



HODGKISS DIRECTOR AWARD 2027 INFORMATION PACK

ROLE SUMMARY

The Hodgkiss Director Award 2027 offers an emerging theatre director from Greater Manchester a unique opportunity to build a lasting relationship with the Royal Exchange Theatre. This award aims to support a director with a distinctive, underrepresented voice who has faced barriers in their career.

The recipient will gain a bespoke development program, including the opportunity to be the Assistant Director on the World Premiere of SHOOTERS by Tolu Okanlawon. SHOOTERS is about an African American photojournalist, Gordon Parks who is on the precipice of international renown as he attempts to document the lives of a gang of teenage boys from Harlem for LIFE Magazine. The play is an exploration of masculinity and representation as it examines a true event in mid-century New York and asks the question; who has the right to tell someone else's story?

The Awardee will receive mentorship from the Royal Exchange's Associate Directors Emma Baggott and Katie Greenall offering insights into the Theatre's operations and the challenges and opportunities of directing at scale. Additionally, they will also have the opportunity to workshop their own ideas with two professional actors across a creative development week.

This program is designed to provide an emerging director with the tools and experience to build a sustainable career in theatre, offering a rare and comprehensive opportunity in a challenging arts landscape.

INTRODUCTION

The Hodgkiss Director Award 2027 will provide an exciting and unique opportunity for an emerging Greater Manchester based director to forge a meaningful relationship with the Royal Exchange Theatre.

Our ambition for the Hodgkiss Director Award is to provide an exciting emerging director with an in-depth experience that is not just focused on the rehearsal process but also encompasses the range of ways a director might work with a theatre to forge a sustainable career. It will provide an opportunity that is becoming increasingly rare in the theatre landscape with many other schemes for emerging and assistant directors closing. Supporting emerging directors to take the next step in their career is something that the Royal Exchange Theatre has a proven track record of delivering in a way that has a lasting impact on the artist's journey and career opportunities.

The aim of the Award is to offer a bespoke programme of work which we hope will provide the Awardee with:

- A greater understanding of a rehearsal room process working at scale
- Embedded knowledge of how to work with creative teams and build a production

- Experience to support yourself to forge a sustainable career as a theatre director in the current landscape
- Insights into a major producing house

We hope to engage people that have a distinctive voice that is currently under-represented, an energy to generate ideas and the drive to tell ambitious stories that connect with a range of people. The applicants will have experienced a barrier to pursuing their career ambitions and would tangibly benefit from the opportunity of structured support, a bespoke developmental journey and a sense of home.

They will be mentored by Associate Director, Emma Baggott who will provide them with a unique insight into forging a career as a theatre director at a particularly difficult and precarious time in the arts ecology. Through dialogue with the Artistic Director and Associate Directors Emma Baggott and Katie Greenall at the Royal Exchange Theatre, the Awardee will gain insights into how to forge relationships with other producing theatres.

Finally, they will also be afforded an opportunity to explore what they have learnt through their placement in a practical way with an opportunity to workshop an idea of their own with two professional actors – this will be shaped through conversations with Associate Director Emma Baggott, to enable the Awardee to explore something that will have the greatest impact on their creative development.

This placement is open to artists over the age of 18 who have a demonstrable background in directing theatre and are looking to further develop their practice.

HODGKISS DIRECTOR PLACEMENT

The candidate will receive a 10-week bursary that will:

- Enable them to act as Assistant Director on SHOOTERS
- To lead their own process across a creative development week

When working as Assistant Director, duties will include but are not limited to:

- Providing general assistance and carrying out any research that will inform and benefit the production as agreed with the Director.
- Observing rehearsals and inputting into discussions with the creative team and production meetings.
- Supporting the acting company with line learning.
- When requested, leading on warm-ups and supporting with the pastoral care of the actors and creative team.
- Assisting the company in documenting the rehearsal process.
- Being a sounding board and active observer in the rehearsal room and to offer notes where appropriate.
- Noting the show once a week after press night in consultation with the Director and Associate Director.
- Observing and assisting the director in technical rehearsals, through previews to press night.

- Providing observations and reflections (either written as blogs or filmed) from the rehearsal room for sharing on the Royal Exchange Theatre website and social media channels.
- Supporting and facilitating any shadowing or work experience placements.
- Any further duties as required by the Director or Associate Director.

Your creative development week could be testing out a new idea on a pre-existing text, developing a facet of your practice that you haven't yet had time, space or resources to develop. When working as Director across your own creative development week, duties will include but are not limited to:

- Actively communicating with the Royal Exchange's creative team regarding your desired outcomes and what you hope to learn.
- Leading on your own phase of research and development in negotiation with Associate Director Emma Baggott and Associate Director Katie Greenall (Creative Exchange).
- Forming local and national relationships with theatres and creatives via mentorships and facilitated meetings.

The Royal Exchange will also provide:

- One 1:1 meeting with the Director during the rehearsal process.
- Five 1:1 meetings with either Emma Baggott or Katie Greenall, giving you the opportunity to plan and shape your residency.
- One 1:1 meeting with Artistic Director, Selina Cartmell.
- As part of the Hodgkiss Director placement there will be potential opportunities to meet with other departments in the Theatre including our Producing, Production, Audiences and Engagement teams in order to fulfil their specific interests.
- One final 1:1 meeting with the Associate Director at the end of the placement to evaluate the experience.

Continuous learning is vital to our delivery of this Award – it is therefore expected that the recipient will take part in a full evaluation of the Hodgkiss Director Award 2027 at the end of their placement.

WE ARE LOOKING FOR SOMEONE WHO:

- Can demonstrate a commitment to directing and a passion for theatre making.
- Has an interest in new writing and the dramaturgical development of a new play
- Demonstrates a strong interest in theatre that challenges dominant narratives.
- Is organised, confident, flexible, calm and approachable.
- Has had some experience of directing in a professional capacity and engaging with professional actors.
- Is a good team player who is willing to work collaboratively as part of a team including creatives, actors, stage managers and RET staff.
- Someone who is living in or originally from the Greater Manchester area with a commitment to making work in the region.

We welcome and encourage Global Majority applicants who were born and raised in Manchester.

We require applicants to be aged over 18.

TIMELINE

The Hodgkiss Director Award 2027 placement runs from 4th January 2027.

Wednesday 23rd September 2026	Hodgkiss Director Award 2027 announced and open for applications
Wednesday 7th October @ 1.00pm	Hodgkiss Director Award 2027 information session on Zoom with Katie Greenall
Thursday 22nd October @ 6.30pm	Hodgkiss Director Award 2027 information on Zoom with Emma Baggott
Monday 2nd November – Midday	Deadline for applications
Friday 6th November	Unsuccessful applicants and first round interview candidates informed
w/c 9th November	First round interviews (10 th November)
w/c 23rd November	• Second round interviews (25th November) • Recipient confirmed
w/c 4th January 2027	Prep and induction at the RET (1 day)
w/c 11th January- w/c 1st February	Rehearsals x 4 weeks
8th - 11th February	Technical rehearsals
12th - 16th February	Previews (not Sunday 14th)
Wednesday 17th February	Press Night
w/c 22nd February	Cover rehearsals (TBC)
w/c 18th January	Touchpoint sessions planning and required resources of the Creative Development week
w/c 8th March	Creative development week

The successful candidate will be expected to be present full time on the weeks in bold.

Hours of work per week are 35 hours averaged out across the engagement. Normal working hours will be 10am – 6pm with a one-hour unpaid lunch break included. There will be evening and weekend working, particularly during tech and preview weeks, which will require the Awardee to work more than 35 hours in a week. When this occurs, working hours will be adjusted in quieter weeks.

More details on the timetable and working hours can be provided upon request when shortlisted candidates are invited to interview.

BURSARY

We are able to offer the Hodgkiss Director Award a fully inclusive bursary payment of

£6,600. The bursary has been calculated in line with industry guidelines drawn up by UK Theatre/Equity – more information at <https://uktheatre.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2023/07/130723-UK-Theatre-Equity-Directors-rates-2023-2027-1.pdf>

TO APPLY

DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS : Monday 2nd November 2026 – Midday

Please submit your application to recruitment@royalexchange.co.uk

We accept written or video applications. **Please label all your documents with your full name.**

To apply for this bursary, please send us the following:

- An up-to-date CV – no more than one side of A4
 - A link to your website or 3-5 images from your work
 - Your answers to the questions below:
1. Why would this opportunity prove useful to you at this point in your directing career and what would you hope to learn from this placement? (300 words or up to 3 minutes of video)
 2. Tell us about a piece of theatre you've seen in recent years in Manchester or the Northwest where the theatre space / theatre architecture has helped tell the story. If you have seen something at the RET please use the RET production to answer the question. (300 words or up to 3 minutes of video).
 3. The role of Assistant Director often involves giving constructive feedback to a wide range of people. Can you give an example of a time when you've had to give feedback to someone who is older or more experienced than yourself? (300 words or up to 3 minutes of video).
 4. What piece of art (visual art, film, installation, photography, live art, sculpture, live music) has stopped you in your tracks and made you see the world differently? Please tell us what it was, where it was and what it made you feel and how you saw the world differently. (300 words or up to 3 minutes of video).