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**PEOPLE UNITED  
ARTISTS' COMMISSIONS  
2014**

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Janetka Platun, *Figure of 8*, 2013

# PEOPLE UNITED ARTISTS' COMMISSIONS 2014

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People United, in association with Manchester Museum and Lunsford Primary School, Kent are looking for two artists to deliver exciting and ambitious work exploring the themes of wonder and role models.

## DEADLINE

Monday 10 February 2014, at 5pm

## FEE

£7,500 per commission

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For more information, please visit  
[www.peopleunited.org.uk](http://www.peopleunited.org.uk)



Supported using public funding by  
**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**



Still from *The Empathy Roadshow*, Sarah Woods, 2013  
Image courtesy of Richard Gott

## INTRODUCTION

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People United is a creative laboratory.

We are interested in researching, testing out and trying new things. We want to explore work that illuminates philosophies and ideas about how we live well in the world together. We are interested in kindness and compassion, in mutual understanding and common bonds, in empathy and resilience, in justice and equality and in the values that unite us.

We believe that arts, creativity and culture have a special role in helping us explore these themes.

Our commissions programme aims to illuminate these 'bigger than self' ideas and to support artists to develop their own practice. The development of artists' practice is central to the commission programme. Artists will be supported, connected with wider conversations across disciplines, given space to improvise and will be part of a community of practice.

In 2013 artists Sarah Woods, Janetka Platun, Maria Amidu and Phoebe Marsh explored themes of empathy, belonging, values and

learning through processes that included imaginative conversations, participatory practices, inquiry and experiment.

In 2014 we are excited to be working with our partners Arts Council, Artsworld, Lunsford Primary School and Manchester Museum.

With them we have chosen *wonder* and *role models* as the stimuli for the 2014 commissions. These are informed by our research paper *Arts and Kindness* that explores the science behind altruism and pro-social behaviour and the potential for the arts. Our model identifies four mediators, Emotions, Connections, Values, and Learning, that may inspire kindness, and these provide an overarching framework for our commissions.

Informed by the latest research we want these commissions to explore the potential of the arts to inspire positive social change. Our hope is that these small flashes of inspiration will grow, multiply and spark new ways of seeing and being in the world.



*a moment of your time* (cooperation), 2013  
Maria Amidu

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Being commissioned by People United to develop a *moment of your time* was quite a unique experience. They like risk and for an artist who is all about the process and the open-ended nature of participatory art making their approach was a joy, and relief.

**Maria Amidu, artist**

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COMMISSION 1:

# WONDER

in association with **MANCHESTER MUSEUM**

MANCHESTER  
1824

The University of Manchester  
Manchester Museum

Definitions of wonder encompass feelings of amazement, as well as feelings of curiosity and doubt. It can also refer to a spectacle, a miracle or remarkable person. We are looking for an artist who is interested and curious in how such feelings or things might inspire us to work towards a more sustainable world.

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## WHERE?

The work should take place in the museum and potentially beyond.

## WHEN?

The process and outcome must take place sometime between April and November 2014. The commission is flexible in terms of the duration of the project.

## WHAT?

We are particularly interested in receiving applications from writers and performers whose work is related to the spoken word.

## PROCESS?

We want an artist to explore and draw on our extraordinary collections. We are interested in proposals where participation is at the heart of the activity and which engages with a diverse range of people of all ages.

## END RESULT?

To culminate in a Museum based event(s) or programme open to participants and the wider community.

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COMMISSION 2:

# ROLE MODELS

in association with **LUNSFORD PRIMARY SCHOOL**  
Supported with investment from Artswork, the South East Bridge



A role model is someone who serves as an example, or whose behaviour is emulated by others. Experiencing other peoples' stories, observing their successes and triumphs as well as their problems and dilemmas, is often a key component of different art forms.

We are looking for an artist who is inspired at the thought of working in an educational setting with children and young people, and who is curious and excited about how role models might strengthen prosocial behaviour amongst pupils. We are also interested in how the arts can support the whole school in serving as an example of a kind and caring community.

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## WHERE?

The work should take place at Lunsford Primary School, Maidstone and its local community.

## WHEN?

The process and outcome must take place between April and November 2014 during the summer and autumn terms. The commission is flexible in terms of the duration of the project.

## WHAT?

We invite applications from a wide range of artists and art forms. We are particularly interested in hearing from artists who use digital technologies within their practice.

## PROCESS?

The work should engage all the pupils and staff at the school as well as their local community.

## END RESULT?

To culminate in an artwork or event that draws the community together to share and celebrate the work.

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# MORE ABOUT THE PROGRAMME

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The EMPATHY commission for People United was hugely helpful to me as an artist. I am a writer who works a lot from research material and was delighted to find that deeper discussions about the subject, its representation and outcomes from the work could be had with the staff at People United, who offered me research guidance as well as support. I was given free artistic rein – genuinely, respected as an artist from the outset and never felt censored. That’s not to say that feedback wasn’t given – it was, and it was very useful in shaping the work. I was able, as a result, to experiment with elements of my practice that I had wanted to for a long time. I stretched and developed myself as an artist, transforming my practice in a way that I will benefit from in other work I do.

**Sarah Woods, artist**

## COLLABORATION

As part of the programme you will meet the other commissioned artists for 3 days of reflection, discussion and inspiration with special guests. (2 days at the start of the programme, and a follow-up day at the end, all taking place in Canterbury, Kent).

## SUPPORT

You will be offered on-going project support and practical assistance from People United, and will be encouraged to support and learn from the other commissioned artists. Additional support and resources will also be provided by partner organisations.

## RESEARCH AND LEARNING

We are interested and curious about the latest research into prosocial attitudes and behaviours, and how that might enhance the role of arts activities and experiences in inspiring a kinder, more caring society and positive social change. We want to work with

artists who are curious too, and who enjoy learning from other disciplines in order to inform and influence their practice. As part of the commission process we will work with you to identify and access academic research, good practice, and the latest thinking relevant to your specific commission.

As part of our commitment to sharing and disseminating learning we encourage artists to share their learning through regular blogs and via social media. We will also work with artists to develop appropriate ways of evaluating their work.

## LEGACY

We don’t know how the commissions will develop, but we are keen for the work to fulfil its own potential. We will support each commission to enable the work to continue beyond the life of the commission. This might be to deepen an interaction with a small number of participants or to enable an idea to be shared and multiplied nationally.

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# QUESTIONS?

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## WHAT SORT OF PROJECT CAN I PROPOSE?

We are looking for distinctive and experimental participatory projects from ambitious artists who are interested in the themes of the commissions and the work of People United. Proposals must be for original new work. If your application is successful, we will meet with you to discuss the commission, your ideas and any particular needs. We aim to be flexible within the framework of the commission to allow you to develop the work in your own way. This might involve work that is intense over a few weeks or is stretched over a 6 month period. Each commission has particular characteristics and deadlines but we aim to provide enough time and space for reflection and personal learning.

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## WHAT IS THE FEE?

The fee for each commission is £7,500. This fee is expected to cover all artist fees, materials, marketing (e.g. promoting workshops if relevant to the proposal) and expenses for the project. Please note that there is a separate marketing reserve for promoting the overall commissioning programme and additional funds to cover expenses for the away days.

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## WHO CAN APPLY?

We welcome proposals from individual artists or artists in collaboration. (Please note that we have a set fee and it cannot be increased for more than one artist).

We welcome applications from artists at all stages of their career. This programme is open to artists who are UK-based or overseas artists living in the UK.

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## WHEN WILL THE COMMISSION TAKE PLACE?

All the commissions will take place between April and November 2014. The length of the project should be proposed by you. There is no set minimum or maximum duration. You should be available to attend three away days: an opportunity to meet the other commissioned artists, share your ideas and get feedback, hear from inspirational speakers on arts and kindness, and meet representatives from our partner organisations. These days are currently pencilled in for 24 and 25 April 2014, and 28 November 2014.

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# WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

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## STAGE 1 – SHORTLISTING

Proposals will be shortlisted by a panel consisting of representatives from People United and the partner organisation. We will consider the submissions against the criteria in this brief, and the artistic excellence of the proposal. We will let you know by email if you have been shortlisted.

## STAGE 2 - INTERVIEW

We will invite you to attend an interview with representatives from People United, and the partner organisation. We will ask you to expand on your proposal and experience. Reasonable travel expenses to interview will be reimbursed such as train or bus fare, and mileage at 45p per mile. No overnight stay or subsistence may be claimed.

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### INTERVIEWS:

#### WONDER

Thursday 6 March 2014

Manchester

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#### ROLE MODELS

Wednesday 12 March 2014

Lunsford Primary School, Kent

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We will do our best to respond two weeks after the deadline as to whether you have been successful or not.

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## IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE I SHOULD KNOW?

- Successful applicants must hold their own public liability insurance.
- We will ask you to sign a contract outlining the aims and targets of the commission.
- You will report directly to Sarah Fox, Project Manager at People United.

## CONTACT DETAILS

Sarah Fox  
Project Manager, People United

sarah@peopleunited.org.uk  
01227 811800

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# HOW DO I APPLY?

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Please send your full application via our [Submittable](https://peopleunited.submittable.com/submit) page. Here's the link:  
[peopleunited.submittable.com/submit](https://peopleunited.submittable.com/submit)

This year we have decided to offer an alternative way of applying for the commissions programme. As well as the traditional written proposal, we are also offering the opportunity to submit your proposal through video.

Please note that although we are asking for details of your proposal we recognise that your ideas may evolve and change before the commission begins.

We only accept submissions via our Submittable page. Just in terms of logistics, we can't look over applications sent to our email address and are unable to accept applications in the post.

The deadline for applications is:  
**MONDAY 10 FEBRUARY, AT 5PM**

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## PLEASE PROVIDE:

- **YOUR PROPOSAL**  
*The proposal should include the following: description of your proposal; your artistic rationale and proposed methodologies; if relevant, who the proposed participants might be; and an indication of your proposed outcomes.*  
  
*This can be submitted electronically either as a written document (e.g. word document, maximum 2 sides of typed A4) or as a 3 minute (max) video. Please provide the link to YouTube or Vimeo ensuring that we have any passwords that might be required to access the application. Unfortunately we cannot accept video files.*
  - **A CV**  
*Maximum two sides of A4 that demonstrates your previous experience and working practice. Where an application is being made as a joint approach, please include a CV for each artist involved*
  - **AN INDICATION OF EXPENDITURE**
  - **NAMES AND CONTACT DETAILS OF TWO REFEREES**
  - **UP TO 3 EXAMPLES OF PREVIOUS WORK**
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## CAN I GET IN TOUCH WITH YOU TO DISCUSS MY PROPOSAL?

Unfortunately we are unable to talk to you about specific proposals or the application process due to limited capacity. Regrettably, we're also unable to offer any feedback if you are unsuccessful in securing an interview.

## COULD I APPLY FOR MORE THAN ONE COMMISSION?

We are keen to work with a number of artists across the commissioning programme; therefore we will only accept one application per artist.

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# ABOUT PEOPLE UNITED OUR PARTNERS & FUNDERS

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## PEOPLE UNITED

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

People United is a creative laboratory and arts charity. We explore how the arts can inspire kindness, community and social change.

## ARTS COUNCIL

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

Arts Council England champions, develops and invests in artistic and cultural experiences that enrich people's lives. We support a range of activities across the arts, museums and libraries - from theatre to digital art, reading to dance, music to literature, and crafts to collections. Great art and culture inspires us, brings us together and teaches us about ourselves and the world around us. In short, it makes life better.

## MANCHESTER MUSEUM

[www.manchester.ac.uk/museum](http://www.manchester.ac.uk/museum)

Manchester Museum is the UK's largest university museum with a 4.5 million-strong encyclopaedic collection of worldwide natural history, anthropology and antiquities. Over 385,000 people visited last year, a record-breaking year. Learning is at the heart of the museum and our work spans all ages. Over 25,000 schoolchildren, 150,000 family visitors and 150 volunteers participated in our extensive programmes. We believe the museum is ideally placed to encourage people to engage with some of the major issues of our time; promoting understanding between cultures and working towards a sustainable world. We are funded by the University of Manchester, HEFCE and Arts Council England.

## LUNSFORD PRIMARY SCHOOL

[www.lunford.kent.sch.uk](http://www.lunford.kent.sch.uk)

Lunford Primary School is a one form entry school in Larkfield near Aylesford. We have 211 children on roll with 10 teachers, 9 teaching assistants and a number of support staff including a SENCO, FLO and Office Manager. The school has a strong reputation for its academic results and was recently graded as 'Good' by Ofsted. Our Mission Statement is "At Lunford we aim to create a nurturing, creative and inspiring environment which enables us to have valued, happy and independent learners. Our children are ready to grasp life's opportunities with confidence and success."

## ARTSWORK

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

As the Bridge Organisation for South East England, funded by Arts Council England, Artswork is supporting the delivery of the ACE's goal to ensure that every child and young person has the opportunity to experience the richness of the arts and culture. As part of this role, Artswork is developing and delivering a strategic approach to increase access to the arts and culture with, for and by children, young people and their families, in and out of school (particularly in areas of least engagement) - and including embedding Arts Awards and Artsmark.