

Autograph ABP

**Autograph Photography Collection:
Cataloguing & Accreditation Project Brief.**

Invitation to Tender

1 Introduction

Autograph is an internationally respected charitable visual arts agency founded in 1988. We are based in Rivington Place, London in a building designed for us by Sir David Adjaye. Our building houses two galleries, an education studio, dedicated collection store room, and offices, plus space for six commercial tenants. We are an Arts Council National Portfolio client and we also receive periodic project funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF), trusts and foundations and from individual donations. We generate earned income from commercial letting, print sales of editioned art works and artist commissions, collection loans and exhibition touring fees, ticket sales for events and consultancy fees for projects. Our annual turnover is around £1.1 million and we currently employ 9.5 FTE staff.

2 Autograph's Key Purpose and Offer

Our mission is to share the work of artists who use photography and film to highlight questions of identity, representation, human rights and social justice. Through doing so, we invite people to explore the creative and critical power of visual representation, in shaping our understanding of ourselves and of others. We achieve this by:

- Commissioning artists and writers who reflect the diversity of the UK, bringing international creative practitioners to the attention of UK audiences and introducing British artists overseas by making and sharing exhibitions, and publications in the UK and internationally, editioning new works, lending work from our collection and carrying out research to develop new knowledge about photography in visual culture.
- Sharing our photographic collection which is used for research, learning, participation, and lending purposes.
- Supporting professional development of artists.
- Engaging people in participatory and learning activities and including a wide range of diverse user and interest groups on site, off site and online.
- Developing strategic projects which facilitate creative making with communities of interest, local or global in composition.

We hope that through an encounter with an Autograph project, people experience one or more of the following:

- Discover how photography can speak to many different experiences.
- Learn about subjects and stories which have been left out of historical and contemporary visual records and narratives.
- Reflect upon the act of 'seeing' and of 'being seen'.
- Recognise their own potential 'agency' in making and looking at images every day.
- Participate and engage again with Autograph to find out more.

3 Collection Overview

Since our foundation in 1988, our policy has been to commission works from artists for our contemporary artistic programme which are then deposited in our collection. The result has been to build a unique holding of lens-based art works which represent Black subjectivity

and a range of diverse experiences in the 20th and 21st centuries, as well as rare photographic works from the late 19th century which complement the more contemporary practices, and contribute to addressing gaps in representation which characterise most relevant public collections in the UK. We have achieved this through acquiring contemporary and historical works inside and outside the commissioning process through gifts, loans and purchases made with public funding. There are currently around 7500 objects which are photographic prints, plus circa 10,000 negatives and transparencies, and other ephemera.

Between 2008 and 2019 we completed three very successful NLHF projects which together have enabled Autograph to develop its collection assets, carry out research, expand public access to the collection, make critical strategic learning resources available, attract new audiences, build specialist storage space, acquire equipment and purchase works which have improved both the content, and public value of the holdings. A fourth NLHF project is currently in progress and informs the Brief discussed below.

The collection is a cornerstone of programming delivery and contributes towards our sustainability, supporting significant sales of editioned work which benefit artists and Autograph economically, assisting public profile, career development and influencing cultural and collecting discourse internationally. Please see Appendix One for project examples. The physical formats of the assets are varied and reflect the evolution of technology from analogue (e.g. glass plates, negatives, transparencies or in some cases vintage prints made using technologies no longer available) black and white and colour prints, to digital including CD Roms to Tiff files. The majority of the objects are thus capable of being reproduced. Over a number of years Autograph has made several attempts to make more of its current collection assets publicly available in digital formats; often at the instigation of funders who wanted to see projects which had 'digital innovation' as an output. They have provided invaluable learning opportunities. A modest proportion of the collection is currently available in digital format.

Collection development and management of research, learning and engagement, loans, display and limited licensing/reproduction activity, plus contemporary commissioning, publishing, curating and management of touring and on-site exhibitions, as well as acquisitions and print sales have historically all been managed through a shared curatorial brief - primarily as a consequence of the modest scale of the organisation. The resource to deliver all strands of activity is currently 2.5 FTE roles: a full time Senior Curator/ Head of Collection, a full time Curatorial Project Manager and approximately 40% of the Director's time.

As the collection has grown and its uses have expanded and evolved, so too has the responsibility to conserve, manage, and animate it as well as carry out registrar functions, manage research requests, support public/educational access, oversee loans etc. More staffing resource is necessary to provide dedicated leadership to the collection, and to differentiate this area of activity from the contemporary curatorial programmes; to share widely the creative and knowledge generation potential of this collection. Our goals are to secure accredited status, develop an accessible data catalogue of the collection, and to

attract new investment for public access, research, acquisition/commissioning and digital conversion of more of the collection - if appropriate. We are therefore committed to introducing a new senior FTE role in financial year 2022/23.

4 Brief to Consultant

To prepare for this change, we require a highly experienced Consultant/s for a twelve month *minimum* period from October 2021 - October 2022, to help us complete our **Resilient Heritage** project (financially supported by the NLHF) which we were part-way through when the pandemic struck. Closure of our building for fifteen months means we have not been able to access the collection physically since April 2020.

This is a project to carry out an internal programme of care and maintenance on the collection to ensure its effective use as a public resource in future. The main tasks to complete which the Consultant/s will need to deliver are described below under 4.1- 4.2; the Consultant/s will also be required to draft the final report on outcomes required for NHLF at the completion of this project.

4.1 Implement Cataloguing Plan

Overview: The collection has never been formally catalogued, as in the past few years the strategic focus has been to prioritise public access to the assets. The primary function of the catalogue is to act as a definitive record of all works (creator, date, caption, descriptor, materials, format, image of back and front of work, rights attached to works, etc) and to support research, object tracking, and provide an itemised valuation record for the most valuable collection content.

To date: we have reviewed our cataloguing needs, compared a range of providers, selected and purchased licenced cataloguing software from AXIELL and carried out basic training in the systems capabilities. We have information on about 30 - 40% of the photographic prints in the collection, prepared in EXCEL files ready for transfer to the new system. The cataloguing task will need to take account of the advice provided by the specialist insurers of our collection about establishing an order of priority for cataloguing objects which can then lead to a professional valuation of the key assets; essential for substantiating future claims should we sustain any kind of event. Our holdings of works by Rotimi Fani-Kayode will be a high priority in this respect.

4.1a Tasks

- Review the archive holdings – both digital and analogue, but with a focus on the latter; assess and prioritise any conservation needs to determine the priority order for works to be catalogued.
- Manage the cataloguing process to deliver a catalogue record utilising the AXIELL CMS to ensure all works in the collection are accessible, documented and preserved according to relevant standards, follow established industry guidelines for the cataloguing of archival photographs and art works necessary to comply with insurance and loan requirements and to pursue accredited status for the collection.
- Manage AXIELL as a service provider to Autograph.

- Oversee creation of catalogue entries for all the print-based photographic material in the collection by October 2022.
- Develop a volunteer plan to support future cataloguing activity and identify possible partner institutions with relevant student cohorts for voluntary placement purposes.
- Identify options for further funding to support future cataloguing activity and prepare a plan which identifies priority order and phasing for further work.

4.2 **Prepare Collection Accreditation Application.**

Overview: When developing our Resilient Heritage application, we identified two key opportunities which flow from securing accredited status for our collection: access to government indemnity and new funding sources.

To date: we have completed an options appraisal which confirmed that collection rather than archive accreditation is the correct option for us to pursue and confirmed the value of proceeding to application. We have sought advice from the Area Museum Development Officer on the process, changed our Mem & Arts to ensure they are fit for purpose, registered and been accepted to make an application under the Museums Accreditation Scheme England & Wales, attended one training day on the accreditation process. We have drafted and updated some of the required policy documents.

4.2a **Tasks**

- Review existing documentation (collection policy, conservation policy, strategic/business plan, disaster management plan etc) to ensure it is fit for purpose.
- Identify omissions, prepare any revisions and/or produce new/additional documents, created to the format and standard required for the accreditation process.
- Ensure optimum care and management systems are embedded in the organisation, carry out health check on compliance with best practice standards.
- Undertake a Training Needs Analysis to identify group and individual training and professional development plans for staff who use the collection for a range of purposes.
- Ensure the correct governance requirements can be or are already met (e.g. collection based expertise represented at governance level or co-opted to provide critical friend assistance through the process); advise on additional support required (e.g. a sub-committee/co-opted members if required to report to Autograph Trustees on the accreditation process).
- Prepare and submit Autograph's application for collection accreditation.

5 Outcomes

The outcomes we expect to achieve are:

By October 2022 (During the Consultancy)

- As a minimum an accurate record of the print-based collection (circa 7500 objects total) is in place, both digitally within the AXIELL database and for the physical collection in the dedicated storage facilities; cataloguing of other parts of the collection is in progress.
- Accreditation application is submitted.
- Collection care and access is improved and the risk of damage/loss of usage is reduced to minimum.
- Team skills are developed; staff are confident in updating, accessing and managing catalogue and in enabling researchers.
- Access/use for researchers and other users of the collection is improved.
- A volunteer plan and recruitment strategy is in place to support skills development and to complete the cataloguing process as an ongoing organisational activity.
- All relevant documentation and policies are updated and fit for purpose.
- Final reports are produced, and evaluations are carried out to NLHF standards.
- A project management plan for future phasing of work to complete cataloguing, containing technical recommendations is in place.
- Future funding opportunities are identified.

By December 2023 (As a Result of the Consultancy)

- Collection accreditation is achieved and new income streams can be leveraged for the collection.
- Improved insurance terms are secured.

6 Competencies we seek

- A relevant qualification in museum practice and professional accreditation *and/or* the ability to demonstrate through practical experience and successful outcomes, capacity to deliver our project outcomes and to meet best professional practice standards.
- A track record of successfully implementing a new CMS for a cataloguing programme (ideally familiarity with AXIELL)
- Delivery of a successful collections accreditation application to the required standard.
- Skills necessary to:
 - directly engage with NLHF funding and reporting processes through project scoping, design and delivery.
 - deliver a cataloguing exercise, train and supervise staff to catalogue works and administer relevant systems and procedures.

- Design, deliver and evaluate collection management and conservation plans, preservation and collection policies.
 - Apply and advise on policy and best practice in collection management and demonstrate knowledge of how to retain external expertise where required to meet this end.
 - Design and deliver volunteer policy and plans for involvement of non-specialists in collection care.
 - Respond strategically and rapidly to unforeseen challenges affecting project delivery.
 - Accurate written and verbal communication and presentation skills.
 - Excellent IT skills and familiarity with both MAC and PC systems.
- Knowledge and understanding of photographic materials and an appreciation of historical and contemporary lens-based practices.
 - Understanding of charity governance requirements and experience of working with boards.
 - Ability to work collaboratively and flexibly within a small team.
 - Strategically respond to and resolve unforeseen problems on a collegiate basis.
 - Proactive commitment to delivering inclusivity and equality of opportunity in the workplace.

7 Timescale for delivery

October 2021 - October 2022. Dates will be agreed by negotiation.

8 Fee and resources

The fee available for this consultancy will be in the range of £45,000, inclusive of all expenses, exclusive of VAT where applicable.

Additional resources will be made available separately as necessary, to support project delivery tasks to be overseen/supervised by the Consultant. For example: assistance to carry out cataloguing/ inputting data entries to the CMS.

9 Reporting

The consultant/s will report to the Deputy Director, Holly Tebbutt, who will represent the key point of contact throughout the process of delivering the brief.

The consultant will also liaise directly with other key staff including the Senior Curator, Renée Mussai and the Director, Mark Sealy, where appropriate.

The consultant appointed will need to be administratively self-supporting; however office equipment and meeting space can be made available at Rivington Place and a dedicated work area will be provided for working with the collection as the collection store is housed in the main Autograph office.

We expect the consultant to be based in or to have easy access to London as this project will require regular on site working.

10 Terms of Engagement

The consultant/s will be responsible for their own tax and national insurance arrangements. Information gained in the course of this consultancy will be confidential. The consultant/s will need to provide evidence of professional indemnity. All reports, funding applications, correspondence and briefs produced during this consultancy will be the sole property of Autograph ABP and must not be published shared or reproduced in any format either in extract or entirety without prior written permission from Autograph ABP.

11 Tender Process

Please respond to the brief by addressing the following:

- Why you want to provide services to Autograph and what motivates you to do so.
- How you can demonstrate through practical examples that you possess the necessary competencies specified in the brief which are required to deliver this project.
- How you will ensure an inclusive approach is demonstrated in your working practice.
- How you have delivered relevant and equivalent outcomes successfully through other projects that you have led.
- How you propose to deliver the outcomes listed in this brief. Please provide a project management plan, timetable, budget and risk assessment.

Please also provide

- A CV and biographical details
- 2 referees

Tenders must be submitted electronically by NOON on Monday 6 September 2021 to cherelle@autograph-abp.co.uk

Interviews will be held on **15 September 2021** either in person at Autograph, 1 Rivington Place, London EC2A 3BA , or via Zoom. We will advise in due course.

If you have any questions about the brief please send your query to Holly Tebbutt, Deputy Director, using: holly@autograph-abp.co.uk and also provide a contact telephone number. **Queries will be answered up until 19 August**, after which time Holly will be unavailable due to leave commitments.

Appendix One: Selected Autograph Collection Projects

Some of the most successful programmes mounted by Autograph in our galleries at Rivington Place have been exhibition showcases generated out of the collection since 2010. Research from *The Audience Agency* shows that the collection-based exhibitions curated at Rivington Place over the past six years are consistently our most popular programme offers, attracting high audience numbers including a large number of first time visitors. For example:

- *'James Barnor: Ever Young'* in 2010, created through our first 4-year HLF Archive project, attracted over 8,000 people and allowed us to deliver our first ever dedicated schools learning programme. At the time this was the highest number of visitors to any exhibition at Rivington Place since its opening in 2007; including 1000 visitors through the comprehensive public and schools programme. More than 40 works from this exhibition, which has been touring internationally since 2011, are currently on loan to the Serpentine Gallery for the nonagenarian artist James Barnor's *Accra/London: A Retrospective*

<https://www.serpentinegalleries.org/whats-on/james-barnor/>

- *'Black Chronicles II'* in 2014, realised through the HLF-funded *The Missing Chapter* programme, featured over 200 historical images and for the first time made accessible a comprehensive body of Victorian and Edwardian photographs portraying black people in Britain in the 19th and early 20th centuries. The exhibition brought a record 12,000 visitors to the building/exhibition over a ten week period, offered an extensive learning programme, and was critically acclaimed in the press.
- Syd Shelton's *'Rock Against Racism'* in autumn 2015 attracted over 8,000 visitors. These photographs were originally curated for the collection in 2011, with HLF's support. The accompanying publication sold out. It has since toured to many venues in the UK and Europe and a second edition of the publication is currently in production.
- The opening reception for Raphael Albert's *'Miss Black & Beautiful'* in the summer of 2016 saw a record number of 850 attendees queue along Rivington Street for access to the exhibition, and became our most visited exhibition with more than 12,000 visitors to the building/exhibition over a twelve-week period. This exhibition presented the first major solo exhibition of photographs by the late Raphael Albert – cultural promoter, entrepreneur and photographer, showcasing over one hundred photographs now represented in our permanent collection. Albert organised and documented numerous black beauty pageants and other cultural events, which celebrated the global 'Black is Beautiful' aesthetic of the 1970s, in a local west London context
- *'Making Jamaica' in 2017*, explored how a new image of Jamaica was created through photography in the late nineteenth century using historical photographs, lantern slides and stereo cards to reveal the carefully constructed representation of this transitional period in Jamaica's history and attracted 10,000 visitors in its nine-week run. A portfolio of photographs from the exhibition forms part of the collection, and contemporary artist Ingrid Pollard was commissioned to re-interpret five works in a new edition.

The impact of our collection research is also achieving healthy outcomes beyond Rivington Place:

- Our on-going collaboration with the Hulton Archive, a division of Getty Images, for *The Missing Chapter/Black Chronicles* from 2014 onwards meant that for the first time in British history, a large body of photographs depicting people from BAME communities in 19th century Victorian and Edwardian Britain is brought together, making it possible for wide and diverse audiences to engage with this unique cultural heritage through our Archive programmes. High profile research partners in this project include the Royal Collection Trust and the National Portrait Gallery. Associated exhibitions continue to tour internationally, the free *Exhibition In A Box* archive-pop up learning resource is distributed free of charge widely to educational and cultural peer organisations, and a major publication co-sponsored by Harvard University and other partners is in development. The South African Department for Arts and Culture funded a tour of an associated display of images in a multi-media installation identified in and first showcased as part of the TMC research programme to several prestigious venues in Cape Town and Johannesburg in 2017/18, and an audio CD was produced.
- Autograph's collaboration with the National Portrait Gallery was designed to help this national institution shift perceptions and raise awareness of a range of sitters from diverse cultural backgrounds represented in their photography collection, by displaying the results of original archive research carried out by Autograph for *The Missing Chapter/Black Chronicles*, into the Victorian galleries and Royal Landing for a nine month period in 2016. A dedicated learning and public engagement programme accompanied the display at NPG as well as Rivington Place. On average 19% of visitors saw *Black Chronicles: Photographic Portraits 1862 - 1948*, which equated to approximately 202,000 visitors. The collaboration resulted in significant audience shifts for the NPG including:
 - 25-34 years olds made the highest proportion of visits - 25% (16-24 - 19%, 35-44 - 13%, 45-54 - 16%, 55-64 - 14%, and 65+ - 12%)
 - 30% were on a first visit to the Gallery
 - 36% BAME (in comparison to 17% of general visits), 22% Black/Black British (in comparison to 2% of general visits)
 - 58% of BAME visitors were aware of *Black Chronicles* before their visit
 - 21% of visitors were from lower socio-economic groups (C2DE) (in comparison to 8% of general visits)
 - 86% rated the display good/excellent, 37% excellent.

AUTOGGRAPH



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