



UPSWING

ARTIST DEVELOPMENT





TELLING NEW STORIES IN EXTRAORDINARY WAYS

Upswing is an award-winning, contemporary circus company based in the UK. We create world-class experiences that connect audiences, artists and participants through circus. Our work is informed by the wealth and diversity of British Culture. Our work ensures that circus is a modern, dynamic and diverse art-form by cultivating the best in emerging talent, with a particular focus on BAME Artists and those underrepresented in mainstream circus including disabled artists. Since 2013 we have supported over 80 professional artists through our various Artist Development Programmes as well as offering continuous training experiences for artists cast in our public performances, collaborations and co-productions.

Over the last 10 years, Upswing has supported, mentored and assisted BAME and other underrepresented artists to progress their skills, develop their own aesthetic, and gain regular employment within circus and the wider performing arts sectors. With limited support we have invested in strategic interventions at key developmental stages from first access to CPD for established artists resulting in creative labs, mentoring and showcasing, and ultimately, to full-scale performance.

CIRCUS FLAVOURS and ARTISTS' DEVELOPMENT (2020)

Our focus in 2020 will be to provide a more focused mentoring experience to a group of emerging professionals drawn from the pool of BAME talent we have worked with over the last 10 years – to support them in the step-change from skills and spectacle to creation of complete works both short and long form.

This smaller group of artists will be selected for a more formal, one-year attachment to the company through our CIRCUS FLAVOURS programme - training and developing as workshop leaders for a range of participatory/ community settings. In addition, we will offer mentoring to develop their creative ideas as well as creating paid performance opportunities that platform their work.

Ultimately we will create opportunities to bring developing artists into our own regular work as well as providing them with greater visibility to enable them to find work elsewhere as well as to make create their own projects. We want to see them accepted within the wider circus sector and working with a range of companies.



Past programmes include *[see attached pages]*:

- ***CIRCUS, CIRCUS, CIRCUS (2018-2019)***
- ***CIRCUS 50:50 (2017)***
- ***STEP UP and INFLIGHT (2010-2016)***
- ***ROUNDHOUSE DIRECTORS EXCHANGE (2013 & 2014)***

Past programmes:

CIRCUS, CIRCUS, CIRCUS (2018-2019): In collaboration with **Certain Blacks**, an organisation that advocates for BAME artists, we led a two-year mentoring and creation project – working with a group of BAME, LGBTQI+ and disabled artists – mentoring them in the making of their own work. Year One included a two-week dedicated residency followed by mentoring over the subsequent year culminating in a Year Two public showcase event featuring the pieces created by the artists. The project has resulted in two successful bids to Arts Council England from participating artists to further develop their projects and one artist shortlisted for CircusNext - a prestigious EU-funded project to support creation and diffusion to emerging contemporary circus makers.

"I finally felt confident that a producer understood that my work was a little bit different from the live art and circus work that was out there"

Symone, Performance Artist

*"Residencies supporting the creation of new circus work are far and few, let alone opportunities targeting diverse voices. **Circus, Circus, Circus** is addressing head on a lack of diverse bodies, voices and narratives on stage."*

Kevin Wratten, Roundhouse Circus Programme Producer



How met initial
Did they change?

Circus?

Surprises

in your practice

↓ Practical lawyer
↓ Practical process
↓ Practical Buckle up
↓ Practical Sue
↓ Practical ~~about~~ her

Past Programmes:

ROUNDHOUSE DIRECTORS EXCHANGE (2013 & 2014) & CIRCUS 50:50 (2017) We developed these three programmes to address a lack of professional development opportunities for potential circus directors and mid-career circus artists. The goal was to provide training and creative exchange to support skills in directing that would support creating shows specific to circus. The Roundhouse project supported 16 directors over the two years. Circus50:50 run in collaboration with the **New Vic Theatre** in Newcastle-under-Lyme and the Roundhouse supported 8 circus directors/circus creators over four intensive weeks across 2017 in both Newcastle-under-Lyme and London.

"I feel shaken and stirred; I am questioning my place in the world. I want to make some more work and I feel fierce. I found the honesty of today useful, I feel validated."

"I've found it empowering – don't be afraid to follow idea. Don't be scared. I am ready, I am getting the tools together – I feel confident, validated and justified"

practice

SHARE
THE STORIES

would like more time reflecting
on practice & process

A person with curly hair is performing an aerial maneuver, suspended in the air against a clear blue sky. They are wearing a white long-sleeved top and white shorts. Their arms are extended outwards, and their legs are bent at the knees. The person's hair is voluminous and curly, and it appears to be blowing in the wind.

Past programmes:

STEP UP and **INFLIGHT** (2010-2016) were bi-annual training programmes for young, emerging **BAME** artists that ran for several weeks each year. The goals of this programme were to increase the numbers of **BAME** artists entering the sector -- supporting two with an extended package of training and mentoring.

Former **STEP UP** and **INFLIGHT** graduates have gone on to work in the Paralympic Opening Ceremony, with the Royal Opera House, the Royal Shakespeare Company, West Yorkshire Playhouse, Elliott & Harper Productions, Chichester Festival as well as being invited to audition for numerous other opportunities.

*“Both **Step Up** and **InFlight** have allowed me to put questions of money aside and just think about the training. I now feel I can actually do this as a career, focus on aerial dance and circus theatre.”*

Rachel Brennan,
Performance Artist/Dancer

“My aerial artistic development began in 2011 when I took part in the two week intensive programme, from there my passion grew. Thanks to the continuous mentoring and training from Upswing I am proud to be presenting my first show in 2019.”

Jessica Andrade, Actor