

Opportunities for Artists at The Chocolate Factory Theater

(or: how does someone get a gig here?)

What does The Chocolate Factory Theater Do?

The Chocolate Factory Theater supports the creation and public presentation of new work by early and mid-career dance, theater and interdisciplinary artists through our Visiting Artist Program, which includes Commissioned Premieres and Early Stage Creative Residencies.

Since the organization's founding, Co-Founder / Artistic Director Brian Rogers, an active participant in the NYC, national and international experimental performing arts for over 20 years, has been the primary curator of artistic programs. Brian attends numerous rehearsals, in-progress showings and public performances each week; and meets with artists regularly to discuss work and build relationships.

Throughout the years, The Chocolate Factory has been committed to expanding and diversifying the community of artists it supports (with a particular emphasis on welcoming artists from outside our known community); and has experimented with a number of curatorial initiatives.

In 2023, The Chocolate Factory's Board formed a Programming Committee, chaired by artist Neil Greenberg, to support us in reaching, and serving, new communities of artists.

Starting in 2024 (and each year going forward), this committee will invite current and recent season artists to nominate fellow artists from outside our known community to receive early stage creative residencies - and eventually, where possible, commissioned premieres.

The Chocolate Factory Theater remains fiercely devoted to the experimental performing arts community, and strives to build programs that actively consider equity and diversity in regards to race, class, gender, ability, and sexual orientation. As it currently stands, artists supported by The Chocolate Factory's artistic programs in any given year self-identify as 55+% persons of color, 75+% female or gender non-binary.

The Chocolate Factory Theater does not curate "projects" based on proposals or applications; rather, we choose to invest in the potential of an artist to make progress over time, and to do so on their own terms according to individual needs, interests, and points of view; expanding the notion of what performance can be and how it can be shared with the public. In many ways, this process is largely instinctual - though in a larger sense, efforts are continuously made to ensure a balance among the age, aesthetic, race, sexuality, gender and discipline of the artists who appear in any given season.

The Chocolate Factory Theater seeks to support the work of artists who are actively developing rigorous self-knowledge and challenging themselves to emerge into new

understandings of their own generative practices. In this way, we consider ourselves to be a home for innovation and risk. The Chocolate Factory is drawn to artists who seek to expand the possibilities of dance, theater and interdisciplinary performance.

The Chocolate Factory Theater is less interested in any specific project than in an artist's long-term trajectory, often working with artists repeatedly over a period of years. We do not curate for immediate success, but rather the potential to be successful long-term.

The Chocolate Factory Theater is committed to supporting the work of New York based early career artists. Though we also support the work of more established artists (including artists based outside of New York), early career artists remain a strong priority and continue to make up the majority of our roster in any given year. We regularly offer artists their first supported full-evening performance opportunity; and we do this in ways that are intended to feel intentionally non-hierarchical; resources offered to early career artists are comparable to those provided to more "established" artists and companies.

The Chocolate Factory Theater operates according to values that were formed in direct response to the challenges its founding artists faced and lessons learned as independent artists and producers. The Chocolate Factory continues as an artist-led organization striving to fully and properly support our own work while simultaneously providing a comparable level of opportunities to a local, national and international community of visiting artists - welcoming them not as guests, but as equal partners in a shared endeavor.

As the organization has grown, The Chocolate Factory Theater has consciously tailored its opportunities for artists to alleviate challenges, encourage risk-taking, and de-emphasize the pressure to be "successful," while also acknowledging and responding to the massive in-kind contributions made by performers and collaborators in the work. The potential for an artist to progress and grow over time is far more important to us than any particular work we may support.

How Do I Reach Out To You?

Though The Chocolate Factory does not curate its programs based on written proposals - artists are invited to make new work at The Chocolate Factory based on work seen and relationships developed over time - **artists are encouraged to contact Brian directly at brian@chocolatefactorytheater.org**. We do our very best to respond to all inquiries, performance invitations, and requests for meetings. If you do not hear from us right away, it's simply due to our limited capacity as a small team. The majority of The Chocolate Factory's team are working artists who well understand the challenges and frustrations of the independent artist life; this knowledge informs all of our artistic and curatorial decisions. Please reach out!

How Do Your Programs Work?

The Chocolate Factory Theater's opportunities for artists fall primarily into the following two categories: (1) Salaried & Commissioned Residences culminating in premiere performances for the public; and (2) Early Stage Residencies designed to minimize the expectations and pressures of producing a completed work.

Salaried & Commissioned Residencies

(curated by Co-Founder / Artistic Director Brian Rogers)

The goals of our Salaried & Commissioned Residencies are to (1) provide an exclusive residency experience, typically unusual in urban settings, where artists can work with a full complement of technical elements over a number of weeks with their full team, culminating in premiere performances for a public audience; (2) support experimentation and risk-taking by performing artists; and (3) recognize the value of the labor by performance makers, performers, design collaborators and technicians, by providing a fair hourly wage for all hours worked within our spaces, including Workers Compensation, Disability and Unemployment Insurance.

Each supported artist receives:

- 3-6 weeks of dedicated salaried creative residencies culminating in premiere performances for the public;
- Commissioning support (\$5000-\$15K) paid to all lead artists;
- All lead artists, performers and design collaborators will be paid \$30/hour on the books;
- Exclusive access to our space and technical equipment;
- Production, Press and Marketing support;
- Artists receive fully produced and edited multi-camera professional video and photo documentation of their performances.

Early Stage Creative Residencies

(nominated by current + recent season artists - see above for details)

The goals of our Early Stage Creative Residencies are to (1) form relationships with artists from outside our known community; and (2) provide a low/no stakes residency experience with (limited) financial support.

Each supported artist receives:

- 1-2 weeks of dedicated access to our space;
- Limited access to technical equipment;

- Limited financial support (including hourly payroll) for lead artists and their collaborators;
- Opportunity to host an informal work-in-progress showing is desired (not a requirement);
- Early Stage Creative Residencies sometimes lead to commissioned premieres in future seasons.

What Is An "Early Career" Artist?

We define "early career artist" to mean an artist whose artistic vision and voice is still at a developing stage, unrelated to that artist's age, length of career, or reputation among peers. For us, this definition transcends professional trajectory or generational identity. We continually seek to identify, cultivate relationships with, and support the work of artists who are actively developing a rigorous self-knowledge and challenging themselves to emerge into a new understanding of their own generative practices. In this way, and through the resources we are able to give, we consider ourselves to be above all else a home for early career artists. We regularly offer an artist their first supported full-evening performance opportunity; and because we seek to sustain long term relationships with the artists we support, it is not unusual for an artist to return to The Chocolate Factory multiple times over the course of several years. In this sense (and we say this not to be cheeky), we consider our community of experimental performing artists to be continually "emerging".