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 **AHRC Impact Acceleration Account (IAA) Application Form**

This is for the launch funding call for Lancaster’s AHRC IAA. **Please complete ALL sections of this form**, and submit it as an e-mail attachment to ahrciaa@lancaster.ac.uk with [AHRC IAA Call #1 Application – your name] in the e-mail header **by 5pm on Monday 16January 2023.** Please ensure you read and understand the Guidance Notes.

**Please confirm that you have read the accompanying Guidance Notes in order to complete this application:**

Yes

**Incomplete applications, including those without a Head of Department signature, will not be considered.**

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| **1. Applicant Details** |
| Your name | Dr Brian Baker / Dr Azelina Flint |
| Your job title | Senior Lecturer in English and Creative Writing / Lecturer in English |
| Department(s) | ELCW |
| Email address | b.baker@lancaster.ac.uk / A.Flint@lancaster.ac.uk  |
| Total amount of AHRC IAA funding requested | £20,000 |

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| **2. External Partner Organisation** (it is mandatory that you have an external/non-HEI partner for this funding) |
| Partner organisation name | Blackburn Museum and Art Gallery |
| Name of main contact  | Caroline Wilkinson |
| Job title of main contact | Curator of History |
| Partner email address | Caroline.Wilkinson@blackburn.gov.uk  |
| **Short** description of partner organisation | Local Museum for borough of Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council, established in 1874.  |
| **Please highlight below the sector in which your partner is based:** |
| Doctoral Training Partnership/CDT | NGO/INGO/Non-project/Charity |
| Government (local) | Third sector (other) |
| Government (national) | Industry/Business (SME) |
| Government (devolved) | Industry/Business (Large Corporation) |
| International government | Industry/Business (other) |
| International government organisation | Other (please specify) |
| Public sector (other) |  |

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| **3. Proposed dates of project** (the project must end, including all spend, by 31 March 2025) |
| Start date | March 2022 | End date | 31 March 2025 |

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| **4. Head of Department Approval** |
| Head of Department name | Professor Sharon Ruston |
| Date of Head of Department approval | By Email -  |

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| **5. IP Declaration** |  |
| You are free to use the IP relating to the work you will undertake with the external partner | Yes  |
| Is there any knowledge owned by any other parties relating to the work you will undertake with your external partner? | Yes |

**6. Proposed Project Title: “Women’s Iconography in the Twenty-First Century”**

**7. Summary of the collaborative idea and key objectives:**

**Overview**

“Women’s Iconography in the Twenty-First Century” will be a collaborative impact project between Dr Brian Baker, Dr Azelina Flint (ELCW) and the Blackburn Museum and Art Gallery. It will generate significant impart for female practitioners of iconography (an ancient sacred artform that historically excluded women), by creating the first international network/digital archive of women’s iconography hosted by the website of the Blackburn Museum, which holds the largest collection of icons outside London. The network/archive will list and digitally exhibit the work of 50 iconographers in Britain and North America with whom we have already made contact and will lay the foundation for an AHRC Networking Scheme bid that will allow us to expand this network/archive to Europe through organizing a series of events to culminate in the first international conference of women’s iconography. Our IAA project will also generate broader impact by delivering six workshops, led by twelve iconographers, that will introduce local schools, third age networks, and church congregations to iconography and support the collaborative creation of icons that represent individuals from minority communities. Our collaboration with the Blackburn Museum will ultimately support an application for a National Lottery Project Grant to finance the first international exhibition of contemporary women’s iconography, “Diversifying the Icon”, which will support the museum’s current decolonisation agenda by exhibiting icons that expands the visibility of underrepresented groups in Christian sacred art.

**Background, Context and Need**

Iconography is the most ancient art practice in the Christian tradition. It was the universal artform of early Christians until the Great Schism of 1054, after which the Western Church developed alternative forms of sacred art inspired by Renaissance painting alongside the traditional icon. Iconography remains, though, the only artform permitted by the Eastern Orthodox Church and is therefore the most widely used, cross-denominational Christian artform in the world. Throughout their history, icons have been produced in male monastic communities, and in the Orthodox Church they belong to a formalised ministry that was not made open to women until the twentieth century. Although female iconographers now outnumber male, they face difficulties in networking, exhibiting their work, and presenting at conferences—demonstrating a clear need for this project.

**Objectives**

- to support and promote the practice of female iconographers through the creation of digital networks and archives, educational initiatives, and public exhibitions

- to introduce local communities who are underrepresented in Christian sacred art to the ancient practice of iconography and support these communities in diversifying the icon

- to foster cross-denominational discussion about the role of women and underrepresented groups in Christianity using the icon as a vehicle for inclusion

- to diversify the icon and thereby generate discussion about the relevance of the decolonisation movement to Religious Studies

- to publicise the Blackburn Museum and Art Gallery’s collection of icons and its decolonization initiatives

**Importance and Intended Beneficiaries**

Our digital archive of women’s iconography will invite 50 English-speaking iconographers from Britain and North America to create comprehensive listings of their works and will host two digital exhibitions in 2024/2025. The archive will also include video interviews exploring the iconographers’ professional and spiritual journeys. These unprecedented initiatives will raise international awareness of the significant contributions of women to iconography. By stimulating public interest in women’s iconography, our digital network/archive will transform the opportunities for networking and engagement available to female iconographers, thereby effecting real-world change.

The project will also explore how the icon can be diversified. The Co-Is will deliver six workshops at the Blackburn Museum, which will allow local community groups to create artwork inspired by iconography in collaboration with twelve female iconographers from the British and American Associations of Iconographers, and Women’s Ministries Initiative. Delegates will be given the opportunity to represent members of their own communities in their iconographic artworks. The workshops will consider how diversifying the icon can facilitate discussions between Christian and secular communities about decolonisation and inclusion in sacred art. They will address a gap in the current decolonisation movement, which is yet to consider its relevance to religious studies. The workshops will therefore generate change in curricula, expanding Lancaster University’s decolonisation initiatives, and raising awareness of these initiatives across the Northwest.

**Track Record**

We have already developed a network of female iconographers through conducting a series of field interviews with members of the British and American Associations of Iconographers in the academic year 2021-22. These interviews resulted in public lectures at the ELCW Research Seminar (March 2022) and the College of Liberal Arts, Hunan Normal University, Shanghai (November 2022). Azelina Flint was also awarded £500 by the British Association of Victorian Studies (BAVS) to support her field interviews with members of the Epiphany Sacred Arts Guild in Vancouver (March 2022). Additionally, we secured internal funding totalling £2000 from the FASS Decolonising Lancaster University (DLU) Network and the Lancaster Friends for an exhibition and workshop with Rev. Dr Angela Yarber of the Tehom Eco-Feminist Retreat Center (Florida) at the Lancaster Priory in July 2022. Titled “Decolonising Women’s Spirituality”, these events explored ways in which the traditional icon can be queered/decolonised to incorporate a range of feminist perspectives. Currently, we are developing learning resources for our iconography workshops and have been awarded £350 from the ELCW Small Events Fund to run a pilot workshop at the Storey in March 2023. We have also been invited to apply for a small grant of £500 from the Anglican and Eastern Churches Association (AECA) in January 2023, which fosters cross-denominational conversation concerning the importance of the icon to ecumenical relationships.

**8. Why is this particular partnership/collaboration best suited to achieve your project objectives?**

The Blackburn Museum and Art Gallery is the ideal partner for this project because it is home to the largest British collection of icons outside London. The collection consists of sixty-three Eastern European icons, made between the fourteenth- and nineteenth- centuries, which are a rich resource for introducing the public to the ancient history of iconography. Our digital archive will raise awareness of this collection by hosting two exhibitions that will present contemporary women’s work alongside the Museum’s icons. Our workshop series will also be held at the Museum’s Learning Centre, which oversees a variety of educational programmes concerning art history and art making with community groups across the Northwest. The Museum are keen to expand awareness of their collections and decolonisation initiatives. We will work with the curatorial team to develop our learning resources, which will be available to the Centre after the project’s completion. Our project will therefore be a springboard for the Museum to develop further decolonisation programmes/resources, while the Learning Centre will provide us with in-kind contributions for our workshops, including: three learning spaces with digital whiteboards/projectors, two boxes of art materials, plus contacts with the local schools with whom they regularly work.

**9. How does your project meet Lancaster University strategic priorities?**

We will have a “transformative impact on research and thinking” (Priority 1) by revealing the relevance of Christian sacred art to contemporary debates about feminism/decolonisation. The project is has a “regional focus” and will “actively engage in our community of communities” (Priority 3) by working with the Museum and making us of “local ties.” The ensuing discussions will “meet challenges of modern society” by considering how religious and secular communities can work together to promote inclusivity for “the wider societal benefit”. They will develop out of “teaching and learning that transforms people’s lives” (Priority 2), with low-participation groups being introduced to the history of iconography and placed “at the heart of our own work” as we collaborate with them to decolonise the medium. Our workshops will encourage “social mobility”, “support lifelong learning” and “generate positive change”, so that iconography becomes more relevant to the “complex global society” in which we live. Ultimately, we will address “current issues facing humankind” through exploring how the icon reveals the relevance of diversity and inclusion to contemporary Christian communities.

**10. What will the impact be for all partners?**

The project will enable the Museum to roll out its first educational programme in decolonisation in collaboration with teaching professionals with experience in outreach. Our digital archive will promote the iconography collection before its redisplay in 2025 and embed it in the museum’s decolonisation agenda. Our partner practitioners will gain access to an international network that will enable them to coordinate conferences and exhibitions, thus—generating greater recognition of their work. The work of the DLU network will be expanded into Religious Studies—and will acquire contacts with local congregations to help them disseminate their initiatives to a wider audience.

**11. What is your proposed project plan?**

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|  | **22-23** | **23-24** | **24-25** |
| **Michaelmas** | \*Submit IAA application | \*Build digital archive/network **(year-long)**\*Design learning resources for workshops\*Create listing of local community groups for workshops\*Coordinate EDI training/DBS checks for workshop leaders\*Organise travel for to workshops for participants | \*Roll out workshops 4 & 5\*Compile images/resources for second annual exhibition  |
| **Lent** | \*Pilot Workshop @ Storey (funded by ELCW Events) | \*Continue to build archive\*Compile images/listings for summer digital exhibition \*Advertise digital exhibition\*Roll out workshops 1&2 | \*Roll out workshop 6 **(by March)**\*Launch second annual digital exhibition in women’s iconography **(by March)**\*Complete IAA spend **(by March)** |
| **Summer** | \*Recruit digital assistants\*Advertise project on Iconography networks/ websites/facebook groups \*Compile listing of iconographers for digital archive/network\*Invite iconographers to participate in workshops | \*Launch archive/first digital exhibition of contemporary women's iconography.\*Roll out workshop 3 | \* Meet with Museum to discuss plans for “Diversifying the Icon” exhibition\*Draft/Submit National Lottery Project Grant application for Diversifying the Icon” exhibition (open call) |

**12. Please describe how the relationship between the university and the external partner(s) will be sustained post funding, and what you expect a follow-on project could achieve?**

The networks, collaborations, and audiences fostered through the IAA initiatives will lay the groundwork for an international exhibition, “Diversifying the Icon”, at the Blackburn Museum and Art Gallery. This exhibition would take place on the completion of the museum’s renovations in 2026 and be supported by a National Lottery Project Grant bid in 2025. It would be promoted by the exhibitions on the digital archive and feature the work of women from the archive/network, as well as a sample of the iconographic artwork produced in the community workshops. The work exhibited would range from the traditional to the radical, including icons of people of colour from the John Coltrane Church in San Francisco; a series of icons on the Gospel of Mary Magdalene by Mary-Jane Miller, and work of the ‘Holy Women Icons’ project by Rev Dr Angela Yarber, who depicts members of the LGBTQ+ community. This event would draw national attention to the museum’s collections/decolonisation initiatives and would work to close the gender pay gap in sacred art. It would also allow us to scale up on a national level with a view to applying to the AHRC Networking Scheme (open call) to expand the women’s iconography network/archive to such European institutions as the museums of iconography in Venice, Frankfurt, and Tallinn.

**13. Please provide details of your requested budget.**

I am requesting GROWTH FUNDING

**COSTS**

**Digital Archive**

- Staff costs for 100 hrs consultation with digital assistants = [Ask RSO Team for costing of hourly rates]

- Professional photography

@100 images x £69 (standard rate on LU procurement system) = £6,900

- Digital marketing for 2 x online exhibitions (Facebook/Twitter/Instagram) = £100

- Museum hosting costs for website [ASCERTAIN]

- Copyright for icons [ASCERTAIN]

**TOTAL ARCHIVE COSTS**

**Workshops**

- Venue = **In kind contribution**

- Art Materials = **In kind contribution**

- Travel for iconographers

 2 x Round Trip from Vancouver (estimated by KeyTravel) = £1220

 1 x Round Trip from Mexico (estimated by KeyTravel) = £950

 1 x Round Trip from Florida (estimated by KayTravel) = £600

 1 x Round Trip from Bedford = £100

 1 x Round Trip from Barrow-in-Furness = £25

**TOTAL TRAVEL = £2895**

- Accommodation for iconographers

 1 x Two-bed room for 5 nights (intn’ll travel) x 3 (estimated by KeyTravel) = £1900

 1 x bedroom for 2 nights x 2 (estimated by KeyTravel) = £640

**TOTAL ACCOMMODATION = £2540**

- Local travel for 6 x community groups = £2000

- DBS checks x 8 = £480

- Catering (Working Lunch/Tea/Coffee from EAT Lancaster) x 6 workshops = £1250

- Safeguarding Training for Workshop Leaders (from Museum) = £500

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| **14. Please explain how you will protect and promote Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) within this project.**Our project supports the University’s EDI objective to reduce the gender pay-gap by exclusively promoting the work of female iconographers and thereby striving to “eliminate unlawful discrimination” by “encouraging people with a protected characteristic to participate in public life” in a field where their representation “is disproportionately low” (EDI Statement). When recruiting iconographers, we will consult the FASS EDI, Athena Swan and REC Committees, as well as the LGBT+ Staff and DLU networks, and the Stonewall Global Diversity Champions Programme, to ensure that our research subjects represent a diversity of ethnic backgrounds and sexual identities. All participants will complete the university’s online EDI module and will be given access to the development platform. The Museum is accessible to disabled visitors. We will work with our Departmental EDI Committee to collate relevant data on our outreach activities for our Athena Swan Action Plan and will consult with the DEN, DLU and LGBTQ+ staff networks, and Women’s Forum, to ensure that our learning programmes are inclusive and welcoming.  |

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| **15. Please explain how you will approach Responsible Innovation within this project.**The project received ethical approval from REAMS on 9/11/2021. All participating iconographers will receive a letter explaining the objectives of the project and the nature of their participation in it. They will be given the opportunity to review the transcripts of their interviews before publication. We will work with the museum to develop learning resources that do not have unintended forms of impact on local communities. The university’s Spiritual Care Coordinator, Kara Cooper, has provided informal guidance on liaising with local religious congregations and we have consulted clergy from Lancaster Priory about conversations concerning EDI/Decolonisation. Last year, we trialled a workshop, “Decolonising Women’s Spirituality”, at the Priory with staff, worshippers, and members of the university. The event received positive feedback and we will carry the successful activities from this workshop forward in our work with the Museum. We are running a pilot event at the Storey in March 2023 and will incorporate recommendations from participants at this event into our learning programme.  |

**16. Please briefly explain why you think this is the most appropriate source of funding for your project.**We are engaging in cross-departmental and institutional collaboration for impact; in the long-term we hope to work towards an impact case study. Our research represents a ‘novel intervention and approach’ to iconography in its focus on decolonisation and women’s work; and this will enable wider collaborative activities for impact.