Barbican Theatre Open Lab 2021/22

The Barbican Theatre’s Open Lab programme gives artists the opportunity to research and develop a new project, idea or performance.

We are looking for submissions that develop and create:

New voices

We’re looking to support early to mid-career artists. We’re committed to nurturing and developing creative talents and voices from a multiplicity of backgrounds, practices and contexts and are particularly interested in hearing from people who are underrepresented on our stages including ethnic minorities, Black artists/Black-led theatre companies, LGBTQ+ artists/companies, and d/Deaf and disabled artists/companies.

New audiences

We aim to inspire more people to discover and access the arts. We’re looking to support socially engaged, pioneering work from a multitude of voices that reaches and meaningfully engages with new audiences.

New ideas

We want to support the development of work that explores new methods and approaches, challenging the idea of what theatre or dance can be. We are interested in work that crosses art forms and embraces innovation.

New challenges

We are looking to support and develop artists who are being ambitious, challenging themselves and experimenting. We want to ensure this opportunity has the maximum possible impact, helping artists to develop their practice and move to the next stage of their career.

We are offering:

Residency

• A week’s residency in the Pit to experiment and develop your project, idea or performance.

• Technical provision, support and advice from our production team.

• The residency weeks are scheduled to happen across various dates between January – April 2022, please consider your availability when applying.

• A financial contribution towards your project of £2,000 to support you to pay collaborators.

Additional funding for access requirements is available for successful applicants upon request.

Training and Mentoring

• A Barbican Theatre Producer for advice and support with whom you will have regular check ins to discuss the progress of your project, including time before, during and after your residency.

• Training sessions from external partner organisations to support and develop self-sustaining practise on subjects such as fundraising, strategic planning, community engagement and making accessible performance.

• In-house training sessions with Barbican staff members in other departments such as marketing, company development, digital content, creative learning, curation and more.

• Six sessions with a mentor or coach selected by you to give bespoke guidance and advice on your project.

Extras

• Invitations and complimentary tickets for shows and events at the Barbican on an ad hoc basis and subject to availability.

• Inclusion on our website

• Meetings with members of Barbican staff from departments of your choice

How to Apply

Deadline: 9th August 2021 at 5pm

To be considered please provide an expression of interest including approximately 250 words on your artistic practice and approximately 500 words on your project or idea. Your expression of interest does not need to be in written form or follow a particular format. We welcome applications via video or audio recording and ask that they are no longer than 5 minutes in length.

All expressions of interest will be reviewed by at least two members of the Barbican Theatre and Dance programming team and will be assessed according to how closely they fit with our criteria (new voices, new audiences, new ideas, new challenges).We regret that due to the volume of applications we receive we are unable to offer feedback for first round expressions of interest. Our previous round of Open Lab received 378 applications.

We will invite up to 30 applicants to progress to the second stage. For this stage we will pay applicants a £50 honorarium and provide feedback to unsuccessful artists. These applications will be reviewed by at least two members of the Barbican Theatre and Dance programming team and two freelance artists, there will be diversity in this panel.

Further details regarding the Pit Theatre equipment list and an Access Guide can be found in the Additional Information document on the webpage. All documents regarding the Theatre Open Lab are available in large print and audio format.

We encourage you to read over our FAQ’s page for more information.

Submissions and general enquiries can be sent to theatre@barbican.org.uk. For submissions, please use Open Lab APPLICATION as the subject in your email.

We’re following Government guidance to make sure the Barbican is Covid secure. All Open Lab activity will be subject to current government guidance and restrictions. While we intend to deliver the programme as described above, we may need to adapt or postpone the Open Labs at short notice.