhibition will tour:

- Derby Museum and Art Gallery (September 2025 to Feb 2026)
- Manchester Museum (April - October 2026)
- Great North Museum: Hancock (February - September 2027)
- Horniman Museum and Gardens (October 2027 - April 2028)
- Norwich Castle Museum and Art Gallery (June 2028 - TBD)

**Size** The allocated exhibition space at Derby Museum and Art Gallery is 283 sqm. The subsequent four venue galleries range from 416 sqm to c 150 sqm. Gallery heights also vary greatly.

**Build** The exhibition design and fabrication should be robust to withstand a three year tour through five venues. It must be easy to reconfigure, scale and update. This is both to fit with different spaces, and bearing in mind the possibility that as few as c. 25% of objects will complete the full tour, with each host supplementing displays from its local collections.

## Environment

Touring exhibitions developed under the MAGNET umbrella aim to be produced in a way that encourages reuse, reduces waste, pools resources and can be used as case-studies for low-carbon projects. We are working with the [Gallery Climate Coalition](#) (GCC) to plan our approach to creating and touring exhibitions.

Because Human Natures will address themes of waste, pollution, biodiversity loss and climate change, it's especially important to us that the exhibition lives up to the highest environmental standards.

We expect the appointed design and build team to consider how they can:

1. Make use of existing materials and assets like display cases and plinths
2. Design for reuse
3. Use low carbon materials
4. Help reduce the impact of touring
5. Make design part of the story of the exhibition

We will also require the appointed team to monitor material usage and waste using templates provided by our partnership, developed by the GCC.

## Budget

The maximum core design and build budget is £40,000.

This includes all fees and materials. It excludes VAT.

The budget excludes film and media production, co-creation, artist fees, audio description, and mount-making, which will be separate commissions.

Cases, plinths, mounts, lighting, and media hardware will be provided or procured by host venues. The need for new procurement should be kept to a minimum.

## Project Team

Key team members who will work with the appointed design team include:

- Georgina Young, Manchester Museum - Project Lead
- Sadie Scott, Derby Museums - First Host Lead
- Dan Gordon, North East Museums - Lead Curator
- Paul Tourle, Interpretation Planner (independent)
- Dominic Neergehen, MAGNET Touring Exhibitions Coordinator

The existing Interpretation Plan and exhibit briefs were developed by a larger curatorial working group comprising subject specialists across the five partners. That group will continue to play an active role during design work.

## Programme

11 April	Design and Build Team appointed
30 May	Concept design complete
1 August	Technical design complete
5 September	Fabrication complete
15-25 September	Installation in Derby
25 September	Opening

## **SCOPE**

### **1. Design**

- Work with the project team to develop a full set of exhibition designs for Human Natures
- Designs must:
  - Incorporate the the full range of stories defined in the Interpretation Plan
  - Take into account the target audiences defined above and in the Interpretation Plan
  - Take into account the interpretation principles defined in the Interpretation Plan
  - Adhere to the environmental principles established for the exhibition
  - Be flexible and updatable
- We anticipate the deliverables comprising the following but are happy to discuss your approach:
  - Concept design
  - Detailed gallery layout and floor plan for the first venue
  - Indicative layout and design intent for the four further tour venues
  - Design / visual identity: look and feel / colour palette / graphic style / typography
  - Approaches for materials, with particular focus on environmental impacts
  - Principles and high level studies for scaling the exhibition
  - Detailed 3D design scheme for the first venue, including sound and lighting
  - Technical drawings and product specifications for construction/installation
  - A complete graphic design package. Files should be editable to allow for any necessary resizing and formatting between venues.
  - Marketing assets (print and electronic formats)
  - Visualisations of key design elements for audience testing
  - Cost plan and schedule for achieving and delivering the project

### **2. Build, or Build Procurement and Supervision**

- Either carry out or subcontract and supervise the fabrication of the exhibition, including the purchase of necessary materials
- Oversee installation and deinstallation at the first venue, supported by in-house staff
- Provide ongoing design support to adapt the exhibition across the first three legs of the tour
- Work collaboratively with the project team and other appointed consultants and producers.

#### **NOTE**

Our local teams at the touring venues have committed to providing some technical support and materials on a site-by-site basis; for example, constructing walls specific to a particular configuration of the exhibition. For the avoidance of doubt, the design and build scope includes everything that will tour with the show.

### **3. Environmental Monitoring**

- The appointed team will monitor and document its use of materials and production of waste through the design and fabrication process. We will provide you with GCC templates to that end.

## TENDERING PROCESS

Please send in your response as a single PDF to [Georgina.Young@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:Georgina.Young@manchester.ac.uk) by midnight on Friday 28th March. If you have any questions about the project, please send those to [paul.tourle@gmail.com](mailto:paul.tourle@gmail.com).

Your submission should include everything listed in the table below. We will assess it based on the criteria and weightings listed. Please keep your response to a maximum of 8 pages, excluding CVs.

Criteria	Required for submission	Weighting
<b>A Thoughtful Creative Response</b>	In one or two pages, please share with us your first creative response to this brief and the accompanying Interpretation Plan. We are not looking for concrete proposals or designs. We just want to see how you imagine the mood, look and feel of the exhibition, what principles might guide your designs, and whether any particular moments in the Interpretation Plan grab you and inspire a response.	30%
<b>Design Experience</b>	Tell us about at least two relevant projects you've completed, of a similar level of complexity to this one.  Please also provide a 1 page CV for each member of your team.	15%
<b>Experience Designing for Young People</b>	Tell us about at least one more relevant project you have developed for younger audiences specifically. Tell us how you approach the challenge of designing for young people.	15%
<b>A Clear and Credible Environmental Approach</b>	Tell us how you will approach the environmental challenges set out above. Tell us about one more relevant example of a project in which your team has taken successful steps to reduce and mitigate environmental impacts .	15%
<b>A Clear and Credible Methodology</b>	Please describe the methodology you would use to develop the exhibition. This should include a programme for the design and build of the exhibition up to opening.	15%
<b>Fees</b>	Please provide a quote for your services, broken down by design fees, build fees, and materials. Your quote should include all fees, travel and materials. It should exclude VAT.	10%

### Programme for Tendering

Date	Milestone
28 Mar	Deadline for submission of bids
7-9 Apr	Online meetings with shortlisted teams
11 Apr	Award of contract