



Call out for LGBTQIA+ Steering Group Members for major queer project 'Healing Gardens of Bab' (Paid Opportunity)

November 2022

Following a consultation with queer creatives in the city, Fierce is looking to recruit an arty, enthusiastic, politically engaged and intersectional steering group of 'next generation' LGBTQIA+ arts leaders based in the West Midlands. This is a development opportunity and they will work closely with Fierce, as we devolve power to them to lead a hugely exciting, multi-disciplinary arts programme as part of the [Birmingham 2022 Festival](#), subject to contract approvals.

Birmingham 2022 Festival is a six-month culture programme starting in March which will use the moment of the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games to celebrate creativity in the West Midlands and the Commonwealth. With the aim of engaging 2.5m people both in person and online, the programme is designed to reflect the people of the region, exploring our heritage, diversity and youth. Audacious, playful & inclusive, the festival will work with over 500 West Midlands artists on a programme designed to entertain, engage and embrace audiences, whilst positively disrupting the cultural sector and inspiring lasting change.

Context

This project has a duty to actively respond to the context of systemic and social oppression & homophobia across the Commonwealth and the colonial legacy at the root of it. This will require a care centred approach that uplifts those who were most marginalised by empire, to instead celebrate the rich cultures that were erased and eclipsed around the world.

The project will be made with and for communities experiencing significant inequality and disadvantage, particularly considering intersectional identity and inequality across but not limited to LGBTQIA+ communities, disabled communities, people of South Asian heritage, People of African or Caribbean heritage and people who experience racism.

"When terms such as LGBT and queer cross borders they evolve and adjust to different political thinking. Queer became kvir in Kyrgyzstan and cuir in Ecuador, neither of which hold the English meaning. Translation is about crossing borders, but some languages travel more than others. Sexualities are usually translated from the core to the periphery, imposing Western LGBT identities onto the rest of the world. Many sexual identities are not translatable into English, and markers of modernity override native terminologies. All this matters beyond words. Translating sexuality in world politics forces us to confront issues of emancipation, colonisation, and sovereignty, in which global frameworks are locally embraced and/or resisted. Translating sexualities is a political act entangled in power politics, imperialism and foreign intervention."

Caroline Cottet and Manuela Lavinás Picq from *Sexuality and Translation in World Politics*



The Healing Gardens of Bab

Babylon's* hanging gardens were built as a luscious sanctuary for Queen Amytis in an unfamiliar city, because she missed the mountains and greenery of her homeland. One of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, they are the only wonder whose existence is disputed. Some suggest the gardens are a figment of the ancient imagination.

The *Healing Gardens of Bab*** are a paradise that uplift alternative expressions of gender, sexuality and family. The gardens are a space to reflect on the violent erasure enforced by empire and celebrate the many sexual identities that are not translatable into English.

Offering a space for respite and healing through performing arts, discourse and design, The *Healing Gardens of Bab* are designed by Birmingham's LGBTQIA+ communities in collaboration with artists from Canada to Australia. Across venues in Birmingham city centre, including Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery, we will create our own future folklore.

The Gardens will physically manifest for three weeks in June and July 2022, with some elements running for longer. The steering group will be in place from January 2022 and will be chaired by Fierce's Artistic Director, Aaron Wright.

Likely elements of the project which you will get to help shape will include:

- An exhibition in a major museum
- A public programme of talks and events
- A major public realm visual artwork
- An international programme of music
- A socially engaged, participatory project

**Babylon*

- *the chief city of ancient Mesopotamia: first settled around 3000 bc*
- *a contemptuous or dismissive term for aspects of culture seen as degenerate or oppressive*

***Bab - MIDLANDS ENGLISH*

used as a friendly form of address.

"I'll have a portion of chips, please." 'Is that a big or little one, bab?"

The Steering Group

We are looking to recruit five LGBTQIA+ community members and it is important that their lived experience reflects that of the aforementioned audiences. There is at least one guaranteed spot in the steering group for a disabled person; a trans person; and a person with lived experience of racism. We recognise the experiences of individuals sitting across various intersections and are



seeking to reach a steering group with the broadest representation possible. We reject tokenism and see these quotas as a bare minimum.

We understand that, in particular, for Birmingham's Black and South Asian queer communities, working on a project connected with the Commonwealth and the abuses of colonialism may prove complex and triggering. We intend to embed appropriate support for our steering group members to help them during this project and centre care behind the scenes as well as in our programming.

Responsibilities

We expect the steering group to fundamentally drive the project both conceptually and materially. It will have key decision-making power and will define the eventual programme of events, that will best serve the city's queer residents and visitors. Ultimately this is a development opportunity for the steering group and they will have to carefully navigate the management of numerous confirmed stakeholders including venues, funders and a number of artists already attached to the project, as well as bringing new ideas and plans to the programme. The steering group will be guided and mentored through this process by the Fierce team.

The steering group will be expected to meet periodically, and work outside formal meetings where appropriate to:

- Conceptualise, strategise, review planning proposals, determine the results of artistic tenders and hear reports from the wider Garden's team, including the Producer, Lead Artists, Project Coordinators and Fierce's Senior Management.
- Help to shape working practices, front of house approaches, access principles etc.
- Confirm elements of the proposed project framework and greenlight production for various project strands.
- Help shape a number of artistic tenders, oversee the callout process and award a number of commissions to artists.
- Work closely with the project coordinators and producer to recruit a number of delivery team members.
- Deliver on the initial brief set by the Birmingham 2022 Festival team as well as adhere to the specific criteria attached to different strands of funding for the project.

Payment

This is a development opportunity for the steering group. Steering group members will be paid a freelance day rate of £160 to attend twelve research, discussion and decision-making days from December 2021 to June 2022 (total fee: £1920). Any access needs will be paid for on top of fees. We will take a relaxed approach to these 12 days: they may sometimes be half day meetings with some advanced prep/reading, or sometimes shorter activities, reflective of the fact that some subject matter may be triggering. Steering Group members will need to be registered as self-





employed and are responsible for their own tax, but Fierce can help get you set up with this system if needed.

Who we're looking for?

Our intention is to bring together a group of 'next generation', future arts leaders in an opportunity to work within an exclusively LGBTQIA+ team on a project of scale. There is the potential for additional support for this group to form a new affiliation that may continue after the project. We are looking for artistic and creative people at the start of their careers who have a desire to work in the arts. You might be working as or interested in one of the following roles (this list is not exhaustive): artist, director, designer, producer, curator, programmer, choreographer, arts administrator, or promoter. Or perhaps you're interested in arts marketing, PR, fundraising, community engagement or policy. You might be interested in areas such as Theatre, Dance, Music, Visual Art, Architecture & Design, Outdoor Arts, Museums & Heritage, Nightclub Culture, Arts Participation and more.

We want to ensure participation from a varied group of people, however it will be necessary for people to attend all meetings and therefore people will need to be able to allocate one day a fortnight for this role. The steering group will need to agree the best time for their meetings to take place. We are looking for people based in the West Midlands, who know Birmingham and will be able to travel to attend in-person meetings and events in Birmingham city centre (unless access reasons prohibit this).

Applicants should be aged 18+. Students in full time education are welcome to apply but need to consider the viability of the commitment alongside their studies. You must have the legal right to work in the UK.

Provisional Schedule, subject to change after discussion with the Steering Group

DATE	ACTIVITY
January 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Formation of Steering group, agree working code of conduct, agree scheduling and regular meetings for steering group - Review existing commitments of the programme. Meet with key stakeholders and staff.
February 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Research and creative development of programme content and vision. Artistic Briefs created. - Ongoing review and management of existing programme commitments
March 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continued visioning / planning of full creative programme - Awarding of commissions - Secure and finalise programme partners
April 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Finalise Programme plans - Marketing and comms campaign planning





May 2021	- Support marketing and comms activity
June 2021	- Delivery activity
July 2021	- Delivery activity
August 2021	- Evaluation & Legacy Planning

How to Apply

There are two stages to the application process.

To apply please either send us a statement (no more than two pages) or make an audio or video recording (no more than 4 minutes) outlining why you're interested in the opportunity, what skills you think you could bring to the role, what you are interested in artistically, and what your future aspirations are. We encourage brevity and suggest not spending longer than a few hours making your application. We also require a completed monitoring form.

Please also include the following details:

- Full Name
- Pronouns
- Date of Birth
- Address
- Email Address
- Contact Number
- Any access needs relating to the interview process (so we can arrange)

Please email your application to will@wearefierce.org. The closing date for these applications is 11.59pm on Sunday 9th January. Whilst we won't penalise applications that are a few minutes late, please respect other applicants by not sending applications hours, or even days late.

Following this we will shortlist candidates to bring to interview. Interviews will be conducted on Thursday 13th January, 2022 by a panel with representation across a range of protected characteristics. Interviews can be conducted in person or online. Second interviews are not planned but may be necessary in certain circumstances. We can cover travel expenses to attend interviews in person. The first meeting of the steering group will be in January, date to be agreed with the steering group.

If you need access assistance to help you make your application please email will@wearefierce.org to arrange this, we can arrange to call/video call you back if preferred.

Got Questions? Join our Q&A session...

We want all Fierce team members and associates to feel comfortable and able to be themselves at work. Our working culture is built on Fierce's core values of Trust, Joy, Disruption and Rigour.





As the Fierce team grows it is important to us that we maintain a caring working environment. Our working culture is fluid and all team members and associates have agency to influence it. Read more about our working culture [here](#).

We are committed to being an inclusive workplace where all team members and associates feel able to be their whole selves, free of (micro)aggressions. Particularly, in this moment, we highlight our commitment to anti-racism and trans rights. We are available to talk to anyone who wants more information about this, particularly if it may make you feel more comfortable in applying to be part of this steering group. You can read more about our work in this area and how we are holding ourselves accountable [here](#). From our programme to our working culture, we aim to be as accessible and inclusive as possible. We are committed to making application processes as accessible as possible and are happy to provide information in alternative formats and answer any other questions you may have regarding this opportunity. We actively encourage and welcome access documents.

If you're considering getting involved and have questions or concerns about working practices at Fierce, eligibility for the role or anything else we will be holding an online group Q&A on **Tuesday 14th December, 2021, 17.00 (with BSL interpretation and closed captions enabled)**. To sign up for this Q&A session please email us on will@wearefierce.org.

Alternatively sign up for a 15 minute one-on-one surgery with Fierce team members to discuss the opportunity. To arrange a time email will@wearefierce.org - we can respond either via email or by scheduling a call if you'd prefer.

