

Research in Dance Award Residency 2026: Open Call

A Royal Birmingham Conservatoire,
Birmingham Botanical Gardens and Fabric
partnership.

Funded by



A collaboration between



ROYAL
BIRMINGHAM
CONSERVATOIRE



BIRMINGHAM
BOTANICAL
GARDENS

fabric

About The Royal Birmingham Conservatoire at Birmingham City University

Royal Birmingham Conservatoire is a world class institution providing exceptional training for the musicians, actors, stage managers and performers of the future.

It's an exhilarating place to learn with a unique, electric atmosphere, which inspires and brings together acting and musical talent. The Conservatoire has an excellent track record and global reputation for its research programmes and activities.

About Birmingham Botanical Gardens

Birmingham Botanical Gardens is one of the UK's most important historic botanic gardens, situated just one mile from the city centre. Home to rare and endangered plant species, the Gardens are a site of outstanding biodiversity, heritage, and public engagement.

Currently undergoing a major transformational capital programme, Birmingham Botanical Gardens is reimagining its role for the 21st century — as a place of research, learning, wellbeing, and cultural exchange.

About Fabric

[Fabric](#) is a dance development organisation based in the Midlands UK. Our work is shaped by our four cornerstones: Research, Engagement, Sector Development, Showcasing and Performance.

Our home cities and the communities we serve and collaborate with are constantly changing – they bring a diversity of practices and forms together to make this an extraordinary place for dance.

Our approach is informed by care, openness, and rigour, through our curatorial values of [Curiosity](#), [Disruption](#) and [Joy](#).

Through this approach our mission is to create the conditions for dance to flourish.

Eligibility

- The artist must live and work in the Midlands (and be able to travel to site for the residency)
- The lead applicant (whether an individual or part of a collective) must be an artist who works primarily in dance, movement or choreography
- The artist must be independent
- The artist must not be employed full time by a regularly funded arts, culture or heritage organisation in the UK
- Regularly funded organisations can not apply
- The artist must be 18 or over
- The artist must not be a full-time (undergraduate / Masters) student

Please note: we will only accept one application per artist/collective/company

The Award

The Research in Dance Award (RiDA), is funded by Dance Hub Birmingham and is a collaboration between Royal Birmingham Conservatoire at Birmingham City University, Birmingham Botanical Gardens and Fabric.

The Research in Dance Award takes the form of an artist in residence opportunity at Birmingham Botanical Gardens. This is an ideal opportunity for a dance artist with an established practice, a particular interest in research applications of their work, and a willingness to engage in discourses that reveal some of the shared knowledge that emerges during the residency. The project can be a solo endeavour, or collective.

The award relates to developments in the areas of EcoSomatics, site responsive dance, and expanded dance practices.

Start date and duration are flexible in negotiation with Birmingham Botanical Gardens, but all aspects of the project must be within the allocated budget and completed by end of October 2026. Mentoring and support for bursary recipients will be provided, and the project lead is Dr Polly Hudson.

Criteria

- Proposals should identify a research question and illuminate the methods that will be used to tackle it. Your practice could be in site responsive dance, EcoSomatics, environmental performance engagement, climate injustice, ethics of care, and related areas.
- Your proposal must additionally illustrate how you plan to engage with the wider dance community, and Birmingham Botanical Gardens visitors/community at times during the residency.
- Outcomes of the project can include, but are not limited to—performances, workshops, talks, written word, film, and audio, and should be open access.
- You will be willing to document the process throughout, and to submit a thorough evaluation on completion, supported by RBC and partner colleagues which will map the process, outcomes and impact of the work. Organisational support and mentoring will be offered but beyond that projects need to be self-sufficient within the bursary.

The award is designed and resourced to take place without additional funding. We welcome successful applicants applying for additional funds to enhance the opportunity, but the project submitted should not be reliant upon or subject to additional funds, and the project as outlined should be able to be delivered regardless.

The Offer

Space

You will primarily work onsite at Birmingham Botanical Gardens. Additional studio space at Fabric may be possible subject to availability.



Money

Artist fees £12,000

Materials / performers budget £3,000

Access plus expenses budget £2,500

There are no travel expenses, accommodation allowances, or additional technical support attached to the award. All costs will need to be found within the above budget lines.

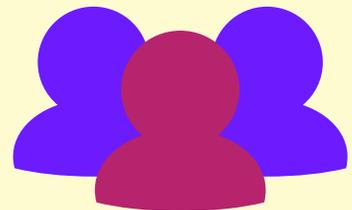
We expect that time, expenses, & fees are considered and paid fairly & access is included where relevant

Mentoring

Mentoring during the project from Dr Polly Hudson

On site support

Fabric staff can provide advice on various aspects of the industry



Advice can include producing, community engagement, marketing and research.

Public Engagement

The artist should engage with the wider dance community, and Birmingham Botanical Gardens visitors/community at times during the residency in some way. This could be through existing programmes and initiatives, through an artist's own connections, or a new invitation to the community, providing it is well considered and held.

Examples include:

- Classes for dance professionals
- Writing to be hosted and shared publicly by Fabric online
- Podcasts to be hosted and shared publicly
- Workshops for Children & Young People where projects are suitable
- A Sneak Peek of what you are working on shared to a public audience
- A participation invite – for example, a community workshop, a conversation about your work over food with members of the community, or a co-creation opportunity with non-professionals
- An Open Studio to invite people in to see you live at work
- Photography
- A public open resource for the sector or something more imaginative, it's totally up to you to propose what you believe will connect your work to others in a genuine and mutually beneficial way with solid preparation.

Any proposed engagement will be discussed and agreed with partners to ensure that it aligns with broader organisational values and activities and must be open access.

Administration and Meeting Time

Partners will expect the awardee to commit to completing the necessary administration to carry out the activity and outcomes.

In addition:

- Attendance at a minimum of 2 meetings to negotiate and confirm the proposed activity
- Complete necessary materials to support project partners in their communications about the project
- Engagement in content creation for social media and any agreed events
- Half day of time to evaluate the project with project partners

Selection Processes

Applications will be read by at least 3 members of the selection panel, made-up of Project Lead Dr Polly Hudson and representatives from Birmingham Botanical Gardens and Fabric. It may be required that candidates for the award will need to attend an interview with partners before a final decision is reached.

Applications will be scored based on the following criteria:

- The quality and alignment with the core interests of RiDA. (The award relates to developments in the areas of EcoSomatics, site responsive dance, and expanded dance practices)
- The proposed project is deliverable, well considered and manageable
- The project articulates clearly the opportunity for public engagement and project dissemination
- The project extends research practices aligned with RiDA core interests

Eligible artists must living and working in the Midlands.

The Midlands is Birmingham, Coventry, Derby, Derbyshire, Dudley, Leicester, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Herefordshire, Northamptonshire, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire, Rutland, Sandwell, Shropshire, Solihull, Staffordshire, Stoke-on-Trent, Telford and Wrekin, Walsall, Warwickshire, Wolverhampton and Worcestershire.

How to Apply*

Read the application guidance and ensure you are eligible and your project idea aligns.

Please note that the application form has no option to save your progress. A template version of the application questions (in Word) is available to download on our webpage to enable you to work offline and then paste it into the application form once you're ready to submit your online application.

If you prefer to answer in video or audio to the questions, you can upload within the Wufoo application form.

If you have any questions or would like support from someone in our team to help you complete your application, please get in touch by emailing:

helen@fabric.dance

Deadline to apply: Wednesday 4 February 2026 10am

Offers made by Monday 2 March

Delivery period: April to October 2026

Please note: that submitting an application in the final minutes can sometimes lead to technical difficulties, so we advise you not to do so.
Applications won't be accepted after the deadline.