

## **Call for international artists' residency proposals**

### **Preston UK, autumn/winter 2010**

Deadline for Applications: Friday 30<sup>th</sup> July 2010 5pm BST

Fee: £2500 GBP, plus travel and accommodation expenses

**ra·dar** (rā' dār)

*n.*

1. A method of detecting distant objects and determining their position, velocity, or other characteristics by analysis of very high frequency radio waves reflected from their surfaces.
2. The equipment used in such detection.

Radar is an innovative programme of digital artists' residencies in public libraries across the county of Lancashire, in the North West of England.

Through collaborative arts activities and experiences resident artists consider the role of libraries as free and accessible public gateways to culture, and the implications of the evolution of digital culture on this core function.

The term Radar is an apt analogy for the residencies, which will extend the digital opportunities currently available in the county's library service and identify future potential. The scheme is a partnership between leading digital arts agency folly and the Lancashire County Library and Information Service.

Radar sees resident artists work with library staff, users and communities, exploring relationships between the virtual and physical cultural experiences on offer and potentially available through public libraries.

Following a successful first residency at Lancaster Library in February/March, a further two residencies will be delivered in 2010/11. We are currently seeking an international artist (someone who's main home is outside of the UK), to become Radar's second artist in residence, at the Harris Library, Preston this autumn/winter.

### **Residency brief**

The goal of Radar is to explore relationships between the virtual and physical cultural experiences on offer and potentially available through libraries; to consider the role of libraries as free and accessible public gateways to culture, and the implications of the evolution of digital culture on this core function. Resident artists are expected to do this through engaging collaboratively and creatively with library users and staff.

Key questions for consideration by resident artists include:

- How do users and staff perceive digital culture?
- Is the credence given to digital culture of a similar standing or stature to traditional views of culture, what is the basis for these value judgements?
- What are the differences between considering "digital" as a means of storing or preserving information and "digital" as a form of culture, and what are the implications of this on a public library service?
- Who are the different users of the library service, how do their levels of digital engagement differ and how can the library respond, relate and provide for them?
- How does the service currently support access to and creation of digital cultural experience for users and staff?
- What methodologies exist for widening access and engagement in digital culture?
- What framework is needed to support the ethos for 'informal peer-to-peer knowledge transfer and skill sharing'?

Radar requires a tangible legacy that can showcase ways to creatively explore the relationships between libraries' physical and digital cultural offer, with a practical framework of guidance and ideas for libraries to utilise after completion of the residency.

## Residency details

This residency will be based at the Harris Library, Preston, Lancashire, UK.

The following budget is available to the resident artist (to be managed by folly):

- An artists' fee of £2500 GBP (to include any materials and/or production costs)
- Travel and accommodation expenses for a two month stay in Preston UK, up to £2300 GBP

The residency is open to any artist who's main country of residence is not the UK. It should last two months and be completed by December 2010.

## How to apply

For an informal discussion prior to submitting an application contact Jennifer Stoddart, folly Projects Manager on [jennifer.stoddart@folly.co.uk](mailto:jennifer.stoddart@folly.co.uk), +44 (0)1524 388550

Apply by sending a statement (no longer than two sides of A4) detailing:

- Your particular areas of interest in relation to the scheme and its goals (detailed in the 'Residency brief' above)
- A suggestion of how you would spend your time in residence, what outcomes you would expect to achieve and why

Please also include in your application:

- Your CV
- Examples of previous work
- A completed equal opportunities monitoring form (available to download from the folly website)

Applications should be submitted by email to Imogen McGarvie, folly Programme Assistant, at [imogen.mcgarvie@folly.co.uk](mailto:imogen.mcgarvie@folly.co.uk)

**Deadline for Applications: Friday 30<sup>th</sup> July 2010, 5pm BST.**

Applicants must be available to be in residence in Preston UK in October and November 2010.

Decisions will be made in August, after which the successful artist will be asked to develop their ideas further in collaboration with folly and library staff, before starting their residency in October 2010.

folly is committed to equal opportunities in our employment, programme and services.

## Background information

**About folly** – <http://www.folly.co.uk>

folly is a leading digital arts agency working across England's North West and online.

folly commissions, exhibits, promotes and supports creative work and innovation with a strong emphasis on the use of online media, networked systems and integrated technologies.

Founded as a charity in 1989, folly is based at offices in Lancaster and presents work across the counties of Cumbria and Lancashire.

folly has a 20 year history of delivering challenging participatory programmes exploring the creative implications of technology. folly has an international reputation for high quality innovative practices and strong links with creative and technological communities, networks and specialists, both locally/regionally and on an international scale.

olly presents an artistic programme that provides creative interaction and collaboration between artists and the wider public that:

- Finds critical, imaginative and challenging ways to be open and collaborative
- Is relevant to people and rooted in the everyday
- Explores a fusion between the virtual and physical cultural experience
- Questions evolution and imagines how art and technology might alter our future way of life
- Encourages people to be a part of the work to create shared meanings and experiences
- Provokes open and challenging conversations
- Takes risks by carving out new models of presentation and distribution

**About the Lancashire County Library and Information Service and the Harris Library, Preston** – <http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/libraries>

Lancashire County Library and Information Service's core purpose is to 'provide a comprehensive and efficient' library service as set out in the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964. The key functions of the service are:

- Promote reading and learning
- Improve access to the range and quality of information available
- Encourage wider use of and access to digital services for information, learning, communication, and online transactions for daily life
- Ensure libraries are at the heart of community development and play an integral part in community cohesion
- Encourage young people to use library and information services
- Develop and improve services for older people
- Address equality and diversity

The library service in Lancashire has traditionally been provided through its network of 74 static libraries. In 1997 a government initiative, The People's Network, saw banks of personal computers introduced to libraries. To date, the service offers public access to computers and the internet through a network of 950 PCs across Lancashire.

Digital service delivery:

- A newly developed online reference library offers users the opportunity to gain access to reference works – Encyclopaedia Britannica, Oxford English Dictionary etc. – either in a library or in remote settings
- Talis, the service's catalogue provides staff functionality and front-facing opportunities for users
- Self service - self directed issuing and return of books
- SMS - options exist for reservation information to be sent via SMS technology
- E-books - the possibility for electronic books and e-readers pose additional means for users to potential engage with our service over time

This residency will be based at the Harris library, Preston.

The public library in Preston is housed in the Harris, a stunning Grade I listed Neo-Classical building which was designed by James Hibbert (1833-1903) to house the Harris Museum, Art Gallery and Library. It was completed in 1893. The history and architecture of the Harris are of great interest to local people and visitors to Preston.

The Harris library replaced a library service housed in the Town Hall which opened in 1879. Preston City Council administered the library until 1974, and it still administers the museum and art gallery which share the same building. The building is substantially unaltered, but internal refurbishments and alterations have taken place, as new services have been introduced. The entrance has been remodelled to improve wheelchair access, in the form of two circular ramps that surround classically inspired, sculpted cylinders by Ian Hamilton Finlay.

The Harris Museum and Art Gallery houses vast collections of fine art, decorative art, costume and textiles, history and photography and runs a varied temporary exhibitions programme including both historical and contemporary arts exhibits.

### **First Radar residency**

During the early months of 2010 Radar's first resident artist Jennie Savage spent time with Lancaster Library's staff and users developing *A Walk from A-Z*, exploring the new and multiple uses of the library building as it searches for its identity in the digital age, the radical roots of the original library movement and its relation to the city.

*A Walk from A-Z* is a 20 minute audio walk that takes you on a tour of the history of the library movement via the collection at Lancaster Library. From roots in the Chartist rebellion through to the library's relationship to digital culture listeners walk a map which draws this line back onto a locality. Find out more and download the audio at <http://www.folly.co.uk/programme/walk-z> and read about the artist's research process at [http://www.jenniesavage.co.uk/walk%20az/walka\\_z.htm](http://www.jenniesavage.co.uk/walk%20az/walka_z.htm).

### **Origins of the scheme**

Radar originally evolved from artist-led creative consultation facilitated by folly in May 2009, where people's relationships with digital culture was explored in public library settings. *Lancashire Balloonoscope* saw artists John O'Shea and Neil Winterburn facilitate discussion relating to "digital culture" in a way that was engaging for people across a spectrum of digital literacy. The outcome of this consultation is documented online at <http://balloonoscope.folly.co.uk>.

The project worked with three categories of library usage: reading, conference and writing. These were led by the Francis Bacon quote 'Reading maketh a full man, conference a ready man, and writing an exact man.' The project identified three categories of digital engagement: consumer level users, engaged users and specialist users. An additional element to the conversations was the disparity that occurred between staff and user perceptions of approaches and uses for digital engagement.

The project concluded that '...if a climate can be established within libraries where informal peer-to-peer knowledge transfer and skill sharing is the norm, then libraries will reclaim their historical position as free and accessible public gateways to (digital) culture.'

