

2023-2025 Queer (Re)public Residency Program Emergent Artist Residencies

The Theater Offensive's (TTO) mission is liberation -- to present art by, for, and about queer and trans people of color that transcends artistic boundaries, celebrates cultural abundance, and dismantles oppression. The Theater Offensive uses theater and the creative process as a cultural organizing tool, building community and creating space for important conversations through art. Since its founding in 1989, TTO has continually sought to support the creation of transgressive and transformative new queer works. In 2019, TTO adopted a new strategic plan and mission statement that made explicit the organization's historic focus on QTPOC artists and communities. TTO's programming is designed to prioritize the self-identified needs of low-income queer residents of color and amplify their voices.

Queer (Re)public, launched in Spring 2020, is TTO's program that honors, uplifts, and builds on emergent themes inherent to and in QTPOC art through workshops, residency, programs, and commissioning art by, for, and including queer and trans artists of color. This work takes inspiration from the artist and activist Adrienne Maree Brown's theory of [Emergent Strategy](#).

Emergent Artist Residencies -- TTO's Queer (Re)public Residency Program, piloted in July 2021, is dedicated solely to queer & trans artists of color, whose work demonstrates artistic vigor and inquisitive exploration of their personal queer aesthetics. Through Queer (Re)public's Emergent Artist Residency, TTO will engage and support artists both emerging and experienced. The Theater Offensive will take on one or two (1 or 2) resident artists from either project level per eighteen (18) month cycle. Alongside TTO's Programs Director & Staff, the selected artists will develop an in-process or new work of multidisciplinary art during their eighteen (18) month residency. With this Emergent Residency PILOT Program, TTO seeks to:

- Assist emerging and experienced artists in discovering/developing an understanding of their personal aesthetic through interrogation and unpacking Queer Liberatory Aesthetics;
- Create deeper relationships with local and national artists through artist-led & institution-supported development;
- Interrogate the connection of people, place, publics, power, and practices essential to QTPOC art;
- Become an incubator for QTPOC artists on their artistic journey towards edge & queering the performing arts platform;
- Create and foster art that is life affirming for queer artists;
- Work with Resident Artists to develop & grow a residency program that embraces and genuinely reflects Queer Liberatory Aesthetics.

RESIDENCIES COMPONENTS:

The EMERGENT ARTIST RESIDENCIES recognizes two (2) QTPOC artists per eighteen (18) month cycle. The chosen artist(s) work in both residencies must demonstrate exceptional artistic merit and an understanding of their own personal aesthetic.

The selected **emergent artist level 1** will receive:

- A stipend of \$3,000 for the emergent artist;
- Administrative support; Access to studio space, printing, and all TTO in-kind resources;
- Direct producing support from TTO's Program Team;

- Archival & Documentation & Graphic Design Support from TTO;
- Accounting, Budgeting, Banking, and Taxes courses for freelance artists;
- \$1,000 towards Professional Development (including but not limited to conferences, workshops, intensives, wellness ventures, etc that will further the artist's artistic endeavors);
- Four (4) Mentorship sessions with artist chosen mentor to aid in personal aesthetic development;
- \$2,000 to put towards artistic project exploration (including Dramaturgy, Artistic Consultants, and workshop days);
- An optional Work In Progress Showing after exploration;
- An artistic community engagement event lead by resident artist (ie. Story Circle, Liz Lerman Critical Response Process, a Workshop, or Offering).

The selected **emergent artist level 2** will receive:

- A stipend of \$5,000 for the emergent artist;
- Accounting, Budgeting, Banking, and Taxes courses for freelance artists;
- Administrative support; Access to studio space, printing, and all TTO in-kind resources;
- Archival & Documentation & Graphic Design Support from TTO;
- Direct producing support from TTO's Program Team;
- \$5,000 to put towards artistic project exploration (including Dramaturgy, Artistic Consultants, and up to five workshop days)
- Artists choice of a full production showing OR workshop production in the 2023-2025 season for at least 3 public performances;
- An artistic community engagement event led by resident artist (ie. Story Circle, Liz Lerman Critical Response Process, Workshop, or Community Offering);
- Professional Development opportunities to engage with and present to different artists, performances, and theater producers through TTO's resources & national partnerships (including but not limited to National Performance Network, Theater Communications Group, NEPA, and more)

ELIGIBILITY, CONDITIONS, & REQUIREMENTS:

The EMERGENT Level ONE (1) Resident Artist must:

- Self-identify as a Queer and/or Trans person of color;
- Live in the Greater Boston area;
- Have a project proposal and/or thesis that is either in development or has been only workshopped;
- Be ready to discuss how TTO's values of **Edge, Queering, Questioning, and Ambidextrous** (detailed below) shows up in your work and yourself as an artist.
- Commit to spending the 18-month residency period by actively participating in The Theater Offensive's community and staff; The residency period begins May 1, 2023 and ends December 1, 2024;
- Commit to being present and actively participating during all aspects of this residency -- if emerging artists do not show active participation residency will be canceled;
- Serve on the Selection Committee for the 2025 - 2026 EMERGENT ARTIST RESIDENCY.

The EMERGENT Level TWO (2) Resident Artist must:

- Self-identify as a Queer and/or Trans person of color;
- Have a project proposal that has had at least one-two workshops and/or Work-In-Progress Showings either produced by an institution or self-produced;
- Have engaged in vigorous artistic practice of their choosing;

- Have experience in new work creation & development;
- Have an understanding of iterative producing/artistic steps and learnings;
- Commit to spending the 18-month residency period by actively participating in The Theater Offensive's community and staff; The residency period begins May 1, 2023 and ends December 1, 2024
- Commit to being present and actively participating during all aspects of this residency -- if emerging artists do not show active participation residency will be canceled;
- Serve on the Selection Committee for the 2025 - 2026 EMERGENT ARTIST RESIDENCY.

SELECTION PROCESS:

Artists that apply for the EMERGENT ARTIST RESIDENCIES are screened for eligibility by The Theater Offensive's programs staff and evaluated by a selection committee made up of TTO's staff members from all departments and the previous resident artist who will select two finalists. TTO's Program Director, Executive Director & Cultural Strategist, and Program Manager will then evaluate the finalists chosen by the committee. The selected finalists receive a scheduled interview with TTO's Program Director, Executive Director & Cultural Strategist, and Program Manager.

Selection for this residency is based on development of the artist's queer aesthetic, commitment, and originality. The selections are guided by TTO's mission, guiding values, and queer liberatory aesthetics:

GUIDING VALUES:

- **OUTness** creates and transforms space for queer and trans people of color, and the world around us.
- **Design Justice** engages those most directly affected to be leaders at the forefront of our movement and telling stories.
- **Shared Power** guides our programming, pedagogy and organizational structure.
- **Youth Leadership** centers youth perspectives, amplifies youth voices, and supports youth of color as the current leaders of our movement.
- **Experimentation & Innovation** keeps our work adaptive, iterative and relevant.

QUEER LIBERATORY AESTHETICS:

- **Innovation, Disruption and Subversion/Unrealities** -- Inhabiting the space of the unreal, being forced into the space of the unreal, being forced to traverse different worlds across space and time in the context of post-colonization. Pre-colonization, QTPOC existence and gender multiplicity were affirmed. For Instance, the inherent queerness to being black that has nothing to do with queerness as another unreality: innovation as QTPOC lineage and birthright and origin story and survival. Circumstances compelling QTPOC to constantly reimagine: reimagine selves, communities, and stories again and again. Innovation not only in art contexts but also how we move and navigate through the world. "Subversion and disruption is a cultural gift."
- **Lineages and Time Travel** -- QTPOC connect through points in time. We also connect through people we intentionally claim and remember through time. Via lineage and inherited story, context, and experience, we revisit these places, people, and times.
- **Emotional Risk and Tenderness, Wholeness** -- Not fragmenting parts of QTPOC identities but showing up in the fullness of them. Wholeness as a place where we have agency. People taking thoughtful care of one other and their work. The art we create is life affirming and a place where we can be vulnerable. This care is performed from performer to artist, presenter to performers, etc.

Throughout the development and performance process people feel valued and supported, their humanity recognized, and their dignity upheld.

- **Edge, Queering, Questioning, Ambidextrous** -- Create new queer space vs inhabit existing ones. Holding both the navigation of what exists alongside the exploration of the wonderful. Thinking about beauty and function. Engaging with what needs to shift, and building something that needs to be built. Incremental instead of / and monumental. Saying out loud what you choose reminds us that we are not a monolith. Dialectic with the culture that doesn't negate the complexity. Reimagining selves and communities which pushes me to the edge of my perception. Expectation that something spontaneous and unplanned will occur. That's where magic lies.
- **Space & Segregation: Honoring the Kitchens, Piers, and Community Centers** -- The intimacy of space - Regardless of whether the work is performed in a theater, there should be a sense of closeness or intimacy. So many of the spaces in which QTPOC art has been born have been outside traditional art spaces. How is this ethos continued when space is available? Negotiating and claiming space, memory, and lineage within a disappearing and gentrifying city. Honoring the disappearing stories that exist within shifting spaces. Acknowledgement of different realities, histories, contexts existing within the same physical space. These differentials have impacted arts spaces, access, and collective struggle in Boston. White people bought into heteronormativity as legal protections were gained which resulted in a kind of segregation. Segregation is felt within art spaces -- "manifested in art being created in spaces that are leaving."
- **Medicinal/Healing** -- To think of work as medicine is to understand the hurt and create something that will soothe, restore, and transform it. It asks for a diagnosis, an understanding of where this hurt came from. We were not born with it. It is both given to us and, at times, carried on by ourselves. While we were not born wounded, we *are* born with the compounds and instincts needed to make us whole. We are innately social beings.

(Be)longing -- So often QTBIPOC have wounds around belonging. In so many ways, the search for a QTBIPOC utopia, and the migrations and initiations that accompany this quest, begin as a search for belonging. In the quest for our togetherness, queerness offers us the opportunity to reimagine longing and how we center our cultures while creating kinship, love, relationships, family, community, commitments, and the myriad of ways to be interconnected, interdependent, and claim each other. QTBIPOC be longing, and create spaces of belonging. Belonging in this context is a collective endeavor. In an arts context, a sense of belonging is critical for QTBIPOC artists in a world in which they are dismissed, erased, and unseen. When QTBIPOCs see something on stage or in the gallery that is a reflection of our experience, it is revolutionary and grounding. It makes us feel seen, affirmed, and connected. It creates a kind of intimacy and knowing. This aesthetic isn't so much about creating a "sense of belonging." It is specifically leaning into interdependence -- the me/we. This gives space for trust and accountability to be built and deepened over time. The ways that generations of QTBIPOC artists have supported each other, advocated for each other, helped develop and nurture each other's projects, and established autonomous artistic spaces outside of mainstream arts and cultural institutions speaks to this interdependence.

TO APPLY:

Using the subject line LIBERATED FUTURES - EMERGING ARTIST RESIDENCY Level One, send an email to apply@thetheateroffensive.org with a single PDF document, containing the following elements in sequence:

1. **AN APPLICATION COVER SHEET** with the following information presented in clear format:
 - a. NAME
 - b. COMPLETE MAILING ADDRESS
 - c. HOME PHONE, OTHER PHONE
 - d. EMAIL ADDRESS
 - e. PROJECT TITLE
 - f. PROJECT SYNOPSIS
2. **AN ARTISTIC SAMPLE:** Additional Materials that support and expand upon your project proposal (i.e workshop outlines, video of a performance, compilation video of your artistic work, images and or photographs of artwork, writing samples, or an excerpt of a script and/or monologue, reach write ups you have done in consideration of this piece, project timeline proposal using the requirements above). The submitted materials must be a complete draft that represents your best work.
3. **Answer these following questions:**
 - a. What inspires you and your work? [250 words max]
 - b. How important is collaboration and [emergent strategy](#) in your process [250 max]
 - c. Why are you interested in doing this residency now? Incorporate three goals you wish to obtain after going through a process like this [500 words max]
 - d. How do our above values show up in your work? [500 words max]
4. **ARTISTIC RESUME** [listing all productions, readings, awards, commissions, and other relevant artistic information]
5. **RECOMMENDATIONS:** Each application needs to submit a letter of recommendation from an industry professional that can speak to your work ethic, creativity, and character. In addition to this, each applicant needs to submit 2-3 references that the TTO Staff can call if the applicant is advanced to becoming a finalist. The one page of recommendation needs to be submitted with the application.

Name the application packet file with your last name followed by 'emergentartistapp' [Example: application packet sent by Jael Smith = Smithemergentartistapp.pdf]

Email your application packet by January 31st 2023

No late application will be accepted.

Receipt of application materials will be confirmed via email.

DEADLINES & IMPORTANT DATES:

Applications must be received by:	January 31st 2023
Finalists will be notified on:	March 3rd 2023
Finalists Interviews will be the week of:	March 27th 2023
Recipient(s) will be notified on:	April 10th 2023
Residency Term:	May 2023 - December 2024

QUESTIONS:

Contact: apply@thetheateroffensive.org