“acta Elevate

a socially-engaged theatre development programme

September 2026 - March 2027

Elevate is generously supported by The Singer Foundation

Supported using public funding by ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND

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Elevate is a skills-building programme for socially engaged theatre-makers and artists who are interested in working with a specific community of people. It is designed as a practical, explorative course that we hope builds a lasting creative community.

We are looking for ten people to join us. We think this programme would best suit people with some experience of working creatively with communities – but we’re interested in hearing from anyone who is passionate about arts or theatre, community development, and social change.

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Our cohort will meet around once a month. Most of these meets will be structured workshops led by acta workers where we will share our professional practice and lessons we’ve learnt over the years. We’ll also host practice-exchanges: a chance for you to try out ideas with your peers and share and receive feedback. We hope that working this way will build long-lasting creative bonds.

We are delighted that thanks to generous funding of The Singer Foundation we can offer the cohort places totally free of charge.

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“To have a place where people who had shared goals could come together was hugely important. I looked forward to it every month.

It was beneficial on so many levels: the games, the different people, being part of something. The group has been very important to me, especially the diverse experience of the cohort, and people’s different practice. I’ve learnt about worlds that I didn’t know existed.”

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In short:

- A course for socially engaged theatre-makers and artists
- Course runs over nine months, Sept 26 – March 27
- One session a month
- Ten fully funded places
- Aiming to establish a new creative community

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“It has built my confidence. Learning and practicing new skills has made my work much more successful. It’s such a support environment.

It’s opened my eyes to what facilitation work can be. Learning how broad acta’s work is; knowing if you have the skills, you can do it! It has reframed everything for me. It was great to highlight how difficult some groups have been, and understanding that’s just the way it is.”

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You will be part of a friendly and supportive group who will meet together not only to take part in workshops, seminars and events delivered by acta, but also as a peer-support group, helping each other through the challenges that you face.

You can expect to learn and explore your own ideas in a safe, fun and supportive environment. We would expect that you can attend most of the sessions, but we do understand that often, people have other commitments that can arise unexpectedly.

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The benefits include:

Workshops: exploration of, and training in, acta’s own participatory theatre methodology, technique and craft

Reflective practice: space, time and a sounding board for participants to learn through and from their experience

Downtime: Access to free physical space in the acta centre to explore ideas and practical techniques.

Peer support: Shared resources and communication through regular set up of peer support meetings

Social enterprise training: including exploration of starting a Community Interest Company

Mentoring and access to all acta core staff members

Employment opportunities in partnership with acta or other host support organisations.

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“Downtime [in kind room hire for Elevate participants] has really helped us get funding and the 1-1 was really, really helpful.

To have an organisation like acta give us the thumbs up is really reassuring and really valuable. Its hard to get other organisations to do that; to sit down and talk about your stuff, it’s really important.”

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The sessions will take place at the acta centre, Bedminster, Bristol BS3 3AY.

The scheme will last for 9 months (September 2026-March 2027)

Dates:
16th & 30th September (10am-1pm)
14th October (10am-1pm)
4th & 18th November (10am-1pm)
13th & 27th January (10am-1pm)
10th February (10am-1pm)
3rd & 17th March (10am-1pm)

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acta is a well-established community theatre organisation and a National Portfolio Organisation of Arts Council England.

Since 1985, we have been working to bring together people from different cultures, experiences, and generations to make and share creative work. To do this we run several different regular open access creative groups, often with a focus on theatre, in Bedminster and beyond. We believe creativity belongs to everyone, and everyone has a story to tell. acta is a place where everyone’s story matters, where individual opinions and experiences count, and are valued by others. We enable communities to share their stories, and engage audiences who rarely attend theatre.

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We'd like to know why you'd like to take part in Elevate. You can do this by writing to us (keep it to two sides of A4 or less please), making a video or audio recording (five minutes or less please), or anything else you can think of that we can review in our own time.

Specifically, we'd like you to answer the following questions:
What is your current experience?
What do you hope to gain from taking part in Elevate?
Any ideas or communities that you are interested in working with and why?

Please send your application to oliver@acta-bristol.com by Monday 13th July 10am.

Please email any queries regarding the scheme or application process to oliver@acta-bristol.com

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“Other theatre spaces feel very ego-driven. This is about shared values.

The enterprise session was so, so valuable and opened up my eyes to other funding and income opportunities, which would give me more autonomy over my work.

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