

A development lab for new work from solo (or duo) theatremakers

Working alone or in pairs can be hard. Starting Blocks helps with that.

Starting Blocks connects and supports artists who have new, experimental ideas that need development. It invites artists to make a home at CPT for ten weeks, introduces them to others on the same journey, and supports them to realise their creative ideas as ambitiously, and in as supportive and fun an environment as possible.

In recent years, Rachel Mars' hit show *The Way You Tell Them*, Louise Orwin's *Pretty Ugly*, Haley McGee's *The Ex Boyfriend Yard Sale* and 2018 Underbelly Untapped Award-winner *Queens of Sheba* by Nouveau Riche have all started life on Starting Blocks and gone on to national and international tours, four and five star reviews, with extended runs at CPT and beyond. Some of our last cohort have now been programmed for longer-running shows this autumn season.

"Starting Blocks is THE artist support programme for emerging artists making work on the fringes" – Jack Boal (SB artist 2022)

"A safe environment that allows creation and playfulness" – Héctor Manchego (SB artist 2023)

"So special and brilliant" – Hannah Calascione (SB artist 2023)

"Starting Blocks provided the confidence and support I needed to begin my first solo show, something I couldn't have achieved without it. This has been a pivotal experience, opening new doors in my career as an artist." - Sara Amini (SB artist 2024)

“Being on Starting Blocks is going to be a game changer. I've already broadened my network just as a result of the announcement.” - Michelle Hudson (SB artist 2024)

Application deadline: Monday 20th October 2025 at 12 noon.

Please note: Starting Blocks runs from January - March. You are expected to be available to rehearse for approx. 1 day per week between these weeks, and to meet weekly on a Friday from 10:30-12:00. The sharing will take place 27th and 28th of March.

What are we looking for?

We like shows which are like nothing we've ever seen before: new work, new ways of making theatre, new experiences for audiences. Click [here](#) to take a look at CPT's artistic priorities. We are looking for bold, innovative theatre and performance from early-career* artists, particularly where it engages with issues of cultural, social or political currency. (*And "early career" has nothing to do with age! We welcome early-career artists of all ages.)

Applicants can apply with just an idea, or with an idea that has undergone early-stage development, and now needs space, structure, and peer support to help bring it to life.

Please note: Projects that have been previously developed at another organisation, or with the financial support of a funding body, will not be considered. We are also unlikely to support new writing, revivals of classic plays, or pure dance projects.

What do Starting Blocks artists receive?

We will support 5 or 6 solo artists, or pairs of artists, across the programme. Each project will receive:

A £1000 cash commission, paid up front

Approx 9 days of free rehearsal space, across 11 weeks (1 day/week)

Weekly creative discussion meetings with the other Starting Block artists on Friday mornings 10:30-12:00

Creative, producing and marketing support and 1:1 time with the CPT team

A slot to share what you've been working on, at a CPT Starting Blocks showcase as part of our 2026 SPRINT Festival

Feel like we're missing something? Let us know!

Who is Starting Blocks for?

Starting Blocks is for solo or duo theatremakers, with CPT particularly keen to receive applications from solo artists. We prioritise proposals that demonstrate potential to find an audience. CPT is offering minimum 50% of places to artists from a low socio-economic background and/or who identify as:

D/deaf and/or disabled

Neurodiverse

Global majority* and/or migrant

LGBTQ+

*This includes people of Black Caribbean, Black African, South Asian, East Asian, South East Asian, Middle Eastern, Arab, Latinx, Jewish, Romany and Irish Traveller heritage.

How do I apply?

In order to apply you need to create a free account with Eventotron, or sign into an existing account.

Click "Apply" and navigate to the bottom of the page. Fill in the box with the name of your project and select "I'm Creating A New Event" and then next.

Please complete the application form via Eventotron to apply. Video and audio submissions can be accepted in place of a written application; just follow the instructions on Eventotron to submit.

The form is split into three sections. The first collects basic details about you, the second asks for more information about you and your proposed project, and the third section is our Artist Monitoring Form. The third section should take no more than 5 minutes to complete. We cannot accept scripts, or any other documents outside of the application form.

For any questions, accessibility requirements, or if you require the application form in a different format, please email artists@cptheatre.co.uk

A full copy of the call out & application questions can be the call out page on the CPT website.

Application questions below:

Tell us about your idea (max 30 words)

Tell us about your proposed project (max 300 words)

If you have started developing the work, please describe the stage it's at (max. 120 words)

What impact would Starting Blocks have on your artistic development? Why is now the right time? (max. 150 words)

Are you available for regular (weekday, daytime) rehearsals between January and March 2026, a regular Friday meeting 10:30 – 12:00, & a Starting Blocks Sharing?

Please use this space if you have any additional notes on your availability