

# CHISWICK HOUSE & GARDENS TRUST

## Freelance Curator Producer Job Reference CP21

**Responsible to:** Head of Visitor Experience

**Responsible for:** Delivery of 2022 public programme

**Contract:** 1 year contract November 21 to November 22, working 2-3 days per week

**Fee:** £20,000 (inclusive of VAT and expenses)

**Location:** West London

**Funded by:** TBC

**Application deadline:** Friday 22 October 2022

### BACKGROUND & ROLE SUMMARY

Chiswick House and Gardens Trust (CHGT) is a 300-year-old historic House with 65 acres of gardens in the heart of West London. It is the birthplace of the English Landscape Movement, with the largest collection of heritage camellias under glass in the world, a 17<sup>th</sup> C. walled garden, and is internationally recognised for its historic significance, architecture and garden history.

We welcome more than 1 million visits to the gardens annually and had many more during the pandemic. Over the past year, our Gardens have become central to the daily lives of people in our community, and so we emerged from the pandemic with a new vision: to reposition Chiswick House & Gardens as a vital community asset. In 2021 Chiswick House & Gardens presented a public programme *Bring Into Being*: art commissions, workshops and events to support the reopening of the House (May 2021, closing at the end of October 2021) and draw in new audiences.

We believe that heritage sites have more than one role to play, and that we can offer both a historic experience while also recognising the enormous potential of this site to respond to some of the challenges we face as a society. Isolation, loneliness, disconnection to nature, unemployment and poverty are just some of the serious issues we grapple with in our borough, and we have the assets on this site to make some difference to the lives of people who live locally affected by these issues.

Building on our pilot public programme and new community outreach programme, we are looking ahead at the next four years and have identified key areas to focus on. While we have themes for each year loosely defined, we want to look at the next four years as a holistic, connected programme, designed to further strengthen people's relationships to the site and recalibrate Chiswick House & Gardens as a vital community asset.

In 2022 our ambition is to host a programme of events, activities and art commissions that explore the intersection of mental health and the environment. Chiswick House was once 'Chiswick House Mental Asylum' and this history offers us the opportunity to engage with mental health and wellbeing as historically linked to this site but also as a pressing issue of our time.

This role will lead the development and delivery of the 2022/23 programme. We want to adopt a co-development approach where the Curator Producer co-designs the programme with our three partners; artistic/expert practitioner, academic and community partners.

### THE ORGANISATION

Chiswick House & Gardens represents one of the first and finest examples of neo-Palladian design in England, whilst the Gardens are ground-breaking in their own right.

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CHGT was established in 2005 jointly by the English Heritage Trust (EHT) and the London Borough of Hounslow, who previously managed the Gardens. Today, we provide dawn-til-dusk free access to our restored Grade I registered 18th-century landscape and ticketed entry to the Grade I listed House during open season.

Chiswick House is an early 18th century villa which helped to set the trend for the neo-Classicism that defined Georgian architecture. The Gardens are considered one of the birthplaces of the English Landscape Movement, one of the UK's greatest contributions to European art and culture and contain a number of garden buildings and statues. Both House and Gardens are the work of Richard Boyle, the 3rd Earl of Burlington and the architect and designer who was his friend, William Kent, and are considered a complete work of art. The House and Gardens are of international and national heritage significance and are a source of great pride to our local community.

We also care for and manage:

- A Grade I listed Conservatory designed by the architect Samuel Ware in 1813, substantially remodelled c.1930, housing the largest collection of heritage camellias under glass in the world
- A Walled Garden dating back to 1682, which was converted into a Kitchen Garden by a group of local volunteers in 2005, now an essential community outreach resource.

We are a hub for the local community, with 1,000,000 visits made to the Gardens each year, as well as thousands of visitors to the House. We are a popular destination for dog walkers, families, individuals and groups who arrive at Chiswick daily in pursuit of nature and culture. In a normal year, we host weddings, film and photography shoots, outdoor theatre and cinema, music and food festivals, family events and sporting activities which bring the community together.

Our Kitchen Garden is home to our community and education activities where our 'It's Your Neighbourhood' award-winning volunteers cultivate and sell produce. Typically, 140 volunteers help us care for the gardens, along with the students from horticultural colleges. In the past we have hosted weekly visits from nursery and school groups including Queensmill, a local SEND school for young people with autism.

In 2019, Chiswick House and Gardens Trust was awarded:

- Heritage Park and Garden of the Year, Gold and Overall Category Winner
- Walled Garden of the Year, Gold and Overall Category Winner
- Our Community, Gold for the Chiswick House Kitchen Garden Volunteers
- Our Community, Silver Gilt for the Goosefoot Volunteers
- RHS 'It's Your Neighbourhood Award', Thriving for the Goosefoot Volunteers
- RHS 'It's Your Neighbourhood Award', Outstanding for the Kitchen Garden Volunteers
- LIB Allotment Site Award
- RHS 'IYN' Certificate of Distinction for the Kitchen Garden Volunteers
- Green Flag Award 2019/20 and 2020/21

## **WHAT YOU WILL BE DOING**

You will be the glue connecting and project managing our freelance artistic/creative practitioners, academic and community partners to co-design the programme working with our Community Outreach Manager. You will be essential to ensuring the programme meets our objectives and outcomes – checking back to our core principles – building on our new Linbury Trust funded *Growing Together at Chiswick House* community programme. You will work closely with our colleagues at English Heritage to feed in the historic research as well as ensuring the new works/interventions that are produced work within the guidelines. You will also work hand in hand with your CHGT colleagues to ensure the programme is connected and enhances the activities already programmed for 2022. We anticipate the commitment will be 2 to 3 days / week over the year from November 21 to October 22. Programme is likely to be R&D and contracting from November to December, production / installation January to early April, show runs through to October with de-install.

You will be responsible for devising and developing the

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- Curatorial overview that brings together the various themes being explored by our freelance practitioners and partners
- Identifying gaps and interpretative content for the programme
- Working with our creative, academic and community partners to plan the design of the installation regularly checking in with the EH curatorial and conservation teams and the CHGT teams to ensure compliance
- Putting the budget together, managing and cost control
- Working closely with marketing and press to ensure effective communication and promotion of all aspects of the programme
- Putting together risk assessments and method statements (RAMs)
- Overseeing the install and deinstall of temporary exhibitions
- Having a hands on approach with any events related to the exhibition
- Working with our development team on fundraising applications
- Ensuring all activities and the exhibition are documented and evaluated adequately for both internal and external funding purposes.

## **WHO WE'RE LOOKING FOR**

You will have a strong background in producing and delivering contemporary art and events with site specificity and context being a strong focus. In addition, you will need to demonstrate:

- Knowledge and ideally experience in working with the themes for our 2022 programme – intersection between environment and mental health & wellbeing.
- A proven track record of delivering curatorial projects on time and to budget
- Awareness of the context of working within historic art collections and interiors
- Good understanding of learning, curatorial and visitor experience approaches in publicly accessible sites
- Experience and commitment to working with staff, volunteer teams and community partners in the development of content
- Excellent organisation skills, able to prioritise and work to tight timescales
- Strong written and verbal communication skills
- Expertise in management and fostering collaborative relationships between a diverse range of project partners and audiences
- Ability to manage budgets effectively. Demonstrating a responsible attitude to available resources and using them efficiently and effectively.
- To have a flexible and proactive approach.

We are looking for people who reflect the diversity of the country today to help us shape and change our approach and make it more relevant to the diversity of the people in our local communities. Disabled people, those that identify as being from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds and people under 30 are under-represented in our staff and volunteer team so we particularly encourage applications from people in these groups.

## **OTHER**

You may be asked to carry out additional tasks as may arise, and which may be reasonably accommodated within the post's salary level. You will be required to act in accordance with the provisions of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 to take reasonable care for the health and safety of any person who may be affected by your acts or omissions at work.

## **HOW TO APPLY**

Application is by CV (no more than 2 pages) and a supporting statement (no more than 2 pages) outlining the reasons for your interest in the post and why you believe yourself to be suitable, and how you would propose approaching the brief.

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Please provide details of two referees who know your employment and your work. For shortlisted candidates, references will be taken up prior to interview unless you advise that you do not wish us to do so.

Please include your full contact details including daytime and evening telephone numbers.

Applications should be sent to [info@chgt.org.uk](mailto:info@chgt.org.uk) please include the job reference CP21 in the subject header of your email.

**Deadline: Closing date for applications is midday Friday 22 October.**

Interviews and Shortlisting: It is anticipated that shortlisted candidates will be invited for interview (online or in person) on either Friday 29 October 2021.