

## **ANGUSalive Museums & Galleries & Micro-commissions**

### **Open call: Creative brief ‘Perspectives: Collecting the World’**

#### **Introduction**

ANGUSalive would like to offer two micro-commissions in Summer/ Autumn 2025 that provide a creative response to our World Cultures Collection cared for by our Museums and Galleries Team. These commissions are funded by Creative Scotland and the work produced will make a valuable contribution to a wider project funded by Museum Galleries Scotland to re-evaluate our World Cultures Collection and engage meaningfully in sector wide work to address the legacy of Empire and colonialism in Scottish museums. The project will produce a touring exhibition to showcase the collection and share new narratives developed through the lens of creative diversity and cultural inclusion. The exhibition is the starting point of a journey of learning for our museum service, wider organisation and communities. As such this multi-sensory exhibition will evolve as it tours venues around Angus and leave a lasting legacy of change.

This fund is open to all; however we particularly welcome applications from practitioners belonging to historically marginalised groups, those based in Angus and Scotland, and those whose work advocates for anti-racist practice, equality and diversity.

We use the term micro-commissions as the producing period is 12 weeks, in which you, the creative practitioner, will have developed and realised your proposed work(s). The deadline for submissions is 31 May 2025.

<b>Information Session</b>
We will be holding an informal information session on Tuesday 20 May at Montrose Museum between 10am and 12noon. A second online information session will take place on the same day between 2 and 4pm. These sessions will comprise an introduction to the wider project, the showcasing of key objects, and a delve into key narratives with an opportunity for questions.
<b>Please RSVP to <a href="mailto:collections@angusalive.scot">collections@angusalive.scot</a> if you plan to attend either of these sessions.</b>

#### **Creative Brief**

An exhibition entitled ‘Perspectives: Collecting the World’ will take place at Montrose Museum from 1 August until 31 October 2025. This exhibition will be an opportunity for us to showcase our World Cultures collection, present narratives around the colonial context in which these objects were acquired, and bring a contemporary perspective to bear on the collections and their places of origin. It is our intention that this exhibition will be a constantly evolving body of work looking to encourage engagement with marginalised groups in our communities who have not traditionally been represented in our venues. It will adapt to reflect that engagement and better represent all the individuals in our communities.

We are asking for proposals that respond to ANGUSalive’s World Cultures collection of approximately 800 objects from almost every continent. The collection features weapons and armour, ceramics, musical instruments, decorative arts objects, paintings, textiles, domestic objects and costume. It is proposed that commissioned work responds to one or more the following themes: -

1. The cultural heritage of specific regions in Africa, Asia or Australia and the Pacific Islands
2. Identity and representation
3. Angus and Scotland's historic links to the transatlantic slave trade
4. Empire and colonialism

The production period for commissions will run concurrently with the exhibition at Montrose Museum from 1<sup>st</sup> August until 31<sup>st</sup> October 2025. This will allow artists to engage with the objects included in the exhibition and the associated narrative strands.

Submissions should respond to the collection, creating new work(s) that relate to existing collection objects, themes and narratives as listed above. We want to see a proposed outcome that is illustrative of your practice but also shows a development in your thinking or making.

Successful applicants will receive:

- Access to the museum and archival collections either online or in person.
- Access to the exhibition 'Perspectives: The World Cultures Collection' as required along with specialised curatorial expertise and insight, interpretative content and in-depth research material.
- A list of key contacts, exhibitions, organisations that have undertaken work in this area along with financial support to pursue developmental opportunities that will contribute to the commissioned output.
- Signposting to support services considering the sensitive nature of this work
- Opportunities to share their work with audiences through the public programme of talks, events, performances, workshops and displays in our venue(s) and online.
- Practical support presenting their work including access to a range of venues, audio-visual equipment, technical support and marketing and publicity for events and engagement.

We expect to award two commissions of £3300 for 11 days work at the average SAU rate of £300 per day, which will include research and development time, production time and the planning and delivery of an engagement activity.

There are opportunities for any and all creative output, including but not limited to, performance-based output, curatorial interventions, paintings, ceramics, sculpture, filmmaking, music, dance, theatre performance, written work, public engagement events and creative activism ... the list goes on!

Our team will be responsible for the installation of your artwork, including relevant technological requirements, so please outline in your brief if you have existing equipment you will be utilising for the display of the artwork or if you require use of our equipment.

Each successful commission will be individually assessed in consultation with the creative practitioner to determine whether they should be accessioned into the permanent collection. This allows autonomy to remain with the artist; they may choose to retain ownership of their artwork, or it may not be a physical object that can be 'acquired'. Only after consultation, and if appropriate will objects become the property of Angus Council cared for by ANGUSalive, with formal documentation procedures adhered to.

## Detailed Breakdown of Themes

### 1. The cultural heritage of specific regions in Africa, Asia or Australia and the Pacific Islands

Objects in our collection from Africa include musical instruments, traditional dress, shields and weaponry, jewellery and objects relating to the spiritual life of communities. A large proportion of the collection is from Asia and features clothing and footwear, weaponry, armour including a full set of Samurai armour from the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, ceramics and a set of models depicting local people and their occupations. Objects in the collection from Oceania showcase a diverse use of natural resources and include coconut fibre armour from the island of Kiribati, shark tooth swords, painted arrows and shell currency. This is an opportunity to diversify the curatorial voice by interpreting these collections creatively, within a contemporary context that reaches far beyond the bounds of Angus.

### 2. Identity and representation

Within this theme we are looking for work that tells underrepresented stories regarding race, religion and cultural identity inspired by, or exploring, exclusion and a sense of being an outsider. Using objects in the collection, we are looking to broaden perspectives and create a museum space which is diverse in the stories it presents and inclusive in the ways in which it tells them.

### 3. Angus and Scotland's historic links to the transatlantic slave trade

For a long time, Scotland's links with the slave trade were not widely known and up until fairly recently only associated with large ports near cities such as Glasgow. However, vessels from Angus towns were also involved in the triangular trade which involved the purchase of enslaved people in Africa followed by an arduous journey to the West Indies where they would be sold to work on tobacco or sugar plantations. Individuals from Angus owned enslaved people on plantations in Jamaica and Virginia, sometimes several hundred, and profits from the labours of enslaved people flowed back to Angus towns. It is part of our story and it's time to tell it. We are looking for work that furthers our journey to acknowledge this area of our multi-faceted history.

### 4. Empire and colonialism

The World Cultures collection was largely amassed during the Victorian era corresponding with a period of growth and expansion in the British Empire. Britain was exerting economic and political power by developing colonies in areas such as Africa, India, and North America. The empire was so far-reaching the famous phrase 'the sun never sets on the British Empire' was used to describe it. Many museum donors held privileged positions travelling and trading in colonised countries and used their influence to further another Victorian pastime: the collecting of curios. Curios were objects that were rare, exotic, or valuable. They included wonders of the natural world, valuable works of art and cultural objects from far flung places. The imbalance of power between coloniser and colonised led to objects being taken from their places of origin with no regard for the impact or ethics of such action. This left a legacy that endures to this day and raises questions around how we interpret these objects, how we share the narrative around Victorian collecting practices, and whether some of these objects belong back in their native countries. Can you help us tell the stories of our collection and Empire from the point of view of diaspora communities?

## About the wider programme

This programme aims to deliver four key aims:

- Support our local creative sector by creating a series of small-scale commission opportunities.

- Enhance ANGUSalive's work around World Cultures and improve the diversity of representation in our collections work.
- Promote and enhance audience engagement with the World Cultures collection and associated themes by re-interpreting existing collections through exploring new creative possibilities and an innovative approach to curatorial practice.
- Develop staff and collaborative relationships with the local creative sector and give staff the opportunity to learn more about the local creative communities: their practice, challenges and barriers.

**Who can apply? Applicants must:**

- Be aged 18 years or over.
- Be living in Scotland; we particularly welcome applicants who have a connection to the Angus area.
- Be an artist/creative individual with a committed practice to a creative medium(s).
- Be able to create, develop and present a new piece of work to the programme timetable.
- Evidence a desire to develop and an ability to reflect upon their practice and personal development.
- Demonstrate an ability to profile their work and communicate their practice to an audience.

**What the commissions cannot support**

- Applications for artwork already started or planned to start before the notification dates. Awards cannot be funded retrospectively.
- Artworks which support or promote religious or political activity. If your work engages in these themes please contact the ANGUSalive Collections team to discuss this prior to application.
- Artists currently undertaking full time undergraduate study in an arts or creative practice subject area. Artists must have completed their studies by the application deadline to be eligible to apply for a commission.

**How to apply**

Submissions can be in written, audio, or video format, but should address all the points in the application form.

**If written:**

- Completed applications can be emailed to: [collections@angusalive.scot](mailto:collections@angusalive.scot).
- Please use "Micro-commission [YOUR SURNAME]" as the subject of your email when sending the completed application.
- For submissions over 5MB, please contact us for guidance on using our File Transfer Portal.

**If recorded:**

- Please ensure that you complete the required (BLUE) sections of the written application form.

- Your recorded application should answer all the questions indicated in the written form. Please ensure you respond to these prompts clearly, and structure the content in relation to them.
- Please ensure your recording is no more than six minutes long, which is the equivalent to the word limit for written applications.
- A recorded application should not be overly produced. This is not an opportunity to demonstrate your skills in production or to showcase your work, but to clearly communicate your planned professional development activity in an accessible format.
- Examples of work included in an audio/filmed application will not be considered as supporting material. Please follow the guidance at the bottom of the application form.
- Your recorded submission should be saved in MP3 or MP4 format and sent to [collections@angusalive.scot](mailto:collections@angusalive.scot) via our File Transfer Portal.
- Please ensure your message title includes “micro-commission [YOUR SURNAME]” and the name of your file includes [YOUR SURNAME]

### **Support**

If you would like further support in completing your submission form please contact [collections@angusalive.scot](mailto:collections@angusalive.scot) for an informal chat.

### **Selection process**

A panel will assess and select awardees. All decisions made by the panel will be final and not subject to appeal. Shortlisting will take place over three weeks, and applicants will be informed of panel decisions by the end of June 2025.

### **Fees**

The creative practitioners selected to complete their proposed micro-commissions will receive an upfront

First payment: 90% of £3300 fee = £2970

10% of the full fee will be payable on delivery/performance of the final work at one of our agreed venues.

Second payment 10% of £2700 fee = £330

This fee is based on 11 days of work at the standard SAU rate of £300 per day. We suggest 3 days be allocated to research and development time, and 7 days for the production of the artwork. In addition, there will be a half day allocated for the development of an engagement activity, and another half day to deliver this activity.

We will reimburse costs for travel and the cost of materials on production of receipts or tickets. We also have an access budget; please indicate if you require support for your access needs.

Any payment will be subject to the terms and conditions of the contract which as standard is 30 days after receipt of an invoice.

### **Rights**

The copyright and all intellectual property rights in the works remain vested in the creative practitioner. Ownership of the finished work will be decided in consultation between the practitioner and ANGUSalive once the project has been completed.

**NOTE:** If the contract is not fulfilled ANGUSalive reserve the right to reclaim all monies paid to the awardee.

**Commission timeline: 1 May-31 October 2025**

1 May	Micro-commissions 2025 scheme begins, commissioned opportunities advertised.
20 May	One in person and one online hosted session with an introduction to the wider project, showcasing objects and delving into key narratives with an opportunity for questions.
31 May	Application submission deadline.
1-14 June	Judging panel reviews submissions and selects winners.
15- 30 June	Successful applicants informed.
1-31 July	Admin period, during which 90% of fee will be paid to winners.
1 August- 31 Oct	Commission production period begins, this will run in tandem with the first version of the World Cultures exhibition at Montrose Museum and will allow 12 weeks for development and production of commission output.
31 Oct	Commission outputs to be complete by this date – final 10% of fee paid to practitioners.