

Stratford Circus

Visioning Consultant

Invitation to Tender

SUMMARY

Since January 2012 Stratford Arts Trust has been running Stratford Circus Arts Centre, a venue at the heart of its community offering world-class theatre, dance, music and circus performances for families, young people and adults alongside a creative learning programme which works with local schools and community organisations to introduce local people to artistic experiences through workshops and bespoke projects.

2020 has been a year of immense change and challenge with a devastating impact seen across the London Borough of Newham and the entire cultural sector as a result of Covid-19. In this time of slashed budgets and uncertain futures, with the support of its core funder Arts Council England, Stratford Arts Trust are embarking on a period of transition as we leave our home of 8 years and establish our organisation as one based within the community and without a venue.

We are looking for a consultant to work with the staff team and Trustees, alongside our partners, artists and audiences to help develop a new vision and long term strategy for our organisation. How can Stratford Circus innovate and adapt to this changing world and be central to the recovery of arts and culture, supporting artists and freelancers whilst still offering exceptional cultural experiences to audiences and participants? This is an opportunity to create not just a Strategy but a manifesto – for the people of Newham and East London, because everyone has the right to be creative and we want to put our community at the heart of our plans.

CONTEXT

Our current mission has been to give the diverse communities of East London access to the highest quality art and artists in this country and internationally within our facility and off-site, inspiring lifelong engagement, empowering and developing local talent and audiences through the arts. We believe access to art brings joy, empowers people and draws them together.

Situated in Newham - one of the most culturally diverse, socio-economically deprived boroughs in the country, and with some of the lowest levels of arts engagement - Stratford Circus has been a place

- where the best artists in the country perform to local audiences
- where some of the most exciting artists in the country make work with local residents and schools, with a focus on creating new shows that represent and reflect the UK's diverse communities (e.g. Akram Khan Company's Chotto Desh, Upswing's Ramshackle House and The Hartlepool Monkey by Gyre and Gimble with Fuel)
- for progression routes and performance platforms for the next generation of artists.

We have identified, developed and curated artistic programmes and services in order to meet our charitable objectives, which currently are to:

- advance and further public education in the understanding and appreciation of the arts, culture and heritage, in particular (but not limited to) providing a centre to promote cultural education for the benefit of the public.
- provide or assist in the provision of facilities for education, recreation and other leisure time occupation in the interests of social and economic welfare of members of the public with the object of improving their condition of life.

As we evolve into an organisation without a venue, it is clear that our vision, our mission, our objectives and our ways of working will need to change. This transition will bring challenges, but it will also provide us with new opportunities. We are keen that we build on our track record for producing innovative work and making art more accessible for under-represented groups, whilst at the same time finding new ways of meeting the needs of our communities across Newham and more widely across East London.

WHAT WE ARE LOOKING FOR

RESEARCH/ENGAGEMENT

- Research to discover relevant and successful examples and models of best practice (nationally and internationally) of artists and communities working together achieving creative, social, economic and learning outputs
- Research and benchmarking exercise to identify the needs and the opportunities that exist within Newham and across East London in order to define a new role of Stratford Arts Trust within the community seeking opportunities to adapt or expand upon our current programme:
 - what exists in the borough, what are the gaps, where are the opportunities for partnership and collaboration, what are the barriers
- Engagement of key stakeholders and partners
Including the London Borough of Newham, funders, sector development agencies, project partners, delivery partners, artistic partners, education institutes, community & voluntary sector organisations, and local businesses.
- Community conversations – paid facilitated conversations with artists, freelancers and community groups
- Creation of a steering group made up of local people and artists to support the next phase of activity

VISIONING EXERCISE

Taking learnings from the research & engagement phase to lead on a visioning exercise, alongside the staff and board to explore a new vision and mission for the organisation, leading to the creation of a manifesto and detailed plan with recommendations and actions signed off by staff, board, stakeholders and community.

BUSINESS PLANNING

Working with an Arts Council appointed 'critical friend', Stratford Circus staff team and Trustees, you will support the translation of the manifesto, vision and mission into a costed and realistic organisational strategy to include:

- Fully costed Business Plan
- Communication Plan
- Fundraising Strategy
- Audience Development Strategy
- Staffing structure and Board skills audit

KEY DELIVERABLES

- Research report with PESTLE analysis and SWOT
- Facilitate conversations and planning sessions with staff, board, stakeholders and local community to include artists & freelancers
- Creation of a manifesto: including detailed Vision & Mission with key objectives for the organisation moving forwards
- Support the staff in the creation of a detailed Organisational Strategy

WHO WE ARE LOOKING FOR (AN INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP) WITH

- Extensive relevant experience at a senior level, and an in-depth understanding of the arts and culture sector including participatory arts and new and emerging business models
- Experience of developing organisational strategy
- Experience of community driven, co-creation practice within diverse communities
- Strong communication skills, and excellent people skills
- A connection to Newham and/or East London
- The empathy and communication skills required to build consensus across diverse communities and agendas

TIMESCALE

Invitation to Tender

Deadline – 23 November, 10am

Interviews

Thursday 30 November

Contract (Dec 2020 – end March 2021)

Research/Engagement Phase December 20 – January 21

Visioning January/February 2021

Business Planning March 2021

Fee - £10,000 (approx. 25 days)

PROCESS

To tender for this work please email the following to jobs@stratford-circus.com :

An up to date CV and a cover letter (max 3 pages) which include

- Why this role is of interest / what excites you about the role

- How you have supported organisations in a similar way in the past
- Your connection to Newham/East London
- An outline schedule/work plan detailing your approach to this contract, identifying the number of days to be worked and highlighting key milestones
- Two references relevant to this contract.

If you would prefer to submit in an audio or video format, please do so.

If you have any questions relating to this role or tender process please email jobs@stratford-circus.com for the attention of Lucy Atkinson, interim CEO.