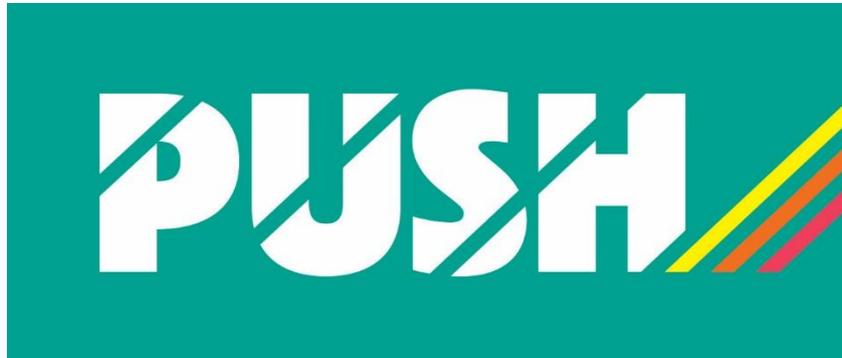


PUSH - OPEN CALL Guidelines
LAB 1: Gender and sexual identity
30th January – 6th February 2017



Information about PUSH

PUSH is a Creative Europe-funded project led by Imagineate (Scotland) alongside Cultuurcentrum Hasselt (Belgium), The Ark (Ireland), Aabendans (Denmark) and Scenekunstbruket (Norway). Over two years, we will explore three topics within theatre and dance for young audiences. Artists from all partner countries will be invited to apply to participate in one of three residential Labs:

- Gender and sexual identity Lab in Scotland
- Migration Lab in Ireland
- (over) protection Lab in Belgium

We will soon have a dedicated PUSH website (at www.pushproject.eu) but for now you can read a little more about the full project here -

<http://www.imagineate.org.uk/project/push-identity-borders-and-safety-zones/>

This application is for the **Gender and Sexual Identity Lab** which will take place in Edinburgh, Scotland.

Information about the Gender Lab:

This Lab will bring together fourteen artists from five different countries in Europe to explore gender and sexual identity in theatre and dance for children. Artists will work together over 8 days from Monday 30th of January to Monday 6th of February 2017.

Gender Lab – how can we use performance to explore the topic of gender and sexual identity in theatre for children? And should we? How can we as artists use our current skills and push ourselves and the sector to create bold and

radical work for children? How can we match changes in societal thinking with the work we create and the ways we engage with young people?

Through performance experiments, discussions, skill-sharing, cross-cultural pollination, and engaging with children, we will explore how ideas around gender and sexual identity manifest themselves not only in our individual practices, but also in the wider field of Theatre for Young Audiences and in society at large.

We will ask the difficult questions concerning taboos, stereotypes and archetypes within work for children, and question where the boundaries lie between what is safe, subversive or wholly inappropriate. Where are the tensions between these considerations? Who makes the rules? And is or isn't it the job of the artist to push and question these ideas?

In terms of gender and sexual identity, the LAB seeks to address the gap between the leaps forward in legal equality and the way children and society in general engages with these important topics. For example, Scotland are apparently Europe's fairest nation in terms of legal protection for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people. In Ireland our Marriage Equality vote was seen as greatly progressive and inclusive. But these equality laws are not always reflected in the lived experiences of these people, nor are they reflected in visibility or representation in performance for children, which still sometimes clings to heteronormative narratives.

These are some areas of research for the Lab:

- Experimentation and collaboration – creating performance responses to the topics on our own and with the others in the group, and potentially with children from a local school
- The role of the “child” – what rights do children have in terms of equality and how does this affect the way we make work for them? What do children ‘need’ from our work – if anything?
- Understanding the terminology – get up to speed with current gender and queer theory and how the language used around gender and sexual identity differs from country to country
- Input and provocations from outside the performance world - academics, activists and educationalists who work with children and identity
- What do children think? – We will work with a local primary schools to engage directly with children and their teachers

The Lab will be practical and you will be expected to create small performances as ways of manifesting our discussions so it is important that you consider

yourself to be a maker in order to take part. It is not a masterclass: we will be working together to find ways of making rather than following a pre-scripted approach.

About Eilidh MacAskill (Gender Lab Leader)

This lab will be led by Eilidh MacAskill and is inspired by her research project with Imagine, Gendersaurus Rex. Eilidh is a Glasgow-based live artist and theatre maker who creates and performs original live works for both children and adults. The work she makes is experimental and humorous, and draws on a range of performance styles and media to explore our lives as human animals.

She is Artistic Director of Fish And Game with whom she made and performed *The Polar Bears Go Wild* and *The Polar Bears Go Up* which was a co-production with London's Unicorn Theatre. She is a research artist with Imagine, exploring gender, sexuality, queerness and difference in Theatre for Young Audiences. This research also filters into her work for adults and she has been touring her solo show, *STUD*, which explores masculinity in a queer female body.

<http://www.fishandgame.org.uk>

<http://www.imagine.org.uk/creative-development/research-artist/>

Information on the selection process

The Ark are selecting two artists to attend this Lab, one artist by invitation and one artist by application.

Applications should be made by 12pm on Monday 10 Oct 2016.

The Ark selection panel will include Aideen Howard, Director and Maria Fleming, Theatre programmer and one external panellist. The panel will select one artist based in Ireland for inclusion in this Lab, all applicants will hear if they have been selected by **Monday 24 October 2016**.

There are four places on the Gender Lab for artists based in Scotland who will join four artists from Belgium and two each from Ireland, Denmark and Norway. All artists will be paid a fee of €800.00 and €320 per diems for the 8 days plus return travel to the Lab and self-catering accommodation in Edinburgh (this Lab is fully residential requiring all participants to stay in the same accommodation).

FAQs

- **What kind of artists are you looking for?**

We are looking for artists involved in making theatre and dance, ideally if you have made work for young audiences before (or can show us a strong interest). We would like to find a group of artists at different stages of their career although due to the complexity of an international residency it's unlikely to be suitable for artists still studying or who have very recently graduated.

- **What information should I include in my application?**

We are looking for artists who have experience in making and touring work and who are excited about creating theatre and dance for children. We'd love to see examples of your work (images, descriptions, film clips, reviews etc) so do include them in your application via web links and/or Dropbox. We are also looking for artists who have a genuine interest in the Lab topic – of issues around gender and/or sexual identity - and can bring their ideas to the group, artists who are committed to making change happen.

- **How will the panel assess the applications?**

The panel will talk through each application thinking about these key criteria:

- *Quality of work as a maker*
- *Proven interest in theatre and/or dance for young audiences*
- *Proven interest in gender and/or sexual identity*
- *Quality of ideas and interest in how they intersect with work for young audiences*
- *Potential impact of this Lab for the artist and their career.*

This means we are interested in hearing about your artistic work but also any other ways in which you have been involved in the topic even if not related to your practice as an artist such as political activism, voluntary work, academic study.

- **Do all artists have to stay in the Lab accommodation?**

Yes, all the participants (even those who live in Edinburgh) will be booked into the same self-catering accommodation. This is to allow all the Lab participants to live together for a week, to facilitate deeper discussion and opportunities to get to know each other. If this is a problem for you for any reason please let us know at the time of application.

- **How many places are there?**

There are 14 places in total for this Lab with 4 available to artists based in Scotland and 2 artists based in Ireland, Belgium, Norway and Denmark. A selection process will take place for each of the three Labs so it won't be the same artists taking part in all three.

- **Can I apply for more than one Lab as I'm interested in more than one topic?**

Yes, you can apply for more than one Lab though priority will be given to those who haven't taken part in a previous one. If you are really interested in other topics and are not selected for this Lab, you are welcome to apply for the other Labs.

- **Can I apply if I haven't worked with or met with The Ark before?**

Yes, we would encourage all theatre and dance artists interested in the topic and work for young audiences to apply.

- **Can I apply for this Lab if I'm not based in Ireland?**

If you are based in Belgium, Scotland, Norway or Denmark you can contact us to be put in touch with our partner in your country.

- **How accessible is the Lab?**

Both the Lab venue and the artist accommodation are fully accessible and we welcome applications from artists with a disability. Please get in touch with us if you would like to discuss your accessibility needs.

We aim to ensure the application and selection process is straight forward and fair. If you have any questions about the process, or the project in general, please email Maria Fleming, Theatre Programmer at maria@ark.ie

You can apply via our online application form [here](#) or download a Word version of the application form [here](#)