

## **ARTIST'S BRIEF – 'TRICKSTERS' at SHAKESPEARE'S BIRTHPLACE**

### **BACKGROUND**

Shakespeare's Birthplace is a restored, half-timbered 16th century house on Henley Street, Stratford-upon-Avon. William Shakespeare was born in this house and grew up here with his parents and siblings. He also spent the first five years of his marriage living here with his wife, Anne Hathaway.

William's father, John Shakespeare lived and worked in this house for fifty years. When he married Mary Arden she came to live with him and they had a total of eight children, William was the third to be born. In 1568 John became the Mayor of Stratford, which was the highest elective office in the town. John Shakespeare died in 1601 and as the eldest surviving child, William inherited the house. He leased part of the property and it became an inn called the Maidenhead (and later the Swan and Maidenhead). The inn remained until 1847. When Shakespeare died he left the house to his eldest daughter Susanna, and when she died she left it to her only child, Elizabeth.

Although she married twice, Elizabeth had no children, so when she died the house fell to a descendant of Joan Hart, one of Shakespeare's sisters. The house was owned by the Hart family until the late 18th century, until it went up for sale and was purchased by the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust in 1847. We have cared for it ever since. Each year it is visited by around 400,000 people from all over the world.

### **THE PROJECT**

For the Easter Holidays in April 2020 (4th - 19th April), we wish to commission an artist to create an experience for our visitors that will surprise, challenge, stimulate and encourage participation.

The project should creatively explore the characters of Puck and Ariel, from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *The Tempest* respectively, introducing our visitors to these two important characters, how they might appear, what they do, and what role they have within their respective plays.

It could take the form of a performance, a game, a collaborative project, or numerous other interpretations.

We would like this experience to be interactive, and are open to different approaches and ideas, but would prefer an experience that is not self-guided.

We are not looking for a performance of excerpts from Shakespeare's plays.

## **CONSIDERATIONS**

### **Budget**

There is a total budget of £4,000 available including all materials and expenses.

### **Location**

The primary location for this project would be in the Birthplace Garden, which is fully accessible. We would ask that the potential for wet weather in April is kept in mind.

### **Audience**

Shakespeare's Birthplace welcomes over 400,000 visitors over 364 days of the year. Visitors of all ages come from all over the world to learn and connect with the great playwright and poet. The duration of an average visit is between one and two hours.

We would like the commissioned project to be accessible to a wide audience, including those with limited English. Sound, movement and sensory approaches may be particularly appropriate for engaging our overseas visitors.

During the Easter holidays, we also have a large audience of hyperlocal and regional families, who are likely to be looking for new activities and events to attend during the UK school holidays. As such, this experience would need to be suitable for all ages.

### **Time and duration**

We are open to different approaches to this, and are not necessarily expecting something to happen every day of the timeframe outlined above.

### **Objectives**

We would like this commission to:

- deepen the engagement of our audiences and visitors. We want all of our visitors and audiences to have the best possible experience and be encouraged to return.
- stimulate the creation of new and innovative work that has contemporary relevance and provides fresh insights into Shakespeare's work

## **APPLICATION PROCESS AND CRITERIA**

To apply, artists should send a proposal to [commissioning@shakespeare.org.uk](mailto:commissioning@shakespeare.org.uk)

to include:

- an outline of the idea
- an itemised budget
- Artist CV
- A link to images of previous work

by 5pm on Monday 6th January 2020

**Please include the reference 'Tricksters' in the subject line.**

If you would like to visit the Birthplace as part of the process of developing your proposal, please contact Katie Morrison ([katie.morrison@shakespeare.org.uk](mailto:katie.morrison@shakespeare.org.uk)) to organise a date & time.

## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and building a diverse and representative creative programme. We particularly welcome applications from people with disabilities and members of black, Asian, minority ethnic and refugee communities.

## **ABOUT Shakespeare Birthplace Trust**

The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust is the independent charity that cares for the world's greatest Shakespeare heritage in his home town of Stratford-upon-Avon. It is the global centre for learning about and experiencing the works, life and times of the world's best-known writer. Through the five historic Shakespeare family homes (Shakespeare's Birthplace, Shakespeare's New Place, Anne Hathaway's Cottage, Mary Arden's Farm, Hall's Croft), internationally designated museum, library and archive collections, award-winning learning programmes and digital channels, it provides imaginative, immersive and interactive opportunities for people of all ages and backgrounds to get up-close-and-personal with Shakespeare.

The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust is a self-sustaining charity which generates the majority of its income through the support of visitors, donors, volunteers and Friends. In April 2018 it was granted National Portfolio funding from Arts Council England for the first time, enabling new creative and outreach programmes with a particular focus on communities which are currently less engaged in arts, culture and heritage. For more information, visit [www.shakespeare.org.uk](http://www.shakespeare.org.uk) or follow us on social media @ShakespeareBT.