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## Electricity: The spark of life exhibition Art Commission



### **Call for Artists from the Museum of Science and Industry in partnership with Electricity North West and Manchester Science Festival 2018.**

This £20,000 commission will realise a new art work, developed along the theme of *'keeping you switched on'*, to be included in the exhibition *Electricity: The spark of life*. The exhibition has been created in partnership with Wellcome Collection in London and Teylers Museum in Haarlem. It will run for six months at the Museum of Science and Industry in Manchester and will launch as part of Manchester Science Festival on 17 October 2018.

The theme of *'keeping you switched on'* should explore the future demands on electricity. It could look at how innovation can support future demands, at our behaviours using and managing electricity, innovation around smart appliances, smart homes and renewable energies.

The commissioned art work will aim to ignite curiosity and create debate about the proposed themes and we are particularly interested in receiving proposals for moving image, light art and/or immersive art work.

We anticipate that the commission will be informed in dialogue with the Museum of Science and Industry, Electricity North West and Manchester Science Festival. If required, Electricity North West can provide access to data and their in-house experts.

**Interviews will take place on Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> March. Shortlisted candidates must be available on that date.**

**Proposals:**

Please provide us with a proposal for your idea of up to 750 words and include any information you can about what you need to make it happen (e.g. budget, resources, anticipated technical and installation requirements etc). Your proposal should be accompanied by a CV (one side of A4 only) and examples of your previous work (up to three sides of A4 only, including links to video files) in PDF format.

**The £20,000 commission is inclusive of artist fee, expenses and all related production costs. Please contact [Theresa.Macaulay@msimanchester.org.uk](mailto:Theresa.Macaulay@msimanchester.org.uk) for further details**

<b>Timetable:</b>	
Announcement of commission	Thursday 18 January 2018
Deadline for proposals	Sunday 11 February (midnight)
Notification of selection	Friday 16 February
Interviews	Thursday 1 March
Winner notified, and contracts agreed	Tuesday 6 March
Public announcement of winner	Monday 19 March
Development of project	Tuesday 6 March - Friday 4 May
Final details into exhibition design submission	Wednesday 9 May
PR activity	Monday 3 September – Tuesday 16 October
MSF and exhibition Launch	Wednesday 17 October 2018

**Background**

*Electricity: The spark of life* is a collaboration between the Wellcome Collection, Teylers Museum and the Museum of Science and Industry (MSI), part of the Science Museum Group. Each venue presents core exhibition themes, with specially commissioned artworks and additional content focused on the primary audiences and collection strengths for each venue.

See <https://wellcomecollection.org/electricity> and <http://bit.ly/2IGwqBl>

The exhibition was on display at the Wellcome Collection from February to June 2017 and at Teylers Museum from July 2017 to January 2018. It will be on show at MSI from 18 October 2018 to 28 April 2019.

The focus of MSI is exploring how ideas can change the world, from the Industrial Revolution to today. It's a story that we're uniquely placed to tell—on the site of the oldest surviving passenger railway station, in the heart of the world's first industrial city, which today is alive with innovative discoveries in science and technology.

**Electricity: The spark of life**

Electricity is a fundamental part of everyone's lives. We use it without thinking about it, and often without understanding what it is or where it comes from. We only notice it when it isn't there. Blackouts and power cuts disrupt our lives and remind us of how important electricity is to us.

The purpose of the exhibition is to engage the audience with electricity as a concept, how it was discovered and its power harnessed, how mass generation and distribution unravelled, how its demand has become indispensable and what we can do to ensure its longevity. We will humanise the story, so that visitors can relate to the topics covered. We will be provocative in encouraging visitors to think about their own electricity usage and what the future of electricity looks like if we continue to consume it at the current rate.

The exhibition is targeted at a wide-ranging audience encompassing adults of all ages and families.

MSI holds collections of objects and archives that record the development of electricity generation and supply, as well as the development of new technologies designed to exploit this more reliable, efficient and clean energy source. The exhibition is an opportunity for MSI to celebrate these collections and the role Manchester played in establishing electricity as the UK's principal form of power for industry and the home.

### **Selection criteria**

A small number of artists will be invited to interview. The following criteria will be considered in the selection of the commission:

- Artistic quality
- Relevance to the exhibition and commission themes
- Expressed preference for moving image and/or immersive art work
- Ability to engage MSI's audiences
- Suitability for MSI's Temporary Exhibition Gallery, contact us for more details
- Durability in an exhibition that will run for six months and host over 100,000 visitors
- Ability to deliver on time and within budget
- Availability to attend interview on Thursday 1 March 2018

The selection panel will include representatives from:

- Pete Emery, CEO, Electricity North West
- Antonio Benitez, Director, Manchester Science Festival
- Curator, Wellcome Collection, London
- Paul Bonaventura, Consultant Curator and Exhibition Originator, *Electricity: The spark of life*
- Jan Hicks, Lead Curator and Archives Manager, Museum of Science and Industry
- Theresa Macaulay, Exhibition Project Manager, Museum of Science and Industry