

The following manifesto was posted on the Heritage Lottery Fund website www.hlf.org.uk in March 2016 by Nicole Mollett (Artist/Ideas Test) and Amy Freeborn (Online Communities Manager, Heritage Lottery Fund)

Museums and Artists Working Together Manifesto

Be explicit

What do you want the project to achieve? Have realistic expectations of your artist. Don't demand specific outcomes, look for shared aims. Negotiate a clear and concise framework, which has room for development.

Set aside your own authority

Both museum staff and artists are experts in their own discipline. To avoid the danger that either party becomes defensive about their domain, it is important to both adopt an attitude of openness.

Good quality does not cut corners

Museums and artists are under lots of pressure to provide more, with ever decreasing pots of money. Trying to get funding is hard work and involves determination. You might be tempted to squeeze a big idea into a small budget, or take advantage of artists' generosity, however if you want good quality work, you have to invest in doing things properly, with realistic budgets.

Kill your darlings

You may hold your own dream vision of the artwork, but once you have picked your artist, let them take the lead. Resist the temptation to take control of the creative decision-making. Trust in the professionalism of your artist.

Acknowledge the difficulties

Be open and listen to each others' concerns and misgivings. Be honest about what your limitations and fears are. Explain what you are doing and why. Reassure those that feel distanced or confused by art. Don't stop the conversation, persevere and tell

them it will be alright.

It doesn't have to look like history

Make heritage a starting point, not a barrier. In both the everyday world and art, nothing is what it seems. It doesn't have to be written on parchment to be authentic. It can be a fictional departure which begins with an object. Embrace the unexpected.

Get to know the regulars

Introduce the artist to the museum staff and volunteers. Get them interested in talking about the projects. Harness their expertise and encourage them to be ambassadors for the artwork. Work closely together and try to foster a sense of shared ownership over the art.

Real change needs regular engagement

Don't bother with tokenistic gestures of engagement. Workshops and events are great when they make a meaningful connection to a project, but they are not always appropriate. Don't force unnecessary additional layers of public activities on a project in order to meet external agendas. To develop loyal audiences, museums need to invest in regular programming.

Slow down

Make time for the artist to research and develop their ideas. Do not give short, unrealistic deadlines.

It's alright to not make stuff

Research can be the end goal. Don't feel pressurized into creating physical objects which serve no purpose. Temporary experiences and exchanges can be very powerful and leave a lasting legacy in peoples' minds, without the maintenance costs.