

Mission Statement

About:

The Chocolate Factory Theater is an artist-centered organization, built by and for artists. Co-founders Sheila Lewandowski and Brian Rogers began making work together in 1995 and quickly saw the need for a creative home to support their work and the work of fellow experimental performance-based artists. The Chocolate Factory, therefore, has grown and developed within and through a creative process that centers the development of new work, as guided by makers.

Supportive:

The Chocolate Factory Theater exists to encourage and support artists in their process of inquiry. We engage specifically with a community of artists who challenge themselves and, in doing so, challenge us. We believe that by supporting the labor of these artists, we contribute to elevating New York City as a thriving and more equitable wellspring of ideas.

Artist-Focused:

As an artist-founded, artist-led and artist-focused organization, The Chocolate Factory embraces artistic practice as an integral part of the artist's whole life, an essential component of the life of our community and a key element of a larger national and international artistic dialogue. As such, we host artists as our equal partners with shared autonomy, trust and appreciation. While we seek to make big ideas and extended relationships possible, we commit to working at a small, intimate and personal scale, with few artistic compromises and boundaries.

Comprehensive:

We achieve all of this by creating a vessel for artistic experimentation through a residency package serving the whole artistic-salary, space, responsive and flexible support for the development of new work from inspiration to presentation. We invest in a local, national, and global community of forward-thinking artists working at all stages of their careers.

Dedicated:

Each year 9-10 lead artists and their collaborators receive more than \$50,000 in support including salaried residencies, commissioning funds, dedicated access to our

space, equipment, and more -- culminating in NYC, national and world premiere performances for thousands of adventurous spectators. We literally hand over the keys and offer a remarkable degree of flexibility. We give dedicated multi-week creative residencies and pay every lead artist and performer a weekly salary on the books.

Archive:

We provide high-quality photo and video documentation (by Peter Richards) for every artist we support. These documents, which are added to our growing online archive and are viewed by more than 75000 individuals each year, can be seen online in their entirety at: vimeo.com/chocolatefactory

Community:

The Chocolate Factory is driven by the principle that being good neighbors means being part of a community. We connect with and contribute to the civic health of our neighborhood, its residents, and small business owners in flexible and resilient ways. We serve on our local community board, provide space and support for community activities, and organize large scale community events including the annual Taste of LIC.

Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion:

The Chocolate Factory Theater is committed to addressing racial and social injustice within its Staff, Board, and Artistic and Community Programs.