



Iris Theatre's START scheme for new artists

Start is Iris Theatre's new scheme to support young-in-career artists who are just starting out - people who are interested in a career in theatre, but haven't got too far down the road yet. We're looking to support eight people over the course of 2020 who are looking to nurture their skills in a practical environment, structured around two key pillars of learning and mentorship.

In 2020, the scheme has two different strands: startDIRECTING and startDESIGNING. Both schemes are entirely FREE to participate in, and we're in the process of securing funding to cover participants' expenses so that there's no barrier to attending sessions and taking part.

Read on for more about our schemes for early career directors and designers - and how to get involved! The deadline for applications is Friday 28th February 2020.

Iris Theatre

Iris is an award-winning theatre company and charity resident at the historic Actors' Church, St Paul's Covent Garden. We're devoted to creating transformational opportunities for the next generation of theatre practitioners and artists. Our big theatrical event is our annual summer season at St Paul's, usually featuring a Shakespeare and a family show in the grounds of, and inside, the building.

Over the years, Iris has also hosted circus, musical theatre and opera at St Paul's, which was built in the 17th century by Inigo Jones as the parish church to Theatreland. Today, St Paul's continues to serve the theatrical community in its unique location in the West End.

Start, and our new mid-career artists initiative PLATFORM, are brand new initiatives for 2020, supporting artists across multiple disciplines. We are supported by trusts and foundations across our work, but the bulk of our income comes from private supporters, including our Legacy Friends, as well as our incredibly generous resident venue, St Paul's Church Covent Garden. If you would like to support Iris' work, please visit our Support Us page on our website.



startDIRECTING

This strand supports four people who want to begin a career in directing for theatre, but have yet to receive any formal, vocational training in the role. It's an entry-level programme running over six months, with twice-monthly sessions curated and hosted by our artistic director Paul-Ryan Carberry.

Participants in the scheme will also be given the opportunity to be placed as assistant directors on one of our summer season productions - *A Midsummer Night's Dream* directed by Paul-Ryan, and *Robin Hood*, directed by Rafaella Marcus - allowing the opportunity to apply some of the skills gained in learning sessions in a practical environment.

Application criteria

Applicants for startDIRECTING should:

- be over the age of 18 (there is no maximum age)
- have not taken part in any vocational higher education training related to directing (other theatre training is fine - if you're an actor or other theatremaker looking to move into directing, you're eligible)
- live in or around London, or be able to easily access central London
- have not been an assistant director on more than two professional theatre productions*
- have not directed any professional theatre productions* to date

** we define 'professional productions' here as featuring actors who would self-define as 'professional', or taking place in a formal theatre environment outside of amateur, educational or voluntary theatre or youth theatre groups*

You can apply to take part by filling in [this form](#). If you require the form in an alternative format, get in touch with us at 020 7240 0344 or via office@iristheatre.com and we'll do our best to help. See the bottom of this document for more information on expenses and other application guidelines.



startDESIGNING

For years Iris has supported new designers taking their first steps into theatre through volunteering opportunities on our summer season. In 2020, we're shaking this up and opening the doors to a new kind of involvement - that is, we're introducing four associate designer placements on the summer season. This year, we're producing *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Robin Hood*, and we're looking for two associates per show, one on costume and one on set.

startDESIGNING allows early career designers or design students a chance to make mid-scale theatre work alongside a professional theatre designer, as well as access mentoring and practical opportunities to make and source for a unique theatrical event in the heart of the West End. It's targeted specifically at designers looking to develop their skills in a safe and supportive environment, and build connections for the next steps in their careers.

Application criteria

Applicants for startDESIGNING should:

- be over the age of 18 (there is no maximum age)
- live in or around London, or be able to easily access central London, particularly between May and August
- have not designed set or costumes for more than two professional fringe or small-scale theatre productions* to date, or any larger professional productions
- have not been an assistant or associate designer (set or costume) on more than three professional theatre productions* of any scale

Participants may have undertaken, or currently be undertaking, vocational training in technical theatre, theatre design or similar. Some practical making or sourcing responsibilities will be undertaken, but the role will be crafted around the participants' learning priorities.

** we define 'professional productions' here as featuring actors who would self-define as 'professional', or taking place in a formal theatre environment outside of amateur, educational or voluntary theatre or youth theatre groups. 'Fringe' or 'small-scale' is defined here as performing to an audience of less than 150.*

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A note on expenses

For all eight roles, we've applied for funding to provide up to £500 in expenses per participant. These are designed to cover transport and lunch costs for your time on the scheme, and more information on how they can be spent will be provided upon making offers to successful applicants. We aim to be able to definitively outline expense provision by the time interview offers are made in March.

Making an application

In addition to the above criteria, Start participants will:

- be passionate about stories, telling them, and discovering how they are told
- have a thirst for knowledge and be dedicated to personal development
- carry a curiosity about making work for the stage
- have a strong and committed work ethic

If you're not sure if you fit any of the application criteria, or have any other questions about applying, get in touch with us for a private, informal conversation. We will ensure that any conversations had in this manner are kept separate from the interviewing panel.

The deadline for all applications is Friday 28th February 2020, and interviews will be held with shortlisted candidates in March. To apply, just fill out [this form](#).

Start is brand new, and we're learning along the way. If you'd like to have an informal conversation before applying, or have suggestions about how we can improve or develop the initiative, drop us a line at office@iristheatre.com, or give us a call on 020 7240 0344.