

## **Collections Archivist**

Dear Applicant,

Thank you for your interest in the position of Collections Archivist at Serendipity, Institute for Black Arts and Heritage.

Please find attached more detailed information for the post, which includes:

- About Serendipity and an introduction to Unearthed: Forgotten Histories
- Job Description and Person Specification
- Equal Opportunities Policy and Monitoring Form

To apply, please send us a CV outlining your skills and experience and a written supporting statement and/or an audio/video presentation stating how you meet the person specification for the position of Collections Archivist.

Your application should be sent to [opportunities@serendipity-uk.com](mailto:opportunities@serendipity-uk.com) with the words 'Collections Archivist' followed by your name in the subject heading. The deadline for applications is 5.00pm on 30 June 2023.

Applications received after this time will not be accepted.

Interviews are expected to be held week commencing 10 July 2023.

We look forward to receiving your application.

Yours sincerely,

Pawlet Brookes MBE  
CEO and Artistic Director

### **Head Office**

21 Bowling Green Street  
Leicester  
LE1 6AS

CL00.14 Clephan Building  
De Montfort University  
The Gateway  
Leicester  
LE1 9BH

+44(0)116 482 1394  
[info@serendipity-uk.com](mailto:info@serendipity-uk.com)  
[www.serendipity-uk.com](http://www.serendipity-uk.com)

## About Serendipity Institute for Black Arts and Heritage

Serendipity Institute for Black Arts and Heritage is an internationally connected arts and heritage organisation that actively changes the UK creative and cultural landscape with an innovative and inspiring high-quality programme that centres perspectives from the African and African Caribbean Diaspora.

Serendipity's programmes include Black History Month Leicester, the Annual Windrush Day Lecture and the flagship dance festival, Let's Dance International Frontiers, . Serendipity have established a legacy; hosting a growing living archive documenting Black arts, heritage and culture, documenting the voices of Black practitioners and community activists, nurturing artists to create high quality new work and mentoring young people.

Serendipity fosters innovative new work from artists, both emerging and established, bringing diversity to the forefront of cultural experiences for all.

With a 12-year track record working locally, nationally and internationally and the success of past projects funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, *Lost Legends* and *Archiving the Past: Reflecting the Future*, this opportunity comes at an important point in the Serendipity's development with a three-year project that builds upon our heritage work thus far in the form of *Unearthed: Forgotten Histories*.

## About Unearthed: Forgotten Histories

*Unearthed: Forgotten Histories* is a forward-thinking initiative that seeks to make a structural difference to the recording, documentation and sharing of Black history and heritage in the UK. Serendipity are building a digital living archive that encompasses the history of the African and African Caribbean Diaspora across the Midlands. By amplifying the historical picture and telling stories from a different perspective the archive aims to give back hidden histories for everyone to share. Educational resources, events and exhibitions are planned to give the opportunity of interaction, reinterpretation and the repositioning of the gaze of the heritage.

Alongside this, Serendipity is leading on the Young Archivists an accredited training programme inspiring a diverse range of future heritage experts, currently underrepresented in the sector, at different stages in their careers with training and mentoring. Opportunities for volunteers are also available to develop high-quality skills that support the collection and preservation of oral histories and archival material.

### Head Office

21 Bowling Green Street  
Leicester  
LE1 6AS

CL00.14 Clephan Building  
De Montfort University  
The Gateway  
Leicester  
LE1 9BH

+44(0)116 482 1394  
info@serendipity-uk.com  
www.serendipity-uk.com

The project seeks to highlight histories from communities across the Midlands that might have been lost, forgotten or ignored, using technology in innovative ways to tell and share stories, ultimately creating a legacy of engagement beyond the project and long into the future.

### **Purpose of the Role**

The role of Collections Archivist has been made possible with funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund thanks to National Lottery Players. The Collections Archivist will be responsible for the day to day management of Serendipity's growing archive overseeing the process of acquisition, management and maintenance of physical and digital materials that have historical and cultural significance and leading Serendipity towards relevant industry accreditations.

Working closely with the CEO and Artistic Director, Heritage Manager and Digital Media Technician, the post will be responsible for creating a strategy for the cataloguing of collections, key parts of the Serendipity archive. This includes the ingesting of collections, documenting current heritage projects and co-ordinating the production of new digital content to widen our education, learning and engagement remit.

### **Main Responsibilities and Duties**

- To oversee the collecting, cataloguing and digitisation of Serendipity's archive collections, and engagement of those collections by the public through the production of new digital content and programming.
- In consultation with the CEO and Artistic Director, Heritage Manager and Digital Media Technician, to assess strategy, policy and priorities for cataloguing Serendipity's archives.
- To implement the new archive management system, Axiell Collections and establish an evaluation strategy for cataloguing the archives going forward being informed by discourses in cultural sensitivity, inclusion, accessibility and sustainability.
- To recommend, implement and refine methodologies and practices for sustainable and secure digital archiving, for both born-digital objects and objects that become digital over time
- To lead on developing the strategy for digital preservation and the systems that cater for long-term preservation of digital objects, including towards the NDSA level 4 of digital preservation.
- To monitor archive specific budgets and contribute to developing long-term strategies for engagement with the collection and maintain, review and improve all digital policies relating to the archive.
- To assist the Heritage Manager in providing physical and digital access to the archive collection and managing archive-related research enquiries from the public.

#### **Head Office**

21 Bowling Green Street  
Leicester  
LE1 6AS

CL00.14 Clephan Building  
De Montfort University  
The Gateway  
Leicester  
LE1 9BH

+44(0)116 482 1394  
info@serendipity-uk.com  
www.serendipity-uk.com

## Collections Management

- To review, update and maintain initial box list survey of the archive using MS Excel and oversee the process to upload data onto the archive management system, Axiell Collections.
- To customise, manage and maintain the archive management system, Axiell Collections ensuring surveyed archival material is catalogued to ISAD(G) standards and backup accordingly.
- To repackage materials using archival-grade materials and assess the need to weed collections and possible conservation treatment.
- To create workflows and provide training on best practice to the colleagues.
- To identify material to accession into Serendipity's archive and assess any potential future digitisation in accordance with Serendipity's archive collection policy and retention schedules.
- To undertake research to identify archives in private hands.
- To assist the Heritage Manager with updating and reviewing work placement, volunteer and Young Archivist courses and cultural heritage programming.
- To oversee the maintenance and quality control strategy of digital archive.

## Strategy and Planning

- To contribute to, and follow organisational policies and procedures, particularly policies relevant to your defined responsibilities and area of work.
- To assist the Heritage Manager in implementing an environmental monitoring plan of the archive room.
- To assist the Heritage Manager in implementing and evaluating the sustainability impact strategy of the archive and its use for funding bodies and other stakeholders, including achieving the objectives set out in the National Lottery Heritage Fund reporting guidelines.
- To assess the suitability of scanned and digitised materials for online publication in light of Copyright, Data Protection and Licensing and ensure that their metadata is correctly assigned to archive records in Axiell Collections.
- To work with the Heritage Manager to build relationships with artists from the African and African Caribbean Diaspora, and those working with Serendipity to collect archival material about artistic practices and develop a programme of activities.
- To contribute to Serendipity's heritage programme including conducting tours/workshops with archival material, interviews with artists, public talks, exhibitions and events for the public with support from the Digital Media Technician and wider team.
- To work towards increasing the visibility of Serendipity's archives with different audiences and constituencies through public engagement activity.

### Head Office

21 Bowling Green Street  
Leicester  
LE1 6AS

CL00.14 Clephan Building  
De Montfort University  
The Gateway  
Leicester  
LE1 9BH

+44(0)116 482 1394  
info@serendipity-uk.com  
www.serendipity-uk.com

- To increase visitor engagement with the collection by assisting with the organisation, hosting, showcasing and sharing of events and develop outreach activities with the wider general public.

### **Partnership and Communications**

- Writing regular updates and attending meetings as required.
- Liaising with the Heritage Manager to report to funders on the progress of the project.
- Liaising with colleagues to contribute to the marketing and publicity of Serendipity's archives.
- Liaising with artists/producers represented in Serendipity's archive and potential depositors to secure copyright, licensing and contracts, research collections and create new content for engagement
- To increase the visibility of the archive as a specialist resource in a research context by participating in specialist archive networks, conference and writing articles for publication in professional archive journals.

### **Staffing**

- To support the Heritage Manager in recruiting, supervising and managing archive placement students and volunteers.
- To work with the Heritage Manager to update and review work placement, volunteer and Young Archivist and cultural heritage programming
- To assist in training staff and volunteers in ISAD(G) archival cataloguing standards and develop subject schema for Serendipity's archives.
- To assist in the development of learning modules for the Young Archivists taking in to consideration issues that affect people who are currently underrepresented in the UK heritage sector.

### **General duties and responsibilities**

The duties and responsibilities attached to posts may vary from time to time without changing the general character of the duties or the level of responsibility entailed. All Serendipity employees are required to undertake the following general duties:

- Carry out such other duties as may be reasonably requested by their line manager, or any more senior manager commensurate with the grade of the role.

#### **Head Office**

21 Bowling Green Street  
Leicester  
LE1 6AS

CL00.14 Clephan Building  
De Montfort University  
The Gateway  
Leicester  
LE1 9BH

+44(0)116 482 1394  
info@serendipity-uk.com  
www.serendipity-uk.com

- Undertake continuous professional development, seeking to stay up to date with developments and best practice in your area of work in line with the needs of the post and resources available.
- Travel to locations across the county and beyond as required (please note that reasonable adjustments will be considered for this factor as required by the Equalities Act).
- Be aware of and comply with GDPR and Data Protection legislation and confidentiality.
- Ensure compliance with health and safety policies and procedures, and risk assessments.
- Share in Serendipity's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- Be aware of Serendipity's Equality and Diversity policies and actively promote equality of opportunity, diversity and inclusion for all staff, contractors, volunteers and stakeholders.
- To ensure proper record keeping, filing and archiving of all communications and documentation related to your area of work.
- Act as an ambassador to support and improve awareness of Serendipity's activities and representing Serendipity at events and meetings as required.
- Carry out all duties in accordance with Serendipity policies, procedures and practices;
- Behave in a manner consistent with Serendipity values and code of staff conduct.
- Managing collateral intellectual property that will be used in promotions for permissions for use of imagery, video and audio etc and liaising with intellectual property holders for permissions.
- Database management in relation to the project's audiences, partners and collaborators.
- Operate within an agreed budget. Managing budgets, liaising with team and producing financial reports.
- To contribute to the delivery of Serendipity's mission and vision.
- To uphold collective responsibility, knowledge sharing and team working across the organisation.

### **Person Specification**

The post-holder for this role should demonstrate the following qualifications, experience, skills and knowledge:

### **Essential: Experience or Skills**

- Postgraduate qualification in Archives and Records Management and/or significant experience managing an archive including the provision of research and enquiry service, collections development and preservation.

#### **Head Office**

21 Bowling Green Street  
Leicester  
LE1 6AS

CL00.14 Clephan Building  
De Montfort University  
The Gateway  
Leicester  
LE1 9BH

+44(0)116 482 1394  
info@serendipity-uk.com  
www.serendipity-uk.com

- Proven track record of developing, implementing and maintaining archive management policies, systems and procedures.
- Proven track record of administering a customer-focussed enquiry service providing information (internally and externally) with a positive attitude.
- Excellent IT skills with experience of using collections management software.
- Knowledge of relevant legislation, standards and procedures in relation to collections management, digital preservation, Data Protection, Copyright and Licensing.
- Working knowledge of issues around cultural diversity in the creative industries and how this interface manifests in the heritage sector and the archive.
- Knowledge and experience of archive standards and principles including ISAD(G) and controlled vocabularies.
- Knowledge of surveying, accessioning, cataloguing, cataloguing standards, indexing, storing and preserving archives
- Experience of digitising archival collections and managing online access to such material, including a willingness to explore innovative ways of encouraging access to collections.
- Experience of engaging diverse audiences with archival material.
- Exceptional interpersonal, communication and advocacy skills with the ability to build positive and working relationships with key stakeholders
- Ability to work in a busy and demanding environment – able to analyse and prioritise conflicting demands.
- Ability to work both on own initiative, including making professional judgements, and as a member of a team.

### **Desirable**

- Familiarity with arts and heritage organisations in the UK and, or internationally with the ability to understand Serendipity's place in the history of Black arts and heritage in UK and internationally
- Knowledge of oral history and reminiscence work standards and best practice, including use of recording equipment and/or experience of having collected an oral history archive.
- Experience of effectively recruiting, supervising, motivating and developing archive volunteers

#### **Head Office**

21 Bowling Green Street  
Leicester  
LE1 6AS

CL00.14 Clephan Building  
De Montfort University  
The Gateway  
Leicester  
LE1 9BH

+44(0)116 482 1394  
info@serendipity-uk.com  
www.serendipity-uk.com

Hours:	To suit hours of business, including some evenings and weekends. Usually 9:30am-5.30pm (including 30-minute break), Monday-Friday.  37.5 hours per week.
Contract:	Initially six-months probationary. Fixed term until March 2026.
Salary:	£23,690
Start date:	July - August 2023
Deadline to apply:	30 June 2023, 5:00pm

**Head Office**

21 Bowling Green Street  
Leicester  
LE1 6AS

CL00.14 Clephan Building  
De Montfort University  
The Gateway  
Leicester  
LE1 9BH

+44(0)116 482 1394  
info@serendipity-uk.com  
www.serendipity-uk.com