



Family of The Vivienne opens search for the sculptor who will create permanent memorial to her

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A national call for sculptors opens today for a permanent lifesize bronze of The Vivienne, to stand at the entrance to Liverpool's Pride Quarter, with the artist to be chosen by their family.

The family of James Lee Williams, known to millions as The Vivienne, have today opened a national call for sculptors to create a permanent lifesize bronze statue of the performer, to be sited at the junction of Victoria Street and Stanley Street at the entrance to Liverpool's officially recognised Pride Quarter.

The commission is one of a small number of permanent public artworks in Britain to honour a contemporary LGBTQ+ performer. Art UK's catalogue of public sculpture records more than 13,500 works nationally, of which around 77 per cent depict men and 17 per cent women, a body of public art still dominated by monarchs, generals and industrialists, so why not a drag queen who meant a lot to many people, and will raise awareness around a specific cause.

James Lee Williams won the inaugural series of RuPaul's Drag Race UK in 2019, remains the only British performer to have competed in the American franchise, and became the first drag artist to reach a Dancing on Ice final. James moved to Liverpool from North Wales at sixteen and found in the city a place where he could be fully seen, whilst The Vivienne was born in the venues and community of the Pride Quarter long before national fame arrived. James passed away in January 2025 following a silent battle with addiction to Ketamine, and House of The Vivienne CIC was founded by his family to ensure no one else faces that struggle in silence.

The open tender invites professional sculptors at any stage of their career to put themselves forward. The brief calls for a seated bronze figure integrated with the existing stone benches on the public realm at the junction, so that visitors can sit alongside The Vivienne as she looks out over Stanley Street and the Quarter beyond, acting as the Pride Quarter's permanent guardian angel.

Sculptors are asked to capture the warmth, dynamism and personality of The Vivienne in a work that feels alive in the space, and to be willing to work closely and sensitively with James's family, who will approve the design at every stage from first concept to final clay model and who retain the final decision on who is appointed.

Cassie Williams, mother of James Lee Williams, said:



"I wanted somewhere anyone who loved him could come and sit with him. His family with their brother, their cousin, their nephew, their uncle. His friends with James. Everyone who admired him with Viv. It was important that this was in Liverpool, where The Vivienne made her name, where James found his people, and where the community continue to keep his legacy alive.

"What I would say to any sculptor thinking of applying is this: James was The Vivienne, but he was also my boy. If you can see both of those, you are the person we are looking for."

The project is fundraising toward a total of £120,000 to cover all costs, supported by an ongoing community fundraising campaign alongside other financial backers. Applicants are asked to submit their own full cost breakdowns, whether above or below that figure.

At this first stage, sculptors are not being asked for design proposals. Expressions of interest should comprise a CV, a portfolio of figurative or portrait work, a statement of no more than 500 words, an indication of anticipated fee range, and a proposed timeline. A shortlist of up to three sculptors will then be invited to visit the site and develop full proposals, each paid a development fee of £750.

Expressions of interest close on Friday 16th October 2026. The full brief is available at proudlysaid.co.uk/bring-the-vivienne-home/tender-brief.

John Hyland, Proudly Said, leading the project, said:

"This is the moment the statue stops being an idea and starts becoming an object. We have made this an open call because the right sculptor for The Vivienne could be anywhere.

"What matters is that they understand who both The Vivienne and James were. We are also asking sculptors to tell us honestly what this takes, we want to get it right rather than get it quickly."

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About the commission: Lifesize seated bronze figure, integrated with existing granite benches at the Victoria Street / Stanley Street junction. Bench dimensions approximately 180cm x 46cm x 45cm. Total project fundraising target £120,000, covering all costs. Target unveiling summer 2027, with 2028 as a fallback. Planning permission and a highway licence will be sought from Liverpool City Council.

How to apply: Expressions of interest to hey@proudlysaid.co.uk, subject line "The Vivienne Statue - Expression of Interest", by Friday 16th October 2026.



Full brief at <https://www.proudlysaid.co.uk/bring-the-vivienne-home/tender-brief/>

About House of The Vivienne CIC: A Community Interest Company established by the family of James Lee Williams to support individuals battling addiction, reducing stigma and ensuring people can access help without shame.

About Proudly Said: An LGBTQ+ platform based in Liverpool, founded by John Hyland, acting as project management lead on this commission.

Media contact: John Hyland, Proudly Said - john@proudlysaid.co.uk

Selection: The commissioning panel comprises members of The Vivienne's family and John Hyland (Proudly Said). The family retains final approval on the appointed sculptor.

Terms: Staged payments as funds are raised. Copyright remains with the sculptor unless negotiated otherwise. Professional indemnity and public liability insurance required.