



Artist call-out: Debt, colonialism, and the climate

We're a campaigning organisation looking to commission up to ten new pieces of visual and/or performance art for an exhibition exploring the links between debt and colonialism, with some works also addressing the climate crisis.

Alternative formats: if you'd like an audio recording of this brief, drop us a message at exhibition@debtjustice.org.uk or call +44 (0) 7450 875495. Please note this line is only monitored part-time, so please leave a message.

Context

[Debt Justice](#) is a campaigning organisation working to end unjust debt and the poverty and inequality it perpetuates, in the UK and across the world.

As part of this work, we've been working on a research project exploring the links between debt and colonialism, and connecting issues such as the climate crisis.

Right now, [54 countries are in debt crisis](#). This is not an accident. For centuries, powerful governments, institutions and corporations have used debt to control and plunder the resources of countries in the global south for their own gain.

From colonial powers forcing countries into debt at the point of independence, to allowing corporations like BlackRock to continue to make huge profits from debt repayments today, we can't fight today's debt crisis without understanding its roots.

It's important to us that this work resists conventional ways of producing knowledge, and not just another NGO in the global north producing a technical report that is only read by others in the same space. We want this research to help inform public debate, to be accessible to members of the public who might otherwise not engage, and be useful to grassroots groups on the frontlines of fights for social change.

As part of this project, we want to give visual and performance artists based in, or with links to, countries affected by debt a chance to respond to the research in their own way, culminating in a public exhibition in 2023.

What we want to commission

We want to commission up to ten works of visual or performance art. This may include painting, sculpture, prints, drawing, spoken word, ground-based circus, poetry, soundscapes, photography, music, film, dance, walkabout performance or sketches, and any crossovers of those disciplines.

We're especially keen to hear from artists with links to any of the [54 countries currently in debt crisis](#) - this could be because you live there, have lived there in the past, or are part of a diaspora community with current or past familial connections to one of the countries in question.

We want you to look at the resources we've created, which are linked below, (there's a video, briefing, and discussion pack) and respond to the information in those resources in your chosen medium.

For example, you might submit a painting, a series of 2-3 photographs, or a spoken word or dance piece - we're open to all suggestions! We'd like at least some of the work to touch on the interconnection between debt and the climate crisis, although it's not essential if you wish to take a different approach.

We will also consider works which already exist and match our selection criteria, for a lower fee.

Key exhibition details

The work you create will be displayed publicly in November 2023 at Peckham Levels in London. This exhibition is intended for an adult audience, some of whom will be familiar with the topics, and some who will be new to them. We want the works to be engaging and stimulating for both types of audience.

Performance pieces will be performed live only once on the evening of the launch event in London. We will video your performance to be played throughout the rest of the exhibition. Performance pieces should not exceed 6 minutes.

Artworks, however, will be displayed throughout the full duration of the exhibition. For artworks outside the UK, we would prefer photographs or digital images that we can reproduce in the UK. Hanging artworks by UK artists can be any medium, with a maximum dimension of 5ft tall and 6ft wide. Due to the unconventional space we are looking for work in a wide range of sizes up to this maximum to fit the available wall space. Please note we are only able to display small (max 60cm x 60cm) sculptures due to a lack of floor space.

Logistics

- Key Dates:
 - Exhibition launch event: Wednesday 9th November, 7pm-11pm
 - Exhibition run dates: 9th -17th November 2023
 - Initial informal chats with commissioned artists: week beginning 3rd July 2023.
 - Mid-point check-in: Mid to late August 2023.
 - Deadline for sending finished artwork: 16th October 2023.
- The space: Peckham Levels, 95A Rye Ln, London SE15 4ST
- Support: Debt Justice will be in charge of installing and dismantling the exhibition
- Travel and Accommodation: For artists and performers based in the UK, travel and accommodation to attend the exhibition launch will be provided. We cannot cover the costs of overseas travel, but we will be able to provide accommodation for artists once they arrive in London.

Fees and legal information

Each artist will receive **£600** for new work, with the first half paid halfway through the process and the second on receipt of your artwork. For existing work that meets the selection criteria you will receive £250. If the cost of materials is a barrier we can offer an advance on these payments.

After the exhibition, we will return any original artworks to you for you to keep, sell, or display further as you see fit. For performance artists - you will be able to continue to perform the work in new settings and to use the video of your performance at the launch event.

However, Debt Justice will reserve the right to use images and/or video content of your artwork online and in printed publications in perpetuity with proper credit to you.

Selection Criteria

We will be selecting work based on the following criteria:

- We are looking for art from artists with a personal connection to [one of the 54 countries in debt crisis](#) or another country with a severe debt burden. You might live in the country, have family there, or be part of the diaspora.
- We are interested in hearing new and diverse perspectives on the topic of debt and colonialism.
- Work should respond to the resources at the bottom of this brief.
- Key themes we'd like to see explored (you may address one or more of these): Debt, Colonialism, Climate Justice, Resistance, Liberation, Activism, Health, Education, Human Stories.

How to apply

We'd like a max 500-word statement OR a short (3-5minute) video or audio recording telling us about:

- What medium you work in,
- How you would respond to the resources, what your work would be saying and how you would be adding to the wider conversation about debt and colonialism?
- Any connections you have with any of the 54 countries in debt crisis [\[link\]](#)
- Your identity as an artist - who you are, what drives you, any notable past works.

We'd also like to see examples of your previous work - 3-5 pieces would be ideal. We're interested in videos, photos etc, as well as links to any websites, relevant social media accounts or online portfolios.

Please email the statement and example work to exhibition@debtjustice.org.uk

Deadline: Wednesday 14th June, 12 noon

Resources (for you to respond to in your chosen medium)

- [About the project](#)
- [Short briefing](#)
- [Video](#)
- [Discussion pack](#)
- [About Debt Justice](#)
- [You can find many of the resources in Spanish at the bottom of this linked page.](#)

Any questions?

If you have any questions or wish to chat further about this project please contact skye@debtjustice.org.uk

We look forward to hearing from you!

The Debt Justice Team