

CHA N OT R L V S T E S T

Job Title: Literature and Ideas Programmer

Contract: Freelance (£15,000 contract)

Reporting to: Head of Programme & Events

Hours: Part time

Application deadline: 5pm 3 September 2021

Interviews: 13 September 2021

About Charleston

Charleston is a place that brings people together to engage with art and ideas.

The modernist home and studio of the painters Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant, Charleston was a gathering point for some of the 20th century's most radical artists, writers and thinkers known collectively as the Bloomsbury group. It is where they came together to imagine society differently, and has always been a place where art and experimental thinking are at the centre of everyday life.

Today, we present a dynamic year-round programme of exhibitions, festivals and events. We believe in the power of art, in all its forms, to provoke new ways of thinking and living.

The Charleston Trust was formed in 1980 and is responsible for the care of Charleston's house, interiors and collections; and for opening the site to visitors. It is an independent charitable trust with a commercial trading arm, and currently receives no regular public funding.

Main purpose of role

Charleston is looking for an exceptional literature and ideas programmer to work with us on two of our major festivals, covering a period of maternity leave.

The programmer will be an integral part of a small programming team made up of Charleston's Director, and Head of Programme & Events. They will take the lead on 30 of the 40 Charleston Festival events, and the entirety of Small Wonder.

Charleston Festival

The Charleston Festival was established in 1989 and since then has blazed its way across the literary festival landscape. It is one of the UK's oldest and most prestigious festivals, with over 100 speakers and 40 events staged over 10 days each May.

Taking inspiration from the original inhabitants of the house, Charleston Festival is a place for interdisciplinary debate, discussion and inspiration. The programme consists of literary heavyweights and emerging voices, unique and surprising pairings and dramatic commissions.

Among the thousands of speakers who have been part of the festival over the years are Ai Weiwei, David Attenborough, Patti Smith, Salman Rushdie, Gloria Steinham and Peter Blake.

Small Wonder

Small Wonder Festival is the UK's only festival dedicated to short stories and short form writing. It celebrates short stories, song, poetry, essays, graphic novellas, cartoons and the written word in art. The festival takes place each September and features a mix of home grown and international authors, poets and artists. Previous speakers include Kae Tempest, Ben Okri, Edna O'Brien, Juno Dawson, Neil Bartlett and Kit De Waal.

Main responsibilities

Artistic planning:

Charleston Festival (c.30 of 40 events), 19-29 May 2022, programme deadline January 2022.

Small Wonder (c. 16 events), September 2022, programme deadline July 2022

- Lead on the programming of Charleston's two literary festivals, delivering fully realized festival events which are dynamic in concept and content.
- Manage effective relationships with industry networks on behalf of Charleston.
- Work closely with BBC, British Council and other strategic partners.

- To represent Charleston in all conversations with writers, artists, speakers publicists and agents.
- Be open to opportunities for off-site and partnership models with regional and national partnerships.

Communication and operations

- Work closely with the Events Manager to co-ordinate with speakers, artists and performers on accommodation, travel and technical requirements.
- Liaise with colleagues across the team to ensure smooth running of all events and exceptional speaker care and audience satisfaction.
- Work closely with the Head of Communications and Audience Development on the marketing, promotion and press for all literary and books events, supplying copy, biographical information and press contacts as needed.
- Provide information for green room and front of house teams, including providing biographical information and briefings for all events as appropriate.
- To be positive, open and supportive with the wider Charleston team.

Finance and audiences

- Deliver an exceptional programme mindful of the importance of Charleston Festival as the most important fundraising event in the Charleston calendar while continuing the 30 year evolution and development of the programme.
- Drive audience interest and engagement with dynamic literary programming, reaching new and diverse audiences.
- To work with the Head of Programme and Events and the Head of Finance to ensure that the events programme is delivered within approved budgets.
- To work with the Head of Communications and Audience Development to achieve maximum ticket sales.

Person specification:

We are looking for someone with:

Vision: the imagination to develop original, bold and thought-provoking events. They will have a track record of delivering consistently exceptional literary programmes with speakers who surprise and excite audiences. They will be open and inclusive in attitude, aware of the power of programming to reach new audiences.

Connections: an extensive network of contacts both within and beyond the publishing industry. They will have a dynamic and persuasive personality, securing high profile speakers who are not part of the usual literary circuit, and a passion for exceptional speaker care. They will be able to demonstrate a genuine commitment to diversity and knowledge of the very best artists and writers who are underrepresented at UK literary festivals. We are looking for someone with a minimum of three years programming/artistic planning experience in literature or the arts.

Insight & intuition: understanding of the drama and dynamics that make an exceptional event. They will be finely tuned to all the myriad conversations happening both in the UK and further afield, with an ability to predict changes in trends and

preoccupations before they happen. They will have strong collaborative skills and attitude with the ability to forge new relationships and collaborate effectively with colleagues.

Knowledge: having a far-reaching knowledge of literature and the publishing industry. They will be tapped into the zeitgeist, aware of both mainstream and sub-cultural preoccupations. As well as a strong literary background, they will have an appetite for the interdisciplinary, and an interest in politics, history, sciences and the wider arts. They will have good knowledge of the Charleston and the Bloomsbury group, and understand how their legacy informs the current programme. They will be able to show excellent written and verbal communication skills with meticulous attention for detail.

Additional information

This post holder is welcome to work from home but would be expected to come to Charleston for some in person meetings.

How to apply

Deadline for applications: 5pm 3 September 2021

To apply, please email a covering letter and CV to m.perkins@charleston.org.uk and follow the link on the job description webpage to complete an [equal opportunities monitoring form](#).

Charleston is committed to equality of opportunity for all staff and applications from individuals are encouraged regardless of age, caring responsibilities, disability, gender, gender identity, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, and sexual orientation.

All positions at Charleston are offered subject to the following conditions:

- Receipt of satisfactory references
- Proof that you are legally entitled to work in the UK

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