



***Gear Shift* Artist Development Programme** Info Pack (Large Print)

We're looking for the next generation of creative change-makers to join our new artist development programme - *Gear Shift*.

The HandleBards began from a small seed of an idea - Shakespeare on bicycles - with limited resources but trailer-loads of passion.

Over the last 8 years we have grown to become an award winning, internationally renowned theatre company, touring 14 Shakespeare productions to 15 countries across 5 continents and performing to over 30,000 people a year. We have been consistently recognised for our sustainability efforts, having been awarded the Edinburgh Fringe Sustainable Practice Award in 2014, nominated for The Stage Sustainability Award in 2017, and recently being invited to the Creative Climate Convening discussions in advance of COP26, facilitated by Julie's Bicycle. In 2020 we became a registered charity, solidifying our commitment to education and sustainability in the arts.

We wouldn't be where we are now without the support, advice and guidance we have received over the years, so now we'd like to pay it forward. Gear Shift is an Arts Council funded programme, here to help early-career artists and producers develop their ideas, bring environmentally sustainable thinking to the forefront of their projects, and forge their own networks in the creative industries.

Each Gear Shift participant will receive 10 hours of bespoke mentorship, development and shadowing sessions from Tom Dixon and Paul Moss, the founding producers of the HandleBards, working to increase the participant's skillset in production, fundraising, and the art of bringing a creative project to life. Perhaps you need help writing a funding application or finding the right creative team for your idea? It could be that you need support in booking a tour, or guidance in how to be more sustainable in your practice? Maybe you'd like to see what it's like to produce a tour from the back of a bicycle? Whatever it is we'll work with you and give you the support you need to get your project rolling and shift up a gear.

As well as the mentorship and advice, the programme will feature masterclass sessions from industry leaders, giving you access to expert advice and guidance across the sector and beyond.

There are four spots on this year's inaugural Gear Shift programme, which will take place from April to October 2021. In order to apply, you don't necessarily need to have any professional credits, but we're looking for people with a drive to bring a creative idea to life and build environmental sustainability into the heart of their work. You might be a visual artist, a director, an actor, a writer, a producer, a magician, a DJ, or a combination of things - we're looking for creative people across all art forms, with an environmentally-minded idea and an appetite to make stuff happen. We're particularly interested in hearing from people from a diverse range of backgrounds, including experience in non arts related fields, and those who feel they've encountered barriers to a career in the arts and want to bring their ideas and stories to fruition.

We are committed to a policy of equal opportunities in which individuals are selected and treated on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities without regard to age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

How to Apply:

To apply follow the link below and fill out our short application form and Equal Opportunities form by **midday on 31st March.**

[Application Form](#)

[Equal Opportunities Form](#)

We are also happy to accept your answers to the application in video/audio format. Please submit audio/video submissions in accordance with the length of the word count i.e. 200 words = 1.5 minutes at a regular pace (ref <https://wordstotime.com/>). All applications will need to address the questions in the application form. Send through your videos or audio files to Paul at paul@handlebards.com, with the subject 'Gear Shift Application' followed by your name.

We will be hosting a short webinar on 16th March at 10am to talk through the programme and the application process and answer any questions you might have.

[You can sign up here to join the webinar.](#)

We have also published more accessible versions of the guidance for applicants including Large Print and Easy Read. [Links to these are available here.](#)

The questions in the application are:

1. Tell us about yourself and your creative practice (200 words)

In this section, let us know what you do, how long you've been doing it for, and some examples of the work that you're proud of.

2. Tell us about your project you'd like to make happen, or take to the next level. (200 words)

We're particularly looking for work that's environmentally-minded, either in your artistic output, in its creation process, or both.

3. What do you want to get out of the Gear Shift programme, and why do you think it will be useful for you at this stage in your career? (200 words)

How would you like us to help you, and why now?

You can also attach one document or image of supporting evidence - either an example of your work, or a letter of support from somebody you know - but you also don't have to attach anything if you don't think it's necessary.