

Understanding British Portraits

Brief for podcast hosts x4 An Understanding British Portraits professional network activity

Release date: 31 May 2023

Expected timescale of appointment: 12 days per host, used flexibly between September 2023 and August 2024.

Fee: £200 per day, up to 12 days (total £2,400) per host

Based in own office, online meetings and occasional meetings in London. Some travel likely, depending on episode content

Application deadline: **12 noon, 3 July 2023**

The Understanding British Portraits professional network (UBP network) is looking to engage four hosts for the network's first podcast series launching next year. Aimed at the museum/gallery/heritage sector and wider listenership in the UK, hosts will curate and produce up to two episodes each, with logistical and audio engineer support. This freelance opportunity is open to all within and beyond the sector, and previous experience in developing an audio podcast is not essential.

The Understanding British Portraits professional network

Supported by Arts Council England as a Subject Specialist Network, Understanding British Portraits is an active network with free membership for professionals working with British portraits including curators, collection-based learning professionals, researchers, academics and conservators. It aims to enhance the knowledge and understanding of portraits in all media in UK collections, for the benefit of future research, exhibitions, interpretation, display and learning programmes.

For more information on Subject Specialist Networks please see: <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/supporting-collections-and-cultural-property/subject-specialist-network-fund>

The network is managed by a Steering Group drawn from the following organisations: National Portrait Gallery, London; Oxford Dictionary of National Biography; National Trust; Tyne & Wear Archives and Museums; and Bristol Museum & Art Gallery. Established in 2007, the network now has 1,300+ individual professional members and is engaged in the following activities:

- A specialist events programme of seminars (in-person and online) and private collection visits.
- A Fellowship programme for professionals wishing to develop their portrait expertise.
- A resource-rich website with practical toolkits, expertise database, a film archive of past events, online publishing, queries board, portrait news and members' blog. The podcast is a new venture for the network, and fits within these complementary activities.
- A regular e-newsletter and Twitter feed to keep portrait professionals connected and informed.

See more at www.britishportraits.org.uk

The podcast series

The series is intended to support debate and enquiry around portrait interpretation, display, curation, research and audience engagement. It will reflect current museological concerns and add fresh voices and perspectives

to the conversations taking place. It will have compelling, relevant content which our professional members, the wider sector and interested public will find considered and engaging.

We hope to appoint hosts from a range of professional backgrounds who are interested in sharing their perspectives. Each host will have up to 12 days to design, plan and deliver two podcast episodes of 30 minutes each. This will involve developing themes, identifying interviewees and/or places to visit, conducting interviews, script editing and final production stages. The hosts will be supported by an experienced audio engineer throughout, and have logistical support to realise plans. T&S for interviews, etc. will be provided separately.

Hosts will develop their ideas for their episodes with the support of the UBP network personnel, including the Steering Group, and audio engineer. They will be expected to take the creative lead in devising their episode themes, structure, content and contributor list. Hosts will also invite and brief contributors, conduct interviews or chair discussions, and collaborate in editing the script and final production stages.

This opportunity would suit museum/heritage colleagues, academics, activists, researchers and students who want to use the podcast platform to explore a theme, thesis, narrative or research journey. You don't need to have experience in podcasting; we'll provide the logistics and technical expertise, but we welcome great ideas in search of a platform.

The role

The podcast hosts will each:

- Research the theme, structure and content for their episodes
- Research suitable contributors and/or collection visits that will support the episode's theme/narrative. We are interested in participants from a range of UK organisations working with portraiture or relevant subjects, and those representing a range of personal and professional perspectives.
- Finalise episode plans with network and podcast personnel.
- Invite and brief participants, and conducting interviews.
- Collaborate on script editing and audio landscaping in order to deliver episodes to a high professional standard
- Liaise with network and podcast personnel, reporting on progress, supporting promotion and contributing to evaluation

The hosts will attend occasional meetings with the steering panel in London, though it is anticipated that the majority of communication will be by email and online meeting.

Person Specification

Essential

- Good knowledge of portrait-relevant interpretation, display, curation, research or audience engagement within the context of UK museums/galleries/heritage organisations.
- Understanding of questions of identity and representation as they relate to portraiture and its display/interpretation
- Clear, concise communicator - confident presenting ideas in writing or verbally
- Experience of working to budget
- Ability to meet deadlines
- Ability to work with a range of partners and stakeholders
- Ability to work on own initiative, alongside a small team
- Ability to prioritise and work under pressure
- Creative problem solver

A total fee of £2,400 is available for each host for this work, from the network's Arts Council England project grant. We expect the hosts to spend 12 days in total on their episodes (£200 per day) between September 2023 and August 2024. These can be taken flexibly, in collaboration with the podcast personnel. The development and delivery schedule will be decided when episodes have been modelled and agreed, and logistics are in place. The contract is time-limited and the hosts will work from their own home/office with occasional meetings in London and UK travel for interviews, etc. Hosts will need to be registered as self-employed with HMRC for tax purposes.

Project timeline

August 2023 – appointments of hosts.

September 2023 – briefings and discussion with all hosts and engineer.

October/November 2023 – hosts work up detailed plans for their episodes (themes, contributors, equipment required, travel involved, budget, timescale for delivery of material to engineer).

December 2023-April 2024 – hosts record script and interviews, conduct travel, etc. as required, and deliver audio material to engineer as agreed.

May-August 2024 – hosts work with engineer and UBP network personnel to edit script and complete production of their episodes. Series launched in September 2024.

How to apply

To apply, please submit the following three elements by **12 noon, 3 July 2023** to Bryony Smith, UBP network Researcher/Co-ordinator at bsmith@npg.org.uk:

- **A letter** (no more than one side of A4) giving evidence of how your skills, knowledge and experience meet the person specification
- **A current CV**, with details of two Referees
- **A short audio recording** (max. 3 minutes) outlining why you are interested in this opportunity, and initial ideas on what you wish to explore in your two episodes. To do this please use any voice recording app on your phone (Voice Memos, Sound Recorder, etc.) and attach the audio clip to your email application (by choosing the 'share file' option in your chosen app). You can email this separately to the above documents if you wish. Please remember to introduce yourself at the start of your recording.

Shortlisted applicants will be invited for an informal online interview in early August 2023. If you have any queries, or wish to discuss the brief further, please contact Bryony Smith, UBP network Researcher/Co-ordinator at bsmith@npg.org.uk.

The UBP network is committed to equality of access to its employment. We welcome applications from all sections of the community. We particularly encourage applications from disabled and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) candidates, as these groups are underrepresented within the Arts field /National Portrait Gallery. Should you require application details in another format please contact us at bsmith@npg.org.uk.