

On National Poetry Day, Jerwood Charitable Foundation and Arts Council England announce new partnership to support poets

Jerwood Charitable Foundation and Arts Council England announce the launch of the new Jerwood Compton Poetry Fellowships, a six-year initiative supporting poets in the UK. In 1964, a bequest was made by Mr Joseph Compton, one of the first directors of the Poetry Book Society, to the Arts Council with the aim of helping poets and of bringing poetry to a wider audience. Using accrued interest from the bequest and funds from Jerwood Charitable Foundation and the Arts Council, the new Jerwood Compton Poetry Fellowships will offer a significant new development opportunity for poets, funded to the value of £220,000. The programme will run biennially for three editions between 2017 and 2022, creating a total of nine new Jerwood Compton Poetry Fellowships.

The Jerwood Compton Poetry Fellowships will invest in the process and practice of making poetry, with no expectations of published work or performed events as a result of the award. They will support individuals whose practice encompasses poetry in the broadest artistic sense. Recipients might be page, spoken word or interdisciplinary poets, work with new media or have interactive, visual or participatory practices. They may be at the very start of their practice, or be established in their career; there is no criterion for experience. Successful artists will each receive a bursary of £15,000 to support a year of Fellowship, during which they will be matched with a significant mentor and will have further access to a range of advisers and 'critical friends' to support their developing practice.

The Fellowships will support creatively ambitious and generous practitioners; individuals who are making or who are capable of making a significant contribution to a community of poetry. They will gift freedom, reward creativity and potential and inspire confidence, embracing excellence in poetic practice.

Artists will be selected through a closed nomination process, and the project aims to put together a culturally and creatively diverse shortlist, looking to identify and encourage those who may not normally consider applying for development opportunities, awards or prizes

A list of 250 nominators has been approached to suggest individuals that they think would be right for the Fellowships, who will be then invited directly to apply by November 2016. The list of nominators will be held confidentially until the selection of the first Fellows has been announced in Spring 2017. The list includes poets (different career levels and types of practices), publishers, editors, literary development agencies, artists working in other disciplines, funders, festival organisers and other arts organisers and producers.

Sarah Crown, Director, Literature, Arts Council England, said: "What's wonderful about this programme is that it grants emerging poets something they very rarely get: the time and space to concentrate purely on their poetry. I'm delighted that we've been able to work with Jerwood Charitable Foundation to put Compton's bequest to such worthy use, and look forward to reading the work of the nine artists who come through the programme."

Jerwood Charitable Foundation's General Manager Jon Opie said: "We are proud to have worked closely with Arts Council England to develop this project – a generous, big-hearted opportunity that will give nine individuals time and proper support to do something extraordinary. In our search for prospective Fellows, we

want to explore what poetry in the UK is today and to do this we aim to hunt high and low for artists that represent poetic practice in its broadest sense."

Jerwood Charitable Foundation is seeking a freelance Project Manager to be responsible for the development and delivery of the first edition of the Jerwood Compton Poetry Fellowships.

Deadline 7 November 2016. To download an application pack: www.jerwoodcharitablefoundation.org/jobs

For press enquiries contact Alexis Stevens (alexis.stevens@jerwood.org) or Jon Opie (jon.opie@jerwood.org)
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Jerwood Charitable Foundation on Twitter: @shonaghm

Arts Council England on Twitter: @ace_national

Hastag: #ComptonPoetry

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Project credit:

A collaboration between Jerwood Charitable Foundation and Arts Council England with funds from the Joseph Compton bequest

Project Background

In 1964, a bequest was given by Mr Joseph Compton to the Arts Council, with the aim of helping poets and of bringing poetry to a wider audience. Using accrued interest from the bequest and funds from Jerwood Charitable Foundation and the Arts Council, the new Jerwood Compton Poetry Fellowships will offer a significant new development opportunity for poets.

Joseph Compton (1891-1964) was a member of the Arts Council of Great Britain, Chairman of the National Book League (the forerunner of The Book Trust), he ran the English Festival of Spoken Poetry and was a Director of Education in London. He was also one of the first directors of the Poetry Book Society. He produced a *Collection of poems and rhymes for children* (Methuen, 1931) and a supplement of new poetry edited by Roy Fuller was published by the Poetry Book Society in his memory in 1964. Philip Larkin set up the Compton Lectureship in Poetry at the University of Hull in 1968. It ran for four years and Cecil Day Lewis was the first recipient. Day Lewis paid the following tribute to Joseph Compton in his inaugural lecture: "I think of him chiefly as that invaluable and all too rare thing – the gifted, persevering, persuasive middleman of poetry. Such a person, who can bring together far-apart ends – poet and potential audience – deserves our respect and gratitude."

Notes to editors

Jerwood Charitable Foundation

Jerwood Charitable Foundation is an independent grant-making foundation and UK registered charity dedicated to imaginative and responsible funding of the arts, with a particular focus on supporting talent and excellence. We work with exceptional, dedicated artists and producers, enabling them to develop and thrive at important stages in their practice, often in partnership with leading UK arts organisations.

www.jerwoodcharitablefoundation.org

Arts Council England

Arts Council England champions, develops and invests in artistic and cultural experiences that enrich people's lives. We support a range of activities across the arts, museums and libraries - from theatre to digital art, reading to dance, music to literature, and crafts to collections. Great art and culture inspires us, brings us together and teaches us about ourselves and the world around us. In short, it makes life better. Between 2015

and 2018, we plan to invest £1.1 billion of public money from government and an estimated £700 million from the National Lottery to help create these experiences for as many people as possible across the country.

www.artscouncil.org.uk