

2023-2025 True Colors Residency Program

The Theater Offensive (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.

True Colors: Out Youth Theater, launched in 1994, is an out-of-school program that uses a community-based theater approach to train and activate lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and allied youth leaders ages 12-25. True Colors Residency Program, piloted in July 2021, is dedicated solely to queer & trans young artists of color, whose work demonstrates artist merit and inquisitive exploration of their personal queer aesthetics. Through the True Colors Residency Program TTO will engage one young artist from TTO's True Color's Programming. Alongside TTO's Programs Director & Staff, the selected young artist will develop an outline for an aspiring project, work on career development, and professional development during their eighteen (18) month residency.

RESIDENCIES COMPONENTS:

The True Color Residency recognizes one (1) QTPOC young artist per eighteen (18) month rotation. The chosen young artist must demonstrate a commitment to artistic exploration, and artistic vigor & practice.

The selected **True Colors Artist** will receive:

- A stipend of \$3,000 for the True Colors artist;
- Administrative support; Access to studio space, printing, and all TTO in-kind resources;
- Direct support & mentorship from TTO's Program Team;
- Accounting, Budgeting, Banking, and Taxes courses for freelance artists;
- Mentorship sessions with artist chosen mentor to aid in personal aesthetic development;
- Assistant Director Apprenticeship with True Colors Troupe;
- \$1,000 towards Professional Development (including but not limited to conferences, workshops, intensives, wellness ventures, etc that will further the artists artistic merit);
- Sessions with our Programs Director and Executive Director & Cultural Strategist on their personal aesthetics and artist community engagement event outline and execution;
- An artistic community engagement event (ie. Creating Story Circle, Facilitating Liz Lerman Critical Response Process, a Workshop, or Offering).

ELIGIBILITY, CONDITIONS, & REQUIREMENTS:

The True Colors Resident Artist must:

- Self-identify as a Queer and/or Trans person of color;
- Be between 18 - 25 years of age;
- Have participated in True Colors: OUT Youth Theater programming (i.e. True Colors Troupe, Task Force/Youth Advisory Board/LIC, CAC, Studio) currently or within the past five years;

- Live in the Greater Boston area;
- 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 True Colors artists do not show active participation residency will be canceled;
- Serve on TTO's Youth Advisory Board & will be compensated additionally for this position
- Serve on the Selection Committee for the 2025 - 2026 TRUE COLORS ARTIST RESIDENCY.

SELECTION PROCESS:

Applications for The Theater Offensive's TRUE COLORS ARTIST RESIDENCY are screened for eligibility by The Theater Offensive's programs staff and evaluated by True Color's Alumnae who selects the three finalists. TTO's Program Director and Executive Director & Cultural Strategist will then evaluate the finalists chosen by Alumnae. The selected finalists receive a scheduled interview with TTO's Program Director, Executive Director & Cultural Strategist, and one (1) True Colors Alumnae.

The selection for this residency is based on development of the artists 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. 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 Rick 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. There is a level of thoughtful care being taken of people. The art we create is life affirming and a place where we can be vulnerable. You hug people that you meet here and you mean it. 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 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 that we are not a monolith. Dialectic with the culture that doesn't negate the complexity. Reimagine 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** -- Two spirit people often utilized as moving things along spiritually. Healing is a core part of QTPOC cultural production.
- **(Be)longing** -- Belonging and Being Seen

TO APPLY:

Using the subject line LIBERATED FUTURES - TRUE COLORS RESIDENCY PROGRAM, send an email to ricky@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. ARTISTIC AREA INTERESTED IN EXPLORING
 - f. IDEAS FOR LEARNING
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). The submitted materials must be a complete draft that represents your best work.
3. **Answer these following questions:**
 - a. What inspires you in the arts? [250 words max]
 - b. What are your thoughts on arts at the intersection of social justice? [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. Artists that inspire your work [500 words max]
4. **RECOMMENDATIONS:** Each application needs to submit a letter of recommendation from an industry professional and/or teacher 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 'truecolorsartistapp' [Example: application packet sent by Jael Smith = Smithtruecolorsapp.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