

## Tyneside Cinema Archive Commissions 2021-22: Artist Briefing Document



Tyneside Cinema is inviting proposals from artists working in any medium to create new work in response to archive materials held by the cinema, exploring the social and artistic history of the cinema.

The two commissioned works will be presented as part of a programme of events celebrating the 85th birthday of the cinema in February 2022.

To apply, please read the following guidelines and submit your application by 12 noon on Friday 29th October 2021.

### **Context**

Tyneside Cinema is one of Newcastle's most valuable cultural institutions. Situated at the heart of the city since the 1930s it is the only independent cinema of scale in the region, offering four screens, an award-winning learning programme, moving image art, and three public bar, dining and café spaces.

Tyneside Cinema is a community, with film at the heart of everything we do. We believe in the power of film an instrument of empathy; a way to transport us to places we've never been, through experiences we've never lived. In the setting of our beautiful 1930s newsreel theatre, we strive to create a shared space where people can come gather to be entertained, challenged, moved and perhaps even changed by film.

200,000 people sit down to watch a film at the Tyneside Cinema each year, choosing from a programme of over 500 films from more than 25 countries. Another 300,000 people visit the building each year to dine and socialise, with more than 2,000 young people enhancing their knowledge, skills and experience through one of our learning programmes, and several artists receiving commissions to make new film work.

As an organisation, we have faced very difficult challenges in the last sixteen months. The pandemic meant our venue was closed for over a year, during which time a number of allegations of serious sexual harassment and bullying came to light and led to an independent review into the working culture and practices of the organisation, which were found to be seriously lacking.

We hold ourselves accountable for this and have recognised a real need for change, for which the Tyneside Cinema community (staff, volunteers, Trustees and customers) must be the driving force. We are in the process of a significant transformation, with the goal of restoring the cinema to its place of learning, entertainment and sanctuary for everyone in our community.

An important part of this restoration is exploring how we can be a more inclusive, open, and collaborative organisation. The commissioning opportunities presented here are a key part of that ambition.

### **The Brief**

To mark the 85th birthday of Tyneside Cinema in February 2022, we are inviting two artists or artist collectives to create new work in response to archive materials held at the cinema. It is hoped that the work created will reveal voices and stories that are buried in the material or have remained untold in previous presentations of the cinema's heritage.

We already know that Tyneside Cinema is the oldest surviving newsreel cinema still in operation, and that as well as the film programme, the coffee rooms have been a haven for a wide range of local people since they opened in the 1930s. We know that Derek Jarman met his life partner at Tyneside, that we hosted the regional premier of *My Beautiful Laundrette* with guest appearances from Daniel Day-Lewis and director Stephen Frears, and in 2016 Ken Loach premiered his award-winning, locally produced, *I, Daniel Blake...* but there are gaps in the story of Tyneside Cinema and the way it has been told over the decades. Through these commissions we are inviting artists to create new narratives for the cinema and make alternative histories for this historic and complex organisation visible.

Through these commissions we aim to:

- Provide opportunities for artists to develop their practice through the making of new work.
- Invite people from outside of our organisation to explore the archive materials we hold to reveal aspects of our past in new and surprising ways.
- Explore what it means to be an inclusive, open, and collaborative organisation.

### **Archive Materials**

The materials we hold are currently uncatalogued and are only accessible by visiting the cinema. They fall into five broad areas:

- Papers, correspondence, programmes, photographs and financial information relating to the cinema's operation as the News Theatre (1937-1968), including material relating to the cinema's founder, Dixon Scott and his family.

- Papers, correspondence, programmes, newspaper cuttings, photographs and financial information relating to the cinema's operation as a BFI Regional Film Theatre (1968-1973), and the subsequent establishment of the charity Tyneside Film Theatre in 1973.
- Photographs and contact sheets from the late 1970s and 1980s covering many of the film festivals that took place in the building at that time, including the Tyneside Gay Film Festival.
- Programmes detailing the films and artistic work shown in the building. Some of these dates back to the Children's Film Club, which predates the opening of the News Theatre, many relate to the late 60s and early 70s, and some relate to the film festivals of the 1980s.
- A large number of uncatalogued digital files – mostly films and photographs – which are the outputs of audience engagement projects from the early 2000s onwards.

There are also a small number of objects, including signs, magic lantern slides, door handles, and a threepence piece accompanied by a note from a member of staff detailing their attempts to return it to a customer.

#### **Commissioned Artists will be:**

- assigned a fee and production budget to make the work (see below)
- assigned a single point of contact at the cinema to help manage the commission, including access to materials, spaces and people at Tyneside Cinema.
- supported by the cinema programme team in the artistic development and production of the work, where appropriate.
- supported to research social and cultural narratives related to the cinema through conversation with individuals within and beyond the cinema.
- supported by the cinema programme team to explore exhibition and distribution opportunities beyond the venue, as appropriate.

#### **Scope**

- There are two separate commissioning opportunities, and both are open to individual artists or collectives.
- Proposals must be achievable within the time frame (Nov 21-Feb 22)
- Artists must be over the age of 18 and be a resident of the UK.
- The specific focus and form of the commissioned work will be defined by the artist in relation to their practice and refined through their own archive research.
- The final artwork can take any form and be produced in any medium but will have a relationship to moving image and work for screen.
- We welcome proposals from artists or collectives with socially engaged or collaborative artistic practices or artists working in collaboration with specific communities.
- Copyright in the final work will remain with the artist.

## Key Dates

Application deadline:	12 noon, Friday 29 October 2021
Successful artists notified:	12 November 2021
Presentation of final work & artist event:	February 2022

## Fees and Production Costs (per commission)

- £3000 fee
- £2000 production costs

In addition, there is a separate budget to cover non-production costs associated with each commission, for example travel or accommodation relating to visits to access the materials or take part in the presentation of the work. This budget will be managed by Tyneside Cinema.

## Deliverables (per commission)

- A new artwork to be presented in February 2022
- One artist talk for cinema staff
- One public artist event in relation to the presentation of the final work
- Contribute to creation of digital assets for promoting the commissioned work online
- Contribution to reflection and evaluation of the commission process

## Selection Process

As part of our ambition to be more inclusive, open and collaborative, our commissioning panel will include three people from outside the organisation with specific knowledge and experience of commissioning new work from artists, a member of the cinema's staff from outside of the programme department, and a trustee from our board.

The panel will meet to consider the submissions in early-November, and make their decisions using the answers provided to questions 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 in the application form.

Successful artists will be notified no later than the 12 November.

## Submitting A Proposal

To apply please use [this form](#) to tell us about your previous work, why you are interested in this opportunity and how you will approach the commission.

Please note, as you will not be able to save and return to your online application once you start it, you may want to prepare answers for the main questions offline and then copy and paste your responses into the form. You'll find a copy of the questions at bottom of this document.

If you are unable to fill out an online form for any reason, email us at [ian.fenton@tynesidecinema.co.uk](mailto:ian.fenton@tynesidecinema.co.uk) and we'll supply the form in an alternative format.

DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS: 12 noon Friday 29th October 2021.

## Contact

If you have any questions about the commissions or application process, please contact Ian Fenton, Head of Learning: [ian.fenton@tynesidecinema.co.uk](mailto:ian.fenton@tynesidecinema.co.uk)

## Questions from the Application Form

Q1. Artist name (if applying as a collective or collaborating artists please supply lead applicant details)

Q2. Your Email Address

Q3. Where in the UK are you based? (this opportunity is only open to people based in the UK)

Q4. Please tell us about your practice and previous work you have made relating to moving image, cinema history or archive material (300 words max).

Q5. Please share up to 3 links to previous work you want us to look at in support of your application. Make sure any links and passwords are up to date and accurate.

Q6. If the work is not online, you can share up to up to 3 files with us by sending them via WeTransfer ([wetransfer.com](https://wetransfer.com)) to [ian.fenton@tynesidecinema.co.uk](mailto:ian.fenton@tynesidecinema.co.uk). Please use the following in the subject line of your email: 'Supporting Material for Archive Commission Your Name' e.g Supporting Material for Archive Commission Jane Doe. We will reply to you within 48 hours to let you know we have received the files. All files shared with us will be deleted once the selection process is complete.

Are you sending files to us? Yes/No

Q7 Please tell us how this commission will support development of your practice (300 words max).

Q8. How will you approach the research for the commission and the development of new work in response to our archive and the social and artistic history of the cinema? Please bear in mind that our archive material is as yet uncatalogued and that our archive is in an ongoing process of development (500 words max).