

The Oxford Samuel Beckett Theatre Trust Award 2020

Application Guidelines and Information

Overview of the Award

The purpose of The Oxford Samuel Beckett Theatre Trust Award is to help the development of emerging practitioners engaged in bold, challenging and innovative performance and to encourage the new generation of creative artists.

The Award is for a company or individual based in the UK or Ireland to create a show either for the Barbican's studio theatre or a site-responsive show to take place in east London or the City. The winning show will premiere as part of the Barbican Theatre & Dance season. The proposal must therefore be for an original and unperformed piece of work that is available for production and unattached to any other venue or company.

The Award is designed for artists who are at the stage in their career where they can demonstrably benefit from moving on to a fully resourced and funded production. It is there to help artists move on to the next level in their professional career.

The winning artist or company receives a production grant of up to £32,000. In addition they will receive a mentor for the project and in-kind support from the Barbican including a marketing and press campaign for the performance and some technical and administrative support.

Timeline

- **Monday 10th December 2018** - Deadline for submissions
- **March 2019** – Barbican will respond to applicants to let them know whether they have been successful
We will acknowledge every application but regret that we are unable to offer any feedback due to the volume of applications
- **May 2019** - Interviews
We usually interview around 6-8 applicants. After these interviews 2 applicants are shortlisted and given a £2500 RnD grant to explore their idea further, culminating in a presentation to the panel of judges
- **October 2019** - RnD presentations
These 20-30 minute presentations are an opportunity to share with the panel a practical demonstration of the project that is being proposed. After these presentations a winner is selected
- **Summer/Autumn 2020** – Performances of OSBTTA 2020 winning production
The winning proposal is developed into a full production with support from the Barbican and is presented as part of their 2020 Theatre and Dance season.

Background of the Award

The Oxford Samuel Beckett Theatre Trust Award was first launched in 2003 and has been collaborating with the Barbican since 2007. Together they have supported the creation of 9 brand new performance works including *Helium* by **Slung Low** (2008), *Room Temperature Romance* by **Levantes Dance Theatre** (2009), *You Me Bum Bum Train* by **Kate Bond** and **Morgan Lloyd** (2010), *Camera Lucida* by **Dickie Beau** (2014) and *Roller* by **Mars.tarrab** (2017). This year the winners of the award were **Alan Fielden with JAMS**, whose show *Marathon* was presented at the Barbican this autumn.

For a full list of past winners please see the Trust's [website](#).

Eligibility

We welcome applications from a range of diverse backgrounds and from disabled and non-disabled people. We invite and encourage individuals to get in touch if they have specific access requirements, you can email OSBTTA@barbican.org.uk.

Applicants must:

- Be current and long term residents of the UK or Ireland (3 years or more)
- Have demonstrated a commitment to UK or Irish performing arts with a history of several performances in one or both countries
- Have a proven track record in delivering full productions with a history of at least 2 previous studio or mid-scale events

Your application will not be considered if:

- You are still in full-time education
- You have limited or no formal production experience
- The lead artist or company is already well established, for example
 - Has already had more than one main stage show at a leading large scale venue (800 seats or more)
 - Has already had repeated productions staged in association with leading venues
 - Is now or has ever been an Arts Council National Portfolio Organisation
- It does not have an artistic leader attached to it i.e. a director or choreographer who is a long term resident of the UK or Ireland with the relevant level of experience
- The proposed production has a previous performance history (this excludes Research and Development (RnD) work such as rehearsed readings or work-in-progress sharings)
- The proposed production already has performances planned or in discussion
- The proposed production is already attached to another theatre or performance venue and is not free to be premiered at the Barbican in 2020
- You would be unable to present your production as part of the Barbican programme within the Summer/Autumn 2020 timeline

Suitability

Bold and innovative projects will be favoured.

We will consider all scales of shows from those with large casts to those with one performer, or perhaps none at all.

We will consider shows of any length including durational performances.

We will consider any number of audience members including one-on-one individual audience experiences. We will consider all lengths of run from a handful of performances to a project that, if site-responsive, could last up to a month or more. However, we ask you to consider how many audience members will get to experience your work across the run and would encourage you to accommodate no less than 400 in total.

The Award is intended

- For artists from all disciplines and those who are working on interdisciplinary performances
- For practitioners of a high calibre engaged in bold, challenging and innovative performance
- For artists who are at the stage in their career where they can demonstrably benefit from moving on to a fully resourced and funded production and may not have had this opportunity before
- To support work of quality and promise that will push performance boundaries or take audiences on an unpredictable journey

The Award is unlikely to fund

- Applications from playwrights to support the development of a new script
- A proposal with no key collaborators attached
- An artist or company's first or second production
- A company in the first two years of its professional development
- Proposals that are in the very early stages of thinking and require more than a week of support and research
- Proposals that do not give a clear impression of how a production would most likely be staged or what the audience's experience of that performance might be
- Artists who have received substantial funding for past productions (for example, more than £75,000 for one production)

If you are not eligible for the Award or you are at the very beginning of an artistic idea or question then you may wish to consider applying for [Barbican Open Lab](#) which gives artists the space to experiment in a working theatrical space without the expectation of a final product.

Performance location

The winner of the Award will create a show either for the Barbican's studio theatre, The Pit, or for a non-traditional performance space in East London.

The Pit

The Pit is a studio theatre space, which is usually configured as single sided raked seating with 150 seats but can accommodate other configurations. The dimensions of the space without seats are 15m x 13.5m. The height is only 4.6 metres so the possibilities for aerial work are limited.

If your proposal for the Pit Theatre is successful the Barbican will allocate you two weeks in autumn 2019 (to include get in, tech, rehearsals, performances and get-out).

Site-responsive work

With a site-responsive proposal, the judges are looking for a piece of theatre that is inspired by and takes place in a non-theatre space. Proposals must be for productions in spaces that you could feasibly use, that are safe for audiences, and that are fully accessible for audience members with disabilities.

The final piece should be capable of being presented in locations/venues other than the original location/venue that it was conceived for. All applicants should consider designs that could be transferable. Applicants are recommended to propose making a theatre space in areas that commonly would be found in any urban environment; a town square, a shopping centre, a busy street, an office, a house, an industrial site, a waterway, a library, etc.

The Barbican can be more flexible on the dates for an off-site proposal but would expect these to be either summer or autumn 2020. Depending on the location, it may be more appropriate to schedule the run for when the weather is warmer.

If you are making a proposal for a site-specific or promenade production you should have previous experience of producing site-specific work and have demonstrable skills in moving audiences through unconventional spaces. Alternatively, you should demonstrate how you will gain these skills through future experience or collaboration with partners who have this expertise.

FAQs

I have applied in previous years can I apply again?

Every year we receive many strong applications so please do not be disheartened if you have not been shortlisted in the past, we strongly encourage you to reapply.

Can I apply with more than one proposal?

If you have more than one proposal that is eligible and suitable you may submit applications for both. However, remember that we are looking for applications that are detailed, focused and well through-through. You may also be the lead artist on one proposal but appear as a named collaborator on another.

I have already undertaken an Open Lab/work-in progress-sharing/rehearsed reading of this project, is it still eligible?

Yes, all of these are fine. However, any proposals that have already had a full, public performance will not be considered. The proposal must not have attachments to other venues, companies or funders that prevent it from being premiered at the Barbican in 2020.

Why is the production grant "up to £32,000"?

The size of the production grant (up to this amount) will depend on the scale of the show and a justified production budget.

Can I get feedback on an unsuccessful application?

Due to the volume of applications we receive we regret that we are not able to offer feedback.

Can I discuss my application with you before I apply?

Yes, if you have specific questions please email OSBITA@barbican.org.uk. We are also happy to receive invitations to see performances by artists or companies who are thinking of applying, although it will not always be possible for us to attend.

Why do site-responsive performances have to take place in east London or the City?

The Barbican is committed to bringing world-class arts and learning activity to communities in our surrounding east London boroughs.

We have a strong network of relationships across the east London boroughs, allowing us to support successful productions in building the necessary relationships to identify and secure a suitable site for performances, gain the necessary licenses and permissions, and successfully promote the work to local audiences.

We define east London and the City as including the boroughs of the City of London, Islington, Tower Hamlets, Hackney, Newham, Waltham Forest, Redbridge and Barking & Dagenham.

What art forms does the Award fund?

The award is for artists from all disciplines and those who are working on interdisciplinary performances. Previous winners have included theatre, dance, circus, live art and visual/installation led projects.

If I am shortlisted for interview...

Who will interview me?

The panel usually comprises of five people – two Barbican representatives and one from the Trust along with two arts professionals.

Who can attend the interview?

We welcome as many members of your company as would like to attend. If you are an individual artist you are welcome to attend alone or bring any of your key collaborators or a Producer if you would like.

What happens at the interview?

Before attending interview you will be asked to prepare a draft budget for both the RnD and the final production, a statement about how you would use the RnD period and what you think you would show to the panel as your presentation, and a hypothetical press review that you would like to see written about the final production that you are proposing.

At interview you would be invited to present or re-describe your proposed project to the panel. The panel will ask questions to clarify any aspects of the project that are unclear and to interrogate your ideas a little further both artistically and perhaps logistically. There will also be an opportunity for you to ask questions.

Will I get feedback?

All interviewees will receive feedback, usually in the form of a phone conversation with one of the panel.

If I receive an RnD grant...

What would I be expected to present after the RnD period?

The RnD period is to physically test precise ideas. With work of this nature, RnD will differ depending on the detail of the individual application and we would discuss precise plans with the shortlisted applicants following the interview stage.

Usually, a short performance of 10 to 30 minutes is presented to the panel and an invited audience. If your proposal is for the Pit Theatre, you would be invited to present your sharing there and would be given some time in the Pit (1-2 days) to prepare for this. If your proposal is site-responsive it may be more appropriate for your sharing to take place off-site.

If I am the winning applicant...

What in-kind support does the Barbican provide?

The Barbican provides press and marketing for the performances.

If your proposal for the Pit Theatre is successful the Barbican will allocate you two weeks in the space (to include get-in, tech, rehearsals, performances and get-out). You will have access to any of the stock from the Pit Equipment list and we will provide resident Technical Staff. The exact staffing schedule will be set out in a Technical Specification to be agreed with the winning applicant.

Please note that the Barbican is unlikely to be able to offer any additional rehearsal weeks and so rehearsal space should be allowed for when budgeting.

What support does the Barbican provide?

The winning applicant will have guidance and support from the Barbican, primarily in the following areas: financial management, contracting, press and publicity, long-term strategic development of their work, identifying potential sources of artistic and technical support, advising on technical aspects of the production.

Can I offer accessible performances?

We strongly encourage you to consider including accessible performances as part of your run and are happy to offer guidance and advice on BSL, integrated BSL, audio described, captioned and relaxed performances.

Can I raise additional funds to support the performance?

A maximum of £10,000 (excluding in-kind support, e.g. free or subsidised rehearsal space) can be raised by the winning applicant.

Who will be my mentor?

The mentor is selected in discussion with the winning artist or company and with specific consideration to them and the needs of their proposal. A suitable mentor will be approached by the Barbican on behalf of the winning applicant and paid a fee by the Trust. Past mentors have included Rufus Norris,

Fiona Shaw and Melly Still. The mentors are there to support and guide, and the nature of that relationship is established between the mentor and the winning applicants, and what they feel they need from a mentor.

When will the performances be?

If your proposal for the Pit Theatre is successful, the Barbican will allocate you performance dates in autumn 2020. The Barbican can be more flexible on the dates for an off-site proposal but would expect these to be either summer or autumn 2020.

Do I need to be a limited company?

You do not need to be registered as a limited company to apply for this Award but payments from the Trust will only be made by way of cheque to the bank account of a company, they cannot be made to individuals.

If you have any other questions please email OSBTTA@barbican.org.uk