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**Recruitment of Funded Pilot Museums (FPMs)**

Over the last few months, the Sensational Museum project has been collaborating with our partner museums and museum organisations to design processes and tools that will support museums to embed inclusive multisensory thinking into their practice. We are now looking for a range of museums across the UK, who would be able to join The Sensational Museum as our ‘Funded Pilot Museums’ (FPMs). If selected, as a FPM you will be joining us to both pilot and develop the processes and tools that we have been creating.

**How many museums will be recruited?**

Nine in total:

* We require 3 museums who would like to take part in the Collections strand (Strand A). These museums will trial a new collections management system that supports an inclusive sensorially rich cataloguing process.
* We also require 3 museums who would like to take part in the Communication strand (Strand B), These museums will trial a process, underpinned by co-creation, which will work towards the production of a Sensational interpretation design brief, which we will develop with you for installation within your museums (more details below).
* Finally, we would also like to recruit 3 museums who would like to trial **both** the Sensational products from Strand A and Strand B.

We are aiming to recruit museums across all four nations of the UK, of different types and sizes (national, local, urban, rural, university, etc). We would also like a representative sample of museums / art galleries who collectively cover a range of subject areas and collection types.

Please specify in question 9 if you would prefer to be part of EITHER our Collections strand OR our Communication strand, OR both strands.

The pilot phase of The Sensational Museum will take place between June 2024 and April 2025. We will ask you to give us permission to include references to your museum and the work you undertake in conference papers and publications from June 2024 until after the end of the project. We cannot cover staff costs for people already employed by the museum so we ask that you only apply if your museum can devote staff time to this project and if you can fully commit to participate in the project until at least July 2025. We will cover the costs of materials, workshops, evaluation and the time and travel of external attendees but we will ask you to help us recruit them.

**Collections Strand Museums (Strand A)**

With the support of the Collections Trust and The Museum Platform, Collections Strand Pilot Museums will engage with a beta Documentation Interface and Data Model (DIDM) that we will design in Phase 2 (January-June 2024). The DIDM will be built from July-September 2024, followed by two rounds of testing:

Testing group 1      October - December 2024

Testing group 2     January - March 2025

Post-doc researcher Sophie Vohra and Co-investigator Ross Parry will evaluate the impact of the new inclusive DIDM on working practices in the museum. We will assess how the DIDM changes the way that you record information about and interactions with your collections. We will examine how a diverse range of practitioners (including neurodivergent and disabled museum professionals) work day-to-day with the new interface.

To do this we will use a ‘work out loud’ methodology, evaluating what happens when a museum professional is creating and adding to records of your organisations’ collection, using the new DIDM:

* Professional journaling on using the new DIDM;
* Semi-structured interview questions and observations, sitting with museum professionals as they use the DIDM conducted by Sophie Vohra;
* Focus group with all users at the end of each testing phase held in person;
* Final written evaluation of the testing, containing fixed-response questions and free-text responses.

**Testing phases timetable**

This data will be collected over the period of 3 months per testing group, to understand effectiveness, accessibility, and areas for improvement. You will be required to be part of the testing for 8 days’ worth of time, spaced over the course of the 3 months:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Months 1-3 | Half a day per week using the collections management system and journaling any reflections on this testing |
| Month 1 | A half day online introduction to the testing process at the beginning of the month |
| Month 2 | A full day where the post-doctoral researcher will attend your site to observe you using the system (costs for the researcher to travel to your site are covered by TSM) |
| Month 3 | A full day where we will bring together all testers to reflect on the CMS in person in Leicester at the end of the month |

**Communication Strand Museums (Strand B)**

Communication Strand FPMs will run workshops, produce at least one intervention, and evaluate visitor experience in relation to this intervention.

In phase 2 (Jan-June 2024), we will create a Trans-sensory Inclusive Co-creation Process (TICP). We will ask you to use the workshops and resources within the TICP model to produce a design brief for at least 1 intervention at your museum site. Our [Sensational Museum partners](https://sensationalmuseum.org/about/people-and-partners/) will then work with you to produce the interpretation you designed.

The TICP includes staff-only workshops and co-creation workshops with your local communities. As part of the process for members of staff, in addition to the workshops, we will ask you to complete a reflective log that will include some activities and questions. For each of the workshops, all participants (staff and where appropriate, co-creators) will be asked to complete an online evaluation questionnaire, within which we will seek people’s satisfaction with the process, and feedback on what worked and what could be improved. All of the feedback will be analysed by Post-doc Charlotte Slark, so that we can refine and enhance the process and workshop protocols.

The product of the TICP will be a design brief, co-created by the museum professionals and the community participants. We will provide you with funding and support to create at least one prototype intervention in your museum and we will ask you to collect visitor and museum professional evaluation data (using a standardised online survey created by the research team) on the intervention(s) you have created.

**Indicative Timeline**

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| --- | --- |
| Deadline to submit this form | 8th March 2024 |
| Partner Museums announced | w/c 15th April 2024 |
| Communications Strand: workshops | Between early June 2024 and late September 2024 |
| Communication Strand: Production of Interventions (with TSM Design Partners) | Oct 2024-Feb 2025 |
| Communications Strand: interventions on display in museums and evaluated. Ideally the display should last until the end of the project (July 2025) but this can be discussed depending on individual museums’ needs and plans. | By 1st February 2025 |
| Collections Strand: Testing Phase | Oct 2024-March 2025 |

**Application Form**

If you have any queries at all about the questions, application, process, or project please contact [lucy.mcdonald@rhul.ac.uk](mailto:lucy.mcdonald@rhul.ac.uk).

Please submit the form by emailing it to [lucy.mcdonald@rhul.ac.uk](mailto:lucy.mcdonald@rhul.ac.uk) by midnight on 8th March 2024.

**Please answer the following questions:**

1. **What kind of museum are you?**

University

National

Local Authority

Independent

**What is the focus of your museum?**

Design

Fine Art / Sculpture

Science / Tech

Natural History

Living History

Social History

Military

Anthropology

A mixture of the above

Something else (please tell us what)

1. **Who is your primary audience?**

Children

Adults

Both

1. **What is your web address?**
2. **What is the name, job title and e-mail of the person completing this form?**
3. **Can you confirm that you have institutional support for your involvement in this project?**
4. **What region of the UK are you in?**

Northern England

Southern England

Midlands

Wales

Scotland

N Ireland

1. **How many visitors (approx.) do you have per year?**

Up to 10,000

10,000-50,000

50,001-100,000

100,001-500,000

500,001 – 1 million

Million plus

1. **How many paid staff do you have (approx.)**
2. **Are you interested in:**

Collections Strand

Communications Strand

Both Strands

1. **If you are interested in the Collections Strand, do you prefer:**

Testing group 1: October-December 2024

Testing group 2: January-March 2025

No preference/either

1. **If you are interested in the Collections Strand, can you provide sufficient internet access to test the browser-based DIDM?**
2. **If we cannot include your museum in the group of museums whose participation will be funded by the project, would you be able to self-fund (wholly or partially). This would include:**

**For the Collections Strand (A)**

Funding for return travel to/from Leicester (and where necessary overnight accommodation) for an in-person session.

**For the Communication Strand (B): = up to £6,900**

Running 5 workshops in the museum: to include room hire, refreshments; local transport, thank you payments for co-creation participants. (approx. £1,700)

Producing an ‘intervention’ that will be displayed in the museum (approx. £5,000)

1. **Please tell us why you want to be involved in this project? (500 words max)**