

PRESS RELEASE –

EMBARGOED UNTIL 0001 TUESDAY 14 DECEMBER 2021

John Ellerman Foundation is pleased to announce the launch of *Protea*, a unique International Curatorial Exchange, the **first of its kind** between both nations.

The project celebrates the 50th anniversary of the creation of John Ellerman Foundation in 1971.

'Protea' references the national flower of South Africa and, in its allusion to the legend of Proteus, acknowledges the transformative outcomes that can be activated through imaginative and resourceful curatorship.

This Exchange programme will enable six curators to take part in a funded residency programme designed to focus on key issues in each of the three core areas of the Foundation's work: **Arts, Social Action, Environment**

The project builds on the Foundation's highly regarded support for curatorial development through its existing Museums & Galleries Fund as this is often under-funded and yet a vital skillset in safeguarding environmental, heritage or cultural assets for future generations. We believe that by bringing curators from both countries together, we enhance these possibilities for mutual understanding, knowledge growth and innovation dissemination.

The programme is aimed at curators who can demonstrate at least five years of professional curatorial experience, be this as curators working within institutions or experienced freelancers. We are looking for significant evidence of an existing commitment to curatorial practice, as well as an ability to self-manage the Exchange's preparatory research and in-the-field residency phases.

The Exchange consists of 3 parts: i) preparatory research, ii) residential exchange, iii) documentation.

Protea will fund the curators' preparatory research, outward and return flights & visas, and 10 nights hotel or equivalent accommodation in or near the site of research. A subsistence allowance is made for this period. Reasonable travel expenses within the host country are also covered, although it is expected that the fieldwork site is located close to the accommodation to minimise such expenditure.

The research outputs generated from the Exchange may take one or more formats, including essay, blog, video, report, lecture.

This Exchange provides a valuable opportunity for individual curators to undertake field research that supports their personal and professional development. It tests their resilience and the applicability of their skills as well as giving them the opportunity to acquire new knowledge, international contacts and wider networks that will be of value to them and their institutions.

By connecting curators in the UK and South Africa, the project seeks to demonstrate what curators have in common but also to reveal what they have to offer each other and the contexts in which their fieldwork takes place. Successful candidates will be both ambassadors for their practice and their institutions as well as part of a new international enterprise that may serve as a model for others.

For the institutional partners involved, the Exchange provides a valuable opportunity to build new contacts, to import and share expertise, to identify strategic openings, and to plan and advocate for action/change.

For curating as a practice and discourse, it is hoped this Exchange brings insights that illuminate the value of curating as a means for unlocking creativity, building alliances, fuelling support, influencing power, and driving change.

Selected candidates are expected to work within the Curatorial Framework (see Project Description) managed by Executive Curator Mark Irving.

Curator candidates are selected through a two-stage process:

- 1) Expressions of Interest (EOI): Deadline Monday 31 January 2022**
- 2) Issue of Request for Proposals (RFP): Thursday 10 February 2022**
Deadline for Receipt of RFPs: March 2022 (date tbc)

Further information including the project description and application process, can be found at www.ellerman.org.uk/apply-for-funding/protea

Sufina Ahmad, Director of John Ellerman Foundation, said:

“Protea offers an exciting opportunity for the Foundation to strengthen our longstanding commitment to curatorial expertise and excellence, during our 50th anniversary celebrations.

It presents a fantastic opportunity for curators, and the sectors that they are a part of in the UK and South Africa, to share their experience and insights with each other. Through Mark’s leadership of this work, we know that Protea will champion the transformative power of creativity, experimentation and storytelling that imaginative curating can offer”.

All enquiries should be directed to Mark Irving, Executive Curator
mark@ellerman.org.uk +44 (0)7973 346 541.

Note for editors:

John Ellerman Foundation is a medium-sized grantmaker distributing circa £5.8m in grants annually in pursuit of our aim to advance the wellbeing of people, society and

the natural environment. We do this by offering multi-year core funding to work that is of national significance in the arts, social action and the environment, as we believe these areas can make an important contribution to wellbeing.

You can find out more about our work on our website www.ellerman.org.uk and via Twitter ([@EllermanUK](https://twitter.com/EllermanUK)).

End of press release, Monday 13 December 2021