

Artists Commission:

Youth Narratives_Africa_UK

Aug 2021

How Do Narratives Affect Young People?

Background

British Council's Sub-Saharan Africa Strategy aims to create opportunities for young people, enabling them to improve their chances of employment, their resilience and their networks, and therefore fulfil their potential. The strategy depends on long-term, mutually beneficial partnerships between the UK and Africa, aimed at supporting prosperous and secure futures. It has been developed through a consultative process, using extensive market research.

As part of the strategy, we have embarked on a new five-year programme, New Narratives, that will support more diverse, alternative narratives between young people in Africa and the UK. The programme aims to help contribute to changing reciprocal perceptions between both places to stimulate new understanding which will unlock new connections and collaborations for mutual benefit. The programme will work across our business areas including Arts and creative industries, Education and Social Inclusion. It will include online and offline activity that present new ways for young people across countries of Africa and the UK to see each other.

To inform the programme's design, we commissioned M&C Saatchi World Services to undertake some research. This investigated perceptions and stereotypical narratives of countries of Africa and the UK, and how it affects UK - Africa relations.



Proposal

Targeting a youth audience, we would like to bring the research conducted by M&C Saatchi World Services to life visually, through an artist commission. The research presents:

- A historical review of the narrative trajectories, cultural and socio-political themes dominating relations between the countries of Africa and the UK from 1500 to the present;
- An analysis and comparison of how young people in countries of Africa and the UK view each other, using images from popular culture. These images were gathered by narrative scouts and young people across the two regions; and
- Youth discussions with young people from countries of Africa and the UK.

We are seeking artists, including but not limited to illustrators, bloggers, graphic designers, architects, poets, and animators, to interpret the research and create a piece which they will share with a youth audience in their country.

The approach to this work will take on the following:

1. Reading - Access to the full New Narratives report and deciding which aspect of the research the artist would like to focus on;
2. Research - Each artist to conduct mini research in their own country to 'test' the ideas presented in the New Narratives report and gather views of youth from their lived experience;
3. Creative output - Artists to produce a creative piece which can range from art-making, filming, take on the form videos, art,
4. Public Engagement – Artists will present their work to a public audience, with youth being the primary focus, online and/or face-to-face. This can be in the form of an exhibition, a series of conversations, performance etc.
5. Publication – The work produced by each artist will be published on British Council's New Narratives website. ([New Narratives site](#))

Specifications

We are looking for **10** artists, aged 18-35years, to visually interpret the New Narratives report. Eligible artists will be from Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Morocco, Nigeria, Northern Ireland, Scotland, South Africa, Wales, and Zimbabwe.

The artists must be:

- Proficient, native, or fluent in reading English (so as to be able to navigate the text)
- Interested in interpreting an in-depth rereport on narratives artistically / visually
- Prepared to explore and further investigate the ideas from within the paper in a local context

- Able to create works of art that help tell a story / show a perspective on narratives from the youth's perspective
- Are prepared and able to present their work to a public audience
- Comfortable with and mindful of deadlines
- Welcoming of constructive criticism with respect to their work
- Able to attend a briefing workshop with other commissioned artists, the New Narratives team

Deliverables

- Artistic interpretation of New Narratives report
- Presentation of artistic work to a public audience online, with a reach of at least 150. Where possible, engagement can be face to face.
- Providing a report/summary sharing insight.

Budget

The budget for each artist's commission is up to *GBP5,000, which includes:

- Time spent in briefing session
- Conducting research in your country
- Creating your work
- Public-facing engagement

*Budget will be processed in each artists' local currency.

Timeline

Activity	Dates
Open call for artists	7 October 2021
Proposal (with portfolio) submission deadline	4 November 2021 (23:59 GMT)
Selection of 10 Artists	8 – 12 November 2021
Notification of selected artists	15 November 2021
Contracting of Artists	Commencing w/o 15 November 2021
Reading, research and creating	November 2021 - January 2022
Public engagement of work	February – 15 th March 2022
De-briefing and sharing work with New Narratives team	30 March 2022

Application process

- Submit a two-page (maximum) expression of interest highlighting why you are interested in this opportunity and include your approach to the assignment.
- A portfolio of previous work with relevant links – include handles to social media pages. Please ensure your portfolio is shared as a PDF document and is no more than 5MB in size.
- Submit Expression of Interest and portfolio to new.narratives@britishcouncil.org no later than 4 November 2021, midnight, GMT.

Interested artists will find a summary of the New Narratives [here](#)