

The Arts Foundation Futures Awards

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The Arts Foundation Futures Awards 2026 for Theatre Shortlist Artists Announced

The Arts Foundation announces the four Shortlisted Artists of the Arts Foundation Futures Awards 2026 for Theatre, one of the UK's leading fellowships for artists.

Tristan Fynn-Aiduenu, Annie Kershaw, Craig McCorquodale, and Hannah Noone have been shortlisted for the prestigious £20,000 Arts Foundation Futures Award 2026 for Theatre.



Hannah Noone, *George's Wonderful Life*, Photo: Dafydd Hughes

The Theatre Award champions visionary theatre directors developing extraordinary theatrical productions across any genre.

The independent Jury members are Toisin Cole, Actor; Francesca Moody, Executive Producer, Francesca Moody Productions; and Rufus Norris, Director, who said:

“The Arts Foundation Futures Awards remain a vital and progressive fund for artists in the UK. When I was awarded the fellowship for Theatre Directing in 2002, it came at a really pivotal moment for me. At the time, I already had a child and was desperately trying to keep going, juggling shows and family life. The support gave me the breathing space and security I needed for that year - and everything that’s happened since really grew from that. It was, without question, a turning point. It’s been great to return as a juror this year.

Tristan Fynn-Aiduenu’s work stands out for its individuality and originality. From ‘Pig Heart Boy’ to ‘Sweet Like Chocolate Boy’, his work is distinctive, assured, and wholly his own. He’s also achieving something rare: drawing a fresh audience into our theatre spaces through his unique creative voice.

Craig McCorquodale is ambitious in scale, socially engaged, and deeply rooted in community. His work spans placemaking, autobiographical storytelling, and participatory art, with total commitment and originality. He’s a true innovator, taking audiences with him on a journey that challenges and redefines what theatre can be.”

Annie Kershaw’s work is polished, accessible, and rooted in strong mainstream appeal. Her productions demonstrate a real professionalism and credibility, with a clear sense of direction and audience. She’s an accomplished creative voice, steadily building an impressive and grounded body of work.

Hannah Noone is an imaginative director and composer whose work combines visual flair and musical sensitivity. Her theatre projects show strong creative leadership and a commitment to collaboration, as she continues to develop her craft and ambition, while contributing richly to the Welsh creative landscape.”

Jury member, Francesca Moody, added:

“It’s been a real privilege to join the jury for the Arts Foundation Futures Awards 2026 for Theatre. All of the shortlisted artists had such a strong sense of self, distinctive aesthetic and artistic integrity. What’s striking about all the practitioners is their determination to make their mark, by hook or by crook. In this challenging funding climate, in both the public and commercial sectors, awards like this are so necessary to support those operating at a high artistic level, who know what they need to do to take their creative practice further, but unfortunately, do not have the means to do so.”

Tristan Fynn-Aiduenu

Tristan Fynn-Aiduenu is a British-Ghanaian theatremaker whose work stretches the imagination of his audiences with his unique brand of storytelling. He was nominated for an Olivier in 2022 for his work on *For Black Boys Who Have Considered Suicide When The Hue Gets Too Heavy* by Ryan Calais Cameron. Tristan’s awards include: 2019 JMK Young Director Award, 2022 Black British Theatre Award for Best Director, and 2025 UK Theatre Award for Best Children's Show. In 2026, Tristan will direct the UK premiere of [*Deep Azure*](#) by late

Academy Award and BAFTA-nominated actor and writer Chadwick Boseman, opening 7 February - 11 April at the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse, Shakespeare's Globe.

Annie Kershaw

Annie Kershaw is a Theatre Director who strives to make striking, innovative and accessible theatre. She is often drawn to stories that are led by queer and/or female characters. Her approach to making theatre is highly sensory and instinct-driven, often focused on drawing out moments of symbolism. Annie prioritises building collaborative environments in the rehearsal room, where the cast and creatives can feel comfortable to offer and explore, try new ideas and accept failure as a part of the process. She is proudly self-trained as a director, having studied BA Drama and Theatre Arts at the University of Birmingham, before developing her directing practice through workshops, reading, observing, rehearsed readings and assisting brilliant directors such as Jeremy Herrin and James Macdonald. She was the 2024 winner of the Genesis Future Director's Award, for which she directed *Girl In the Machine* by Stef Smith at the Young Vic Theatre in October 2024. Annie's next production is *Educating Rita* by Willy Russell, which she will be directing. Performances start in February and run until March 2026 at Reading Rep Theatre.

Craig McCorquodale

Craig McCorquodale is a director based in Glasgow, pushing theatre into public space and public space back into the theatre. Often working with local people rather than actors, his projects ask us to look more closely at the people we share our streets with. Craig seeks to mobilise a new movement of civic theatre in the UK, rooted in the traditions of socially-engaged practice but with a renewed sense of scale – exploding the possibilities of what theatre can look like. As a director, he works with theatre's familiar languages of temporality, storytelling and audience experience but embraces expanded ideas of encounter, spontaneity, site, conversation and risk. In 2021, Craig was awarded the Jerwood Live Work Fund, and in 2023, he was a recipient of the Jerwood New Work Fund. Craig is currently working with Factory International and, in 2024, was awarded the inaugural Artist Takeover at Aviva Studios.

Hannah Noone

Hannah is a theatre and opera director whose work spans intimate new studio plays to large-scale opera. Originally from North Wales and now based in Cardiff, she developed her craft through a decade of close collaboration with Theatr Clwyd and Sherman Theatre, creating highly acclaimed productions such as: *The Wife of Cyncoed* (Sherman), *BoHo* (Clwyd & Hijinx), *Worlds Apart in War* (Clwyd & National Trust), and most recently *Hot Chicks* (Sherman & Grand Ambition). Her practice is rooted in building work collaboratively, finding and holding onto authenticity through discovery with performers and communities. She's interested in unearthing the most vital, playful ways of telling stories that feel unapologetically alive, with her work often noted for its boldness, humour and flair. Hannah is Associate Director at Chippy Lane Productions and a Visiting Director at the Royal Welsh

College of Music and Drama. She will direct *Odyssey* for WNO Youth Opera, and in the Autumn will join Michael Sheen and Steffan Donnelly for *Owain & Henry* with the Welsh National Theatre and WMC.

The Arts Foundation has a long history of supporting theatre and the performing arts, and Mary Jane Edwards, Director of The Arts Foundation says:

“The four shortlisted artists reflect the exceptional quality and vitality of theatre directing in the UK. Each director brings a distinctive and personal vision to their work, shaping performances that speak compellingly to contemporary audiences. We are delighted to support their artistic development at such a pivotal early stage in their careers.”

Jury member Toisin Cole added:

“It’s been a true privilege to support new artists by being on the jury of the Arts Foundation Futures Awards. The foundation’s support for artists and the commitment to keeping creativity alive is inspiring and so valuable at a time with less funding and rising costs for us all. I’m hopeful these awards will help artists thrive and share their work to more people. Congratulations to all the shortlisted artists involved for their unique dedication, passion, and creativity.”

The winning Fellow receiving £20,000, will be revealed at an Award Ceremony on 2 February 2026, with all Shortlisted Artists, awarded £1,000 towards their artistic practice.

You can explore the Shortlisted Artists' work on the [Arts Foundation website](#) and watch the award announcements via [Instagram Live](#) on 2 February 2026.

Press Pack & Images

The Theatre Shortlist Press Pack and Images can be viewed [here](#).

The Arts Foundation Futures Awards 2026 Press Pack can be viewed [here](#).

Media Enquiries

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Notes to Editors

About The Arts Foundation

The Arts Foundation is a registered charity that supports individual artists and creatives in the UK with unconditional financial fellowships through the Arts Foundation Futures Awards.

Since 1993, the Arts Foundation has awarded over £2 million to the most promising artists in the UK at a pivotal moment in their careers to enable them to concentrate on their creative development, experiment, and realise their artistic potential.

The annual Arts Foundation Futures Awards provide five transformative £20,000 Fellowships, with all Shortlisted Artists receiving £1,000 towards the development of their practice.

The vital contribution of the Arts Foundation Futures Awards to the arts in the UK is demonstrated by its past Fellows, many of whom are regarded as contemporary pioneers and have gone on to become leaders in their respective art forms, including: Wayne McGregor (1994), Alice Oswald (1996), Sarah Kane (1998), Asif Kapadia (2001), Ali Smith (2001), Rufus Norris (2002), Carol Morley (2003), Lynette Yiadom-Boakye (2006), and more recently, Simon Fujiwara (2009), Sam Lee (2011), Alice Birch (2014), Hollie McNish (2015), Evan Ifekoya (2017), Holly Hendry (2019), Onyeka Igwe (2020), Klein (2020), and Bethany Williams (2020).

The Arts Foundation Futures Awards 2026 are generously supported in partnership with The David Collins Foundation, The Adrian Brinkerhoff Poetry Fund of the Sidney E. Frank Foundation, and The Yoma Sasburg Estate.

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