

## *On-site/Off-site*

### Re-presenting physical contemporary artworks in a digital form

### Project brief for a digital design company or freelance creative



Thomas Bewick birthplace cottage at National Trust Cherryburn. Image: The Bewick Society

#### 1. Overview

Newcastle University is inviting digital design companies and freelance creatives to apply for a short-term contract (circa 6 months) with the University working with us on the delivery of our Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) funded project *On Site/Off Site*. Developed in partnership with National Trust, The Bewick Society and Arts&Heritage, the aim of this project is to demonstrate the potential for small heritage properties interested in commissioning contemporary art to use digital spaces and content to engage audiences in new ways. It explores how digital approaches might increase audience access to the artworks produced, particularly for those who cannot experience it on site.

The focus of this contract is to re-present a previously commissioned physical art installation created by artist [Mark Fairnington](#) in a digital format (further details on the artwork below) using readily accessible digital platforms and tools. The original installation – [Walking, Looking and Telling Tales](#) - was created for and presented in 2018 at National Trust Cherryburn (Mickley, Northumberland), the historic home of Thomas Bewick. The emphasis here is on working with the project team and the artist to *re-present* their work in a way that conveys some of the essence and aesthetic of the original installation for digital consumption and engagement.

The digital design work must be completed by the end of September 2023, ready for public presentation in October. The total **budget** (including all expenses, design, and production costs) for the digital re-presentation of the artwork is **£6,000 plus VAT**.

The **deadline for Expressions of Interest is Friday 28 April 2023**.

## 2. Background

This is a follow-on project to the 2017-2020 '[Mapping Contemporary Art in the Heritage Experience](#)' research project which created several contemporary artworks for heritage sites in the North East including the art installation by Mark Fairnington for Cherryburn.

The [Cherryburn](#) site comprises Bewick's tiny birthplace cottage, a farmyard with glorious views over the Tyne Valley, and a traditional 19th century Northumbrian farmhouse – which is now a museum housing a press room, an unrivalled collection of Thomas Bewick's woodblocks and personal library, and an exhibition about the artist's life.

### The artwork - *Walking, Looking and Telling Tales* by Mark Fairnington

In 2018 painter Mark Fairnington took inspiration from Thomas Bewick's own daily experience, following in Bewick's footsteps to trace a series of walks around Cherryburn and wider Northumberland and recording the landscape and conversations with people he met along the way. From these walks, Mark produced a series of sketchbooks and painted landscape miniatures that explored Bewick's countryside from a contemporary perspective, and which made new connections with Fairnington's own family history. The resulting installation, [Walking, Looking and Telling Tales](#), was displayed in the panelled 'half parlour' of Thomas Bewick's birthplace cottage.



*Walking, Looking and Telling Tales* by Mark Fairnington, installation at Cherryburn 2018. Image: Colin Davison

## 3. Brief for the digital re-presentation of *Walking, Looking and Telling Tales*

We are interested in digital responses which create a new journey through Mark's paintings, combining elements from his landscapes with the 'tale-piece' illustrations (or vignettes) originally created by Thomas Bewick. Within this framework, digital approaches which play with scale, surface texture, and mark-making (of Mark's paintings and Bewick's wood engravings) are particularly welcomed. (High-definition digital images of Mark's paintings will be made available to the contracted company/freelancer as part of the design phase.)

### Further information

[https://youtu.be/HuPggjAs\\_s](https://youtu.be/HuPggjAs_s) - a short video where Mark introduces his 2018 installation.

[https://research.ncl.ac.uk/media/sites/researchwebsites/artinheritage/MCAHE\\_CherryburnLeaflet.pdf](https://research.ncl.ac.uk/media/sites/researchwebsites/artinheritage/MCAHE_CherryburnLeaflet.pdf) - illustrated leaflet about *Walking, Looking and Telling Tales*

<http://www.bewicksociety.org/Vignettes.html> - information and examples of Thomas Bewick 'tale-pieces'

#### 4. The Contract

##### Budget and timeline

The total design and production budget for the digital re-presentation is **£6,000 plus VAT**. This fee includes research, discussion time with the project team and the artist, and production costs for the digital re-presentation. The selected company/creative will be contracted in May 2023 and will develop the artwork re-presentation over the summer through to the end of September, ready for public presentation in October 2023.

#### 5. How to apply for the contract

This brief is being circulated through a number of networks e.g. Creative Fuse North East and via direct communication with companies/freelancers. The deadline for an initial response Expression of Interest (EOI) is **28 April 2023**. Shortlisted companies will then be invited for Zoom interview with the artist and the project team in early May.

The Expression of Interest (EOI) should include:

- Your name and contact details
- Weblinks to previous work and/or a digital portfolio
- At least one example of a project that you have worked on which involved collaboration as part of a co-developed / co-designed approach.
- A short description of your work/company and why you find this contract interesting (maximum 350 words)
- An outline approach. Please give us some indication of how you might work with the artist on the development of this project and what form the digital content or use of digital space might take (Maximum 500 words).
- A timetable including key milestones for delivery and brief summary of anticipated digital outputs.

You should **email your EOI to: Rebecca Farley** ([Rebecca.Farley@newcastle.ac.uk](mailto:Rebecca.Farley@newcastle.ac.uk)) by **5pm on Friday 28 April 2023**.

For an informal discussion or questions on the design brief please email Rebecca Farley or Judith King ([Judith.King@newcastle.ac.uk](mailto:Judith.King@newcastle.ac.uk)).

## Additional Information

### On Site/Off Site project team members

- Vee Pollock, Principal Investigator On-Site/Off-Site Project, Newcastle University
- Rebecca Farley, Research Associate & Co-Investigator On-Site/Off-Site Project, Newcastle University
- Judith King, Research Associate & Co-Investigator On-Site/Off-Site Project, Newcastle University
- Kay Owen, Visitor Operations & Site Manager, Hadrian's Wall & Tyne Valley group, National Trust
- Andrew Poad, General Manager, Hadrian's Wall & Tyne Valley group, National Trust
- Peter Quinn, Chair, The Bewick Society
- Stephanie Allen, CEO, Arts&Heritage

**Mapping Contemporary Art in the Heritage Experience (MCAHE)** 'Mapping Contemporary Art in the Heritage Experience' (2017-20) was an interdisciplinary research project that critically examined the role and practice of temporary visual art commissioning within heritage properties in Britain, mapping the current landscape and exploring the impact of this activity on its producers and audiences. It approached this subject from multiple perspectives, bringing together the knowledge and experience of scholars, artists, heritage professionals, volunteers, and visitors. [www.research.ncl.ac.uk/mcahe](http://www.research.ncl.ac.uk/mcahe)

### Project partners

**The National Trust** is Europe's largest conservation charity and believes in the importance of nature, beauty, and history in people's lives: 'We are dependent on the support of our members and the visitors we welcome each year to ensure we can continue caring for special places, forever, for everyone.'

[www.nationaltrust.org.uk](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk)

**The Bewick Society** The aim of the Society is to promote an interest in the life and work of Thomas Bewick and related subjects. The Society publishes a journal called the Cherryburn Times. This provides a forum for the activities of the Society and keeps members informed about the latest research into the life and work of Bewick and his apprentices. Members publish articles about their own special interests where relevant to the Society and the Society supports those institutions (museums, libraries, art galleries and archives) that hold Bewick material. It encourages the development of facilities for conservation and display of Bewick related materials, including wood-engraving as practised by those following in Bewick's footsteps.

[www.bewicksociety.org](http://www.bewicksociety.org)

**Arts&Heritage** is an agency working nationally with museums and heritage sites to forge collaborations between contemporary artists and heritage organisations to create new perspectives for diverse audiences. Its projects bring to life the narratives, atmosphere and architecture of histories and places.

[www.artsandheritage.org.uk](http://www.artsandheritage.org.uk)

### The Artist

**Mark Fairington:** 'Mark Fairington's paintings are known for their intense realism and observed detail. They vary tremendously in scale from large scale paintings of mounted insects, taxidermy displays of birds, flowers, portraits of prize stud bulls to the series of miniature eye paintings. His interest is resolutely in the eccentricities the one required to stand in for all; the specimen and the subjects of Fairington's paintings are made more singular through being painted.' [www.markfairington.com](http://www.markfairington.com)

**ENDS**