

Yorkshire Contemporary Trustee Recruitment Pack



Applications open until Tuesday 18th November 2025 at 10am

Thank you for your interest in becoming a trustee of Yorkshire Contemporary. At this important point in our almost 20-year history, we are looking for individuals who are passionate about furthering our mission; to champion Leeds and West Yorkshire as an excellent place for contemporary art. We create the conditions for artists here to thrive, presenting artwork to people of all ages that enables play, inspires creativity and offers vital new perspectives about the world.

As Yorkshire Contemporary begins a new phase — with an expanded remit across the region and a new Director in post — trustees will help shape and guide the next stage of our development, as we work towards establishing a permanent home for contemporary art in West Yorkshire.

Trustees provide overall governance for the organisation, drawing on their personal experience, professional knowledge and community relationships to support our development. No prior board experience is required — just a commitment to championing our work and helping the organisation flourish.

We look forward to hearing from you,
Frank Finlay, outgoing Chair of trustees (summer 2026)
Hayley Dixon, Director





Who we are

Yorkshire Contemporary champions artistic practice across the region. Based in Leeds, we work with artists to create and present ambitious projects that reflects current dialogues and offer new perspectives. We nurture early career artists to develop their skills and practice in the region, placing them in a wider arts ecology and showcase national and international artists who have relevance to our communities. We bring audiences and artists together through projects in their neighbourhoods, supporting people to be curious, and encourage exploration through creativity and play.

Currently operating without a fixed space, we deliver our mission by working collaboratively across West Yorkshire, collectively championing the work and worth of artists for our shared communities. Partnerships are key to our work, strengthening all we do and will continue as we work towards establishing a permanent new home.

We are funded by Arts Council England as a National Portfolio Organisation, with further investment provided by Leeds City Council. Recent collaborators and supporters include Bradford 2025 UK City of Culture, Bradford Producing Hub, British Council, Foyle Foundation, National Lottery Communities Fund, Tate, University of Huddersfield and University of Leeds.



Our values

Yorkshire Contemporary believe in the transformative role of contemporary art and its ability to invoke curiosity about the world around us. We value the role artists play in our society and work to facilitate their ideas and connect them with audiences. We listen to artists and audiences, creating projects and programmes that respond to their needs. We particularly champion artists whose ideas have been less likely to be heard and create opportunities for those who have not had them, ensuring our work represents the diversity of experience in West Yorkshire.

We commit to being welcoming and accessible to all who enter the spaces we work in, enabling our communities to feel they belong. We believe everyone deserves to engage with contemporary art, to open us up to new possibilities and ways of thinking, encouraging us to be creative and thoughtful in everything we do.

An important value is play. Embedding and encouraging a sense of play allows us to approach the world with curiosity and an open mind. It is a quality that contemporary artists have, giving them the confidence to try new things, present new ideas and use different methods and materials to create their work, breaking the rules in the best way. Part of our work is commissioning projects that encourage this approach for people of all ages.

We recognise that we can do more together than we can alone, ensuring we collaborate to gain the best expertise and input to ensure our projects are a success.



The Manningham Mills Strike,
Bradford
December 1890–April 1891
Cyril Pearce



History

Yorkshire Contemporary has developed from the traditions of artist-led spaces. Founded as Project Space Leeds in 2006, the organisation operated from a temporary space on Whitehall Waterfront for 5 years. Project Space Leeds was created to provide a platform for artists to take risks and try out new ideas, presenting artworks in dialogue with the City. It became a meeting point for artists, writers, curators and audiences from across the UK and beyond, establishing the project on a national and international stage.

These successes saw Project Space Leeds move to the Tetley building in 2013, rebranding as The Tetley. Originally built in the 1930s as the administrative offices for the brewery, the Tetley building was transformed to house unique gallery spaces, a learning studio, an artist residency studio, a bar and restaurant, offices for creative businesses and flexible event spaces.

During this 10 year period, The Tetley supported over 500 artists in commissions and exhibitions, as well as employment, mentoring and showcasing opportunities – helping to launch successful national and international careers. A focus on solo exhibitions often gave artists their first major presentation. Showcased artists included Emii Alrai, Madiha Ajaz, Saelia Aparicio, Simeon Barclay, Afra Eisma, Justin Fitzpatrick, Emily Hesse, Samra Mayanja, Bubu Ogisi and Tai Shani, whose exhibition won the Turner Prize, the only winning presentation commissioned by a Yorkshire gallery.



The Tetley welcomed 140,000 annual visitors, and we connected with a wider audience through collaborations, online engagement and press. International partnerships with organisations in India, Pakistan and Europe, enabled projects like *Antibodies*, a performance residency in Goa, India that brought together artists from South Asia and the UK. Public art projects included a commission for Matthew Houlding to create *The Sun Shines Every Day Forever*, a sculpture designed for play, and a mural commission in Tower Works, Leeds by Zoë Power championing the women in the industrial heritage of the South Bank.

Our acclaimed participation programme had a particular focus in South Leeds, where we reached children and young families who are often excluded from opportunities to create and enjoy the arts. As an ambassador for the city wide programme Child Friendly Leeds, we partnered on the annual Baby week, attracting 2,000 babies and their adults in 2023. We launched Tiny Tetley studio, an under-fives play space designed by artist Stephanie Jefferies that resulted in coverage in national newspapers and subsequent commissions for Jefferies at Tate and Dulwich Picture Gallery. The work was renamed Tiny Totley and relocated to Leeds Central Library.



Our current work

In 2024, we rebranded as Yorkshire Contemporary, and defined our new mission: To position Leeds and West Yorkshire as a place of excellence for contemporary art, creating the conditions for artists to thrive and presenting artwork to people of all ages that enables play, inspires creativity and offers vital new perspectives about the world.

At the beginning of 2024 we launched Inside Out, a three-year National Lottery Community Fund supported project working to transform opportunities for art and play for children and families in Beeston, South Leeds. This includes regular artist-led sessions for under-fives at Hamara Healthy Living Centre, currently led by artist Victoria Lungu and forthcoming with Izzy Dabiri; summer holiday activities in Cross Flatts Park and participating in outdoor events such as Beeston Festival; and Rowland Road Play Patch, an innovative partnership with Rowland Road Working Men's Club to transform a derelict piece of land into an artist and community designed green play area. This project is informed by Leeds City Council's Play Sufficiency framework.

"A round of applause to Yorkshire Contemporary and the Rowland Road Working Men's Club and all who sail in them. This is how communities are built." Bruce Davies, Basement Arts, South Leeds Life



We continue to offer long-term, meaningful support for emerging artists. In early 2025, Benaiah Matheson's multidisciplinary exhibition *Town Island* opened in partnership with University of Huddersfield, aided by a British Council grant following its Yorkshire Contemporary co-commissioned premier to represent Grenada at the 2024 Venice Biennale. The project explores the cultural and historical connections between Carriacou, Grenada, and Huddersfield, drawing on the 1950s migration of Carriacou's people to Britain. This was the culmination of a four-year relationship that saw Benaiah participate in our professional development programme TAAP and take a residency at The Tetley.

Our artist development programme is now known as Practice. Designed for artists at a pivotal stage in their careers, it offers significant mentoring, training and professional development led by our experienced curators. Current projects include Practice: Leeds, enabling three artists based in the city, Rhian Cooke, Thahmina Begum and Matilya Njau to work with external mentors, engage in research trips and participate in workshops. This led to artistic outcomes for Light Night Leeds, Hamara Healthy Living Centre and Rowland Road Play Patch.

Practice: Bradford is supported by Bradford 2025 UK City of Culture, and developed in partnership with Bradford Producing Hub. After an open call, four Bradford artists received one-to-one and peer sessions, funding for research and mentoring and workshop sessions from leading artists including Pio Abad, Simeon Barclay, Daria Martin, Osman Yousefzada and Michelle Williams Gamaker. The programme culminated in a group exhibition of new works at Loading Bay, Bradford. The four selected artists, Joanna Byrne, Atiyya Mirza, Liv Preston and Saba Siddiqui commented that creating new work the programme was a pivotal moment in their development as emerging practitioners.



Our work in Bradford continues with Turner Prize 2025. One of the world's best-known prizes for the visual arts, the Turner Prize aims to promote public debate around new developments in contemporary British art. The prize is awarded each year to a British artist with former winners including Anish Kapoor, Rachel Whiteread and the region's own Damien Hirst. We are delighted to be working with Bradford 2025, Tate and Bradford District Museums & Galleries to co-curate the Turner Prize 2025. Curating the project, including leading on planning, texts, events and relations with the nominated artists Nnena Kalu, Rene Matic, Mohammed Sami and Zadie Xa amongst many other aspects stands as a testament to our experience in developing high quality contemporary exhibitions.

“The best Turner Prize in years” Digby Warde-Aldam, The Spectator

“Its a beautifully installed show of work by four very different artists and an intriguing snapshot of what's going on in contemporary art” Nancy Durrant, The Times

We will soon announce our programmes for 2026 and beyond, which includes an exciting collaboration with Leeds Central Library following the overwhelming success of relocating Tiny Topley, and a partnership with Wakefield Exchange for Yorkshire Sculpture International planned for 2027. Projects will be delivered whilst we work to establish our new home.



Vision and goals

By delivering our core mission, we are working toward the following vision;

To establish a sustainable, accessible and supportive centre of contemporary art for Leeds and West Yorkshire built through embedded partnerships and pioneering approaches.

To achieve our vision, our strategic business plan is being developed in line with the following goals:

1. Show regional leadership in programming ambitious artist commissions in Leeds and across West Yorkshire, championing contemporary practice to wide audiences that is relevant, engaging and generates dialogues with our communities, particularly foregrounding voices and ideas that may have been overlooked.
2. Nurture emerging artists and create programmes based on their needs to enable practitioners to live and work in Leeds and West Yorkshire, ensuring the region has a place within a national and international art ecology.
3. Champion our reputation as advocates of creativity and play for all, in particular for children, young people and artists, by developing programmes to provoke curiosity and joy in the wonder of making and experiencing art.
4. Strengthen Yorkshire Contemporary's reputation by clearly telling the story of our past, present and future to further our impact, developing our strategic communications to cultivate new audiences, partnerships and investment.
5. Build a resilient and equitable business model for our future. This includes being financially and environmentally sustainable, whilst supporting the needs and development of our team and the communities we serve.



Organisational information

Yorkshire Contemporary is the trading name of Project Space Leeds. We are a registered charity, number 1148716 and company limited by guarantee, number 7123227. Our annual turnover is currently circa £500K with revenue funding as an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation 2023–28 and Leeds City Council. The organisation relies on fundraising and partnerships to deliver its creative and business plans.

As we work to establish our new home, our business model is under development. We are in a strong financial position, with trustees designating £120K reserves towards realising a permanent venue.

We have a small but dedicated core team of seven staff; Director, Deputy Director, Finance Manager, Curator, two Assistant Curators, and Marketing and Development Coordinator. We also draw on a skilled freelance team of artists, creative facilitators and fundraisers to develop and deliver our programmes.

We are guided by a board of trustees, bringing their skills, experience and dedication to contribute expertise in business, finance, environmental sustainability, education and community engagement as well as visual arts and culture.

Our current board of trustees is:

- Taneesha Ahmed
- Helen Brook
- Michelle Duxbury
- Frank Finlay (Chair of trustees)
- Steven Foster *
- Arthur Lovitt
- Sarah Netherwood *
- Liyen Nhuyen
- Griselda Pollock
- David Warren *

(* retiring in 2025)



Work of the board of trustees

The board of trustees are a passionate and dynamic group of individuals who care deeply about the success of the organisation. Their collective experience ensures we have the knowledge, networks and lived experience to manage the charity.

Trustees ensure we are always working towards our charitable aims, meeting our funding agreements, advocating for the organisation and using their unique skills and networks to help deliver our vision and mission.

They do this by understanding our work through attending quarterly board meetings and sub-committees as well as making time to be available to staff for advice, offering guidance and expertise. They use their experience and skills to make progress against our goals, and champion what we do by attending events and promoting our work. We rely on them for positive challenges, being willing to speak their minds and offer strong and constructive recommendations.



The trustees are led by a chair. The chair is expected to:

- Chair and facilitate the board meetings
- Provide leadership and direction to the trustees, enabling the board to fulfil their responsibilities for the overall governance and strategic direction of the charity
- Ensure that decisions taken at board meetings are implemented
- Optimise the relationship between the board and the staff, working closely with the Director to provide support and appraise their performance
- Act as a representative and spokesperson for the organisation, attending key meetings with stakeholders

This is a voluntary position as trustees are not paid for their time, but can be reimbursed for expenses incurred in traveling to attend board meetings, for any access needs and/or childcare, or care of other dependents while attending meetings. Other access costs can also be reimbursed.

As a trustee, you will be placed on the public register with Companies House as a director of the company and listed as a trustee of the charity with the Charities Commission.

Board meetings are virtual or hybrid in Leeds City Centre, with an in-person day session once a year.

Trustees are appointed for an initial term of 3 years. The maximum term for trustees is 6 years.



What we are looking for

At this pivotal moment in our history, we are looking to appoint new trustees who are enthusiastic about our next chapter, who understand and want to fulfil our mission, and are passionate to achieve our vision. We are looking to appoint 6–7 trustees, including a Chair of trustees to lead the board.

In accordance with our recent skills survey, we are particularly interested in hearing from people with the following experience:

- Accountancy and audit, experience in charity accounts to lead a Finance and Audit sub-committee
- Advocate of play and children and young people's voice
- Business development, organisational change and team management
- Communications
- Connection to the region's council and/or Universities
- Connections to communities in Leeds and West Yorkshire
- Experience of running/senior role in a cultural or contemporary art organisation, particularly an NPO
- Income generation, both fundraising and commercial
- Knowledge of emerging artist practice development
- Legal
- Property management and capital development

Yorkshire Contemporary is committed to ensuring an equitable working environment. We actively seek a broad membership of staff and trustees to reflect a multitude of experiences and backgrounds, reflecting the personal histories, interests and cultures of the communities we serve. We strongly encourage applications from people who identify as LGBTQIA+, D/deaf, disabled or neurodivergent, come from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds and/or people of the Global Majority.

“As a disabled working-class artist from Leeds, being on the board of trustees at Yorkshire Contemporary allows me an incredible opportunity to advocate for the artistic community in my hometown, particularly those who face barriers in the art world.” Michelle Duxbury

“I come from a business, not an artistic background. Being a trustee of Yorkshire Contemporary has been a win-win experience. Win 1: My business advice was listened to and valued. I felt I made a difference. Win 2: I learnt a lot about the world of art from the team and my fellow trustees. Their answers to any artistic questions I had were very informative.” Arthur Lovitt

How to apply

We are keen to ensure anyone interested in becoming a trustee is supported in the application process, particularly if you are new to governance, as you do not need to have any prior experience. We are committed to making our opportunities accessible to all.

If you would like to have an informal conversation about the requirements of the role, or discuss any access requirements, please contact hayley.dixon@yorkshirecontemporary.org, who can also arrange a conversation with an existing trustee.

If successful, we will provide a full induction and ensure any access requirements are met. Mentoring is provided throughout the first year to those who are new to being a trustee.



How to apply

To apply directly, please follow these steps.

On no more than two sides of A4 or as a video or voice note of no more than 8 minutes please outline:

- why you are interested in becoming a trustee of Yorkshire Contemporary
- what experience and networks you would bring to the role
- how your skills meet our current gaps
- what you would like to gain from the experience of being a trustee
- If you are also interested in the role of Chair, and if so, how you could fulfil this

Please send your application, along with a bio or CV to recruitment@yorkshirecontemporary.org

Please also complete the [Equal Opportunities](#) form. This information will be recorded anonymously and will be held separately from your proposal, playing no part in the selection process.

The closing date is **Tuesday 18th November at 10am.**

Applications will be scored against our required skills and experience (see above). Shortlisted candidates will be invited for an informal interview with trustees and the Director on Zoom on the 4th or 5th of December.

Thank you

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2. Beatrice Lee Knowles, Splat Mat! at Hamara Healthy Living Centre, 2024. Photo © Ronnie Danaher
3. Benaiah Matheson, Town Island installation view, 2025. Photo © Jules Lister
4. Zoe Spowage's PAINT MAZE, Cross Flatts Park, 2025. Photo © Jules Lister
5. Opening event at Practice Bradford, Loading Bay, 2025. Photo © Natasha Koziarska
6. Installation view of Semiramis, Tai Shani, 2018. Photo © Jules Lister
7. Installation view of The high dam, Emii Alrai, 2020. Photo © Jules Lister
8. Opening day at Rowland Road Play Patch, 2025. Photo © Jules Lister
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16. A Common Thread, Zoë Power, Tower Works, 2023. Photo © Jules Lister