

GARDEN MUSEUM

Creative Learning Officer (Communities)

Job Description

Contract Type:	Fixed Term (2 years)
Role Type:	Part-time (0.6 FTE)
Salary:	£21,600 for working 3 days per week (the pro-rata of £36,000 Full Time Equivalent)
Line Manager:	Deputy Director

Are you a creative practitioner ready to work with the Garden Museum's network of community groups in Lambeth? Are you a champion of diversity and inclusion who can bring museum spaces to life through dedicated activities which remove barriers to access? Then this exciting new role at the Garden Museum could be the one for you.

We are looking for a special person who leads creative learning sessions – from clay, to dance, to gardening – for community groups who benefit most from a tailored programme.

You would be responsible for maintaining links with our existing community groups and growing this network. In the last few weeks alone we have welcomed people living with dementia to work with clay, local care home residents to craft their own tea bags, and hosted wellbeing sessions for people with mental health problems, hosted a Windrush Day celebration, and opened our museum for free for our Neighbours Day, which welcomed 491 people and featured a collaborative slow stitch activity and a display of textile hangings made by Lambeth community groups: Sunshine International Arts, Lavender Hope, and Art 4 Space.

We want to welcome someone to the Garden Museum team who will continue the legacy of Janine Nelson who has worked with thousands of local people over the last 17 years and will retire this summer. No two days will be the same in this role, from the art, design and gardening sessions you develop and lead to the people you meet and work with. If this sounds like an exciting opportunity for you and fits with your own creative work, then we would love to hear from you.

This role is generously funded by the Julia Rausing Trust.

The Garden Museum

The Garden Museum explores and celebrates the art, history and design of British gardens and their places in our lives today.

Visitors will discover the stories of great gardeners through a permanent collection of artefacts and tools from gardening throughout history alongside botanical art, photography, and paintings exploring how and why we garden. Exhibitions, events, and community projects delve into art,

architecture, plant science, food, sustainability, well-being and more, all through the lens of gardening.

The Garden Museum is home to the Archive of Garden Design, which preserves and provides access to the working records of leading British garden designers of the 20th and 21st century.

Housed in the deconsecrated church of St Mary-at-Lambeth, the Garden Museum contains the burial place of John Tradescant, an early gardener and plant hunter. To preserve his tomb, the Garden Museum was founded by Rosemary Nicholson, an admirer of Tradescant, in 1977. At the heart of the Museum is a sheltered courtyard garden designed by Dan Pearson as an 'Eden' of rare plants.

The Garden Museum's learning programme was founded by Janine in 2007 with a focus on schools and community outreach, beginning with classroom support and gardening clubs at a local primary school. Since then, she has grown the programme significantly, expanding from just 10 school visits in 2008 to over 40 schools per year by 2025, engaging hundreds of local children in hands-on gardening, art, and storytelling activities inspired by the museum's collection.

The learning team has grown over the years and now has four staff members who each have a unique focus. Our Plant Science Teacher, Samia works with schools, our trained Chef, Ceri, teaches plant-based food learning, and Gemma, our Family Learning Officer, produces a programme for families including, neurodiverse families and Tots. Janine has, over the last few years, led on creative learning for community partners, and on longer term projects, and now we are looking for someone to take on this aspect of our learning portfolio. This will include programmes like Clay for Dementia which started in 2017 as an 8-week pilot, with Arts 4 Dementia and artist Katie Spragg. We are celebrating 8 years this summer with an exhibition in the museum. We have newer participants as well as some of the original carers still joining us.

In 2020 we embarked on a Caribbean Horticultural Heritage project which became known as Sowing Roots. Funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund it was an oral history project and members of the Windrush generation, or their descendants were interviewed by young people about gardening. The resulting oral histories are held in the museum's Archive for the public to use. The Sowing Roots exhibition was held at the museum in 2021/22 because of the project and then in early 2024, a Garden Museum Journal was published with many of the gardeners' stories. This summer on Windrush Day, participants met up to have a reunion lunch together.

The Role

This role at the Garden Museum will build on Janine's legacy and we are looking for someone to take ownership of it. There is plenty of scope for you to develop the role, both in terms of the community groups you work with and the range of creative activities which you will lead on. We are looking for a creative, empathetic and organised person to lead on the Museum's community learning and engagement programmes. This role is central to maintaining and developing our relationship with local communities and ensuring that the Museum remains a welcoming and relevant space for all. The role is a balance of creative practice, and independent management and administration of the groups.

The role combines developing sessions and delivering them, with cultivating and nurturing relationships with community partners and groups.

You will manage our existing Creative Learning programme for community groups, including our Clay for Dementia sessions, and continue to develop meaningful partnerships across Lambeth and London.

This role also includes working with colleagues across the museum on the coordination of the Community Access Scheme of free entry cards for communities to visit any time, responsibility for our Community Panel of local advisors to the Museum and contributing to our annual Neighbours Day celebration, where local people visit for free and enjoy food and music at the Museum.

Responsibilities/Duties

This is a creative learning role and does not include any direct line management but does involve the occasional management of freelancers. You will be work closely with the Learning Team and report to the Deputy Director on the following:

Community Partnerships

- Nurture and grow relationships with community groups, especially mental health groups like South East London Mind and those currently underrepresented in museum audiences.

Creative Learning Programme Development

- The programme of workshops and sessions for our community groups should be based around plants and gardens in the broadest sense, the focus can and should be on gardens and gardening, art and craft, creative writing, dance and movement, or any other method or media which is engaging and suitable for the audience. Wellbeing should be an outcome of sessions delivered wherever possible.
- Develop sessions which take inspiration from to the museum's exhibition programme, permanent collection, gardens and rich heritage—sharing the stories of plants and people that define the museum's mission. This includes figures such as Captain William Bligh, famous for the voyage of the *Bounty*, and father-and-son plant collectors John Tradescant the Elder and Younger, whose tombs lie in the churchyard of the museum.
- Develop and deliver creative, hands-on, and multi-sensory activities/sessions/workshops for a range of community audiences of all ages, including older adults, carers, people with mental health needs and those with neurodiverse needs/SEND, with an emphasis on supporting and enhancing wellbeing.
- Facilitate sessions for people living with dementia and their carers in collaboration with freelancers and volunteers.
- Work with the Public Programmes team to plan and deliver community events including the annual Neighbours Day, working with the wider Museum team, volunteers, and partners and freelancers.
- Act as the Museum's lead contact for community partnerships, ensuring mutual benefit, inclusion and long-term connection.
- Lead on the museum's Community Panel which meets twice a year. Plan and facilitate meetings.
- This role is funded by the Julia Rausing Trust and has targets: to reach 1,800 people through Creative Learning (and Plant Science, which our Plant Science Educator is responsible for),

and holding Creative Sessions for 500+ people over the three years of funding (October 2024 – October 2027)

Creative Learning Programme Delivery & Administration

- Deliver community workshops and sessions at the Garden Museum, often in the Clore Learning Space, the Community Garden, and sometimes offsite in community settings.
- Liaise with colleagues in Learning to ensure the smooth delivery of the Learning programme. You will contribute to team meetings, be collaborative with room bookings, storage of materials and equipment.
- Work with colleagues in marketing to create content for digital learning, and create collateral for the website, social media and learning newsletter as appropriate.
- Manage bookings, communications, evaluation and logistics for all creative learning activities for communities.
- Responsibility for the ordering of materials and equipment for sessions, within budget and funding guidelines.
- Ensure access and inclusivity needs are met for all participants, including providing refreshments and a welcoming environment.
- Collect feedback, monitor participation, and contribute to reporting for funders and internal stakeholders.
- Contribute to displays in the museum which reflect the local community, for example, co-curated displays.
- Maintain the Creative Learning for Communities section of the website.

Person Specification

Essential. Applicants must have the experience, and a proven track record of:

- Demonstrable creative practice and the ability to inspire others.
- Developing and delivering creative learning programmes or projects for community groups in a cultural or educational setting.
- Working effectively with diverse groups, particularly those with access needs or from underserved backgrounds.
- Excellent communication, facilitation and interpersonal skills.
- Being organised, reliable, and able to manage multiple projects and stakeholders independently.
- A passion for inclusivity, wellbeing and the power of creativity and nature.
- Demonstrable skills in creative and artistic practice, including gardens, and a proven track record of delivering sessions to SEND, neurodiverse and vulnerable participants.
- Interest in gardens, green spaces, or environmental engagement.
- Interested in and committed to sustainable practices.
- An Enhanced DBS check will be undertaken following interview and subject to clearance, prior to appointment in the role.

The following will be advantageous:

- Experience working with older adults and/or people living with dementia.
- Knowledge of existing community networks in the borough and beyond.
- Experience with monitoring and evaluation of creative learning for community programmes.
- With lived experience of a protected characteristic
- From the local communities we are working with

- Someone who is confident in continuing our work with the legacy of Caribbean Gardening in South London, or If the preferred candidate does not have a specialism in this area this work will be continued through an additional freelance role, managed by this post holder.

Hours of Work

The postholder will work at the Museum site, usually 9.30am – 5.30pm with an hour for lunch. The days will be agreed depending on the programme and your own situation. Some weekend work may be required. Occasional working from home may be possible. The job may require additional hours during particularly busy times such as on event days, for which there is time off in lieu.

This role is Fixed Term for two years, but with the prospect of extension.

Application

To apply, please email recruitment@gardenmuseum.org.uk with the subject line “Creative Learning Officer (Communities)” and your CV by midnight on Sunday, 24 August 2025. Please add a covering letter of no more than two pages outlining how your skills and experience match the requirements of the role

First Round interviews: w/c 1st September TBC

Second Round interviews: 8th September

We regret that we are unable to respond to all applicants, you will only hear from us if we wish to invite you to an interview.

The Garden Museum is a registered charity and pursues a policy of equal opportunities. The Garden Museum values diversity, promotes equality and challenges discrimination. We encourage and welcome applications from all backgrounds, and all applications are judged on merit.