

the **specialist** participatory arts organisation

Are YOU a photographer or writer interested in using the arts to improve children's creativity?

The Forge requires two extraordinary artist practitioners experienced in working with children in school settings to join our team to work on an exciting new action research project commencing autumn 2016. We are developing a new programme called Seeing Things Differently - approaching creative writing through photography. This project examines whether a lens-based approach to story-telling can improve children's creative writing.

About The Forge:

The Forge uses the arts to improve the life-chances of children and young people, particularly those from disadvantaged communities. We achieve this by delivering creative programmes in schools, offering children the opportunity to participate in and experience a range of different art-forms. The majority (95%) of our programme occurs in places of least cultural engagement (Active People Survey) and focuses on overcoming barriers that prevent people from accessing arts and culture. Last year, as part of our NPO remit, we worked with more than 70 schools, provided training for 171 adults and reached 11,392 children. As the region's leading arts in education agency, we are very keen to develop further evidence of the impact of the arts and especially to show its effectiveness in supporting disadvantaged and marginalised young people.

Context:

There is a long history of photography being used in social context. Photography uses cinematographic aesthetics which stimulate the brain to prompt creative responses. We will harness this approach to develop new approaches to Teaching and Learning.

This project re-imagines children as apprentice-artists who will gain understanding and mastery of narrative techniques through their own practice and reflections. This use of a visual art-form to teach story-telling simplifies narrative craft and makes it more accessible to children who do not have a strong history of reading or writing; children can take and discuss their photographs very easily and they need little prior understanding to be able to take effective images. Since children learn to use cameras from an early age, this project builds on their existing skills and assets; the children's prior experience with cameras will give a creative platform to build upon, using a medium they are familiar with. Furthermore photography is an egalitarian art form, accessible to all levels of income and ability. Given the socio-demographic background of the children we will target, this is very important. Finally, digital imagery makes the project scalable. If this project successfully improves children's creative writing, it is important that it can be replicated across schools cost-effectively. The wide availability of i-Pads and tablets in schools, together with our proposed legacy of resources, makes this future sustainability possible.

The Forge

Stanley Education Centre, King Edward VIII Terrace, Shield Row, Stanley, COUNTY DURHAM, DH9 0HQ
T: 01207 284 515 F: 01207 288 111 E: enquiries@intheforge.com W: www.intheforge.com

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The Brief:

This major two year project, funded by an arts “Test and Explore” grant from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation Arts Based Learning fund, aims to improve children’s creative writing skills through a new visually focused pedagogy. During Phase One of the project, a photographer and writer will work with one year 6 class to transform the way they approach creative writing tasks. This photographer will empower pupils to take control of their own "narrative lenses" to gain an understanding of authorial purpose, enabling the children to experiment with narrative choices. Children will create their own gallery of "images and intentions" which will be exhibited to share their understanding and their creative responses with the wider community. Working in close partnership with the photographer, the writer will encourage pupils to transform their photographic artistry into creative written pieces by helping them experiment with narrative focus, exploring those tiny details and lexical patterns that ultimately create meaning. Finally, pupils will transpose their learning into exciting new visually-driven narratives (descriptive verse plays, image-texts, or poems) which they will share with the school and wider community through e-books, exhibitions and performances. Throughout the whole of this First Phase, both the photographer and writer will work alongside teaching staff to create a legacy of resources for future use. Year two of the project follows the participating pupils across transition into their secondary school, where the entire year 7 cohort (including the original class) experience a visually driven Creative Writing curriculum which has been co-designed by the photographer, writer and English teaching staff. This will include artist-led CPD for staff.

Essential skills:

- Exhibited or published work within the last three years
- Experience of working with children in a school setting
- Experience of leading a project within a formal education setting
- Experience of project documentation, evaluation and research
- Strong collaborative and team-working skills
- Flexible and reflective approach

Desirable

Good understanding of the issues surrounding the teaching of writing in schools

Timeline/Information:

Deadline for applications	September 5th 2016
Interviews	September tbc
Planning meetings with the team	Autumn 2016
Programme schedule	Delivery in school: Jan 2017 – July 2018
Location	The majority of the work will take place in Blyth, with occasional meetings at The Forge office in Stanley
Fee per artist	£11,000 (44 days over two years)

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Applications:

To apply please send your CV with a proposal of no more than 2 sides of A4 to bev@intheforge.com Please put **Seeing Things Differently** as the subject header.

Alternatively, you can submit a hard copy to:

Beverley Briggs, Creative Producer, The Forge, Stanley Education Centre, King Edward VIII Terrace, Stanley, County Durham DH90HQ, marking the envelope "Seeing Things Differently".

The proposal must include the following:

- Information about your work demonstrating relevant track record
- Any relevant web links to your work.
- A description of your approach and how you will engage young people in the process.
- An overview of how you will achieve this in the timeframe.
- Your approach to evaluation and research.
- Contact details of 2 referees that you have worked with in a similar way.
- Artists must be DBS checked and have appropriate public liability insurance.

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