

**LOST
MILLS
AND GHOST
MANSIONS**

509 | Arts



RADIO 106.6fm

Textile Artist
Freelance Commission
Bradford, West Yorkshire



Made possible with

**Heritage
Fund**



City of

BRADFORD
METROPOLITAN DISTRICT COUNCIL



DISTRICT

MUSEUMS & GALLERIES



Introduction

509 Arts and Bradford Community Broadcasting (BCB) are seeking an artist or collective with experience of textiles to provide an interpretive artwork as part of *Lost Mills and Ghost Mansions*. This commission will be developed in partnership with Saltaire Inspired and Bradford District Museums and Galleries (BDMG) .

The City of Bradford is a metropolitan district in West Yorkshire. With a diverse population of circa 500,000, it has a rich textile history that spans nearly two centuries. Once one of the most prosperous cities in Yorkshire, the district's human textile story is a rich seam of stories and experiences that reflects the many diverse communities that have made Bradford their home. The district's economy was deeply affected by the closure of hundreds of mills in the last half of the 20th Century and today only a few working mills remain, often specialising in hi-tech, high quality fabrics. In 2025, Bradford's creativity, heritage and culture will be celebrated when it becomes the next UK City of Culture.

Background to *Lost Mills and Ghost Mansions*

Funded by Bradford Council and the National Lottery Heritage Fund, *Lost Mills and Ghost Mansions* was developed to reveal lost locations and stories of mill life in late 20th century Bradford. The project runs from April 2023 until June 2024 and its principal outputs will be:

- A portfolio of collected memories and stories from people with experience of working in Bradford's textile mills from the 1970s onwards
- Regular programme strands from Bradford Community Broadcasting that increases audiences and their engagement with the project
- A map of up to 30 mills that closed in that period and which are now demolished, repurposed or unused.
- A similar map that documents that locations of mill owners' mansions and their current usages
- A textile artwork that graphically describes the stories of Bradford's lost mills and ghost mansions
- A public event that tells the story of the project and its findings to a diverse Bradford audience
- An accessible online presence that makes the project available to anyone who wishes to explore its findings, together with a suite of learning materials for schools and community groups

Over the last six months a small project team has been researching stories of late 20th Century textile heritage. Through community events and call outs we have encouraged people with first-hand experience of Bradford's textile mills to share their stories. Their testimonies have been recorded, and in some cases translated into English. Participants have also contributed photographs and documents. This collected material will be the basis of a dedicated learning space on the 509 Arts website, with bespoke educational resources for schools and communities and an interactive map showing the location of mills and information about their history and fate. Further details of 509 Arts, BCB and the project can be found here: <https://www.509arts.co.uk/project/lost-mills-and-ghost-mansions/>

The Commission

We are seeking to commission an artist (or artists) with knowledge and experience of working with textiles to produce an artwork that reflects the aims and ambitions of Lost Mills and Ghost Mansions. We are open to imaginative interpretations that bring the project to life - an artwork that will inspire and be cherished by generations of Bradfordians. The intention is to display the artwork at locations across Bradford in 2024, with eventual acquisition into BDMG permanent collection. The parameters for the work are that it:

- Should be primarily, but not necessarily exclusively, textile based
- Is capable of fairly straightforward mounting, demounting, storage and transportation
- Is not excessively fragile
- Considers the practicalities of ultimately being in a museum collection including the potential risk of pests that can impact textiles
- Reflects upon Bradford's diverse cultural and textile heritage, particularly that within living memory - the period covered by Lost Mills and Ghost Mansions

Proposals that surprise and excite the imagination, with content that uses new approaches to Bradford's textile heritage are particularly welcome.

The commission will require:

- Working with the Lost Mills and Ghost Mansions team to review the collected data and explore ways of turning it into an artwork capable of touring to various public indoor locations in Bradford.
- Design and production of a striking and accessible textile-based interpretation that brings to life the essence of the project and its findings. The textile piece must be delivered to Bradford, West Yorkshire.
- Working with the 509 Arts Team to present the work at a launch event in May 2024.
- Participating in the evaluation of the project

The commission fee (currently £6000 but with the potential to be increased subject to further fundraising), must cover all costs of research, development, design and fabrication. The artist or artists will be responsible for all liabilities and relevant insurance cover until the artwork is completed and delivered to the client.

The commissioned artist or artists will have the following:

Essential

- A solid track record of delivering bespoke quality artworks within the context of a community based project
- Experience of creating work that reflects South Asian, or other global majority textile heritage and culture relevant to Bradford
- Experience of working with diverse communities, particularly in areas of low cultural engagement.
- Ability to work to a deadline

Desirable

- Knowledge of Bradford and its many communities
- Experience of working in a heritage setting and with contemporary decolonisation practice in museums
- Experience and confidence in using public consultation as a means of enriching their work
- Experience of working with volunteers

We will provide

A fee of £6,000* including materials.

*This is a minimum that may substantially increase on confirmation of additional funding.

- Access to collected data, recordings and research, archive materials including from our partners, BDMG.
- Support through the project team and advisory group.
- Full support to create a launch event and exhibitions to display the finished work.

How to apply

If you wish to apply for this commission please provide:

- A written statement explaining the reasons for your interest in this commission, the approach you would use and the kind of output you would envisage. Ideally you will identify the overall vision for the piece you would want to create. We understand that this may eventually change, but your starting point for the work is something we would be interested in.
- A comprehensive CV with images and examples of previous work.
- Links to relevant videos, websites and any other useful documentation.

Timescale

4th December 2023:	Closing date for applications
December 2023:	Interviews and selection of artist, either online or in person.
January 2024	Commencement of commission
May 2024	Completion of textile commission and exhibition

Other information

We welcome applications from single artists, collaborations or collectives for this commission. The commissioned artist will report to Alan Dix, the Project Director, together with members of the advisory group which includes Saltaire Inspired, Bradford Community Broadcasting, BMDG. It is anticipated that the commissioned artist will work primarily from their own studio/workspace. To discuss this contract, please contact Marie Millward info@509arts.co.uk.

If you wish to be considered for the commission, please submit your application by email to info@509arts.co.uk. The deadline for applications is **Monday 4th December 2023**.