



building theatre-making in somerset

## Handbook 2019



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Hello!

Thank you for your interest in **BARN**. Over the next few pages we will explain what it is, how it works and how it might support you and your work. For regular activity updates, please keep an eye on [www.takeart.org](http://www.takeart.org) and/or request to join our mailing list: [barn@takeart.org](mailto:barn@takeart.org)

We’re thrilled to be delivering Year 3 of **BARN** and thank our colleagues at the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation for their confidence in our shared aspirations for theatre-making in Somerset.

We continue to build our relationship with Theatre Orchard, [www.theatreorchard.org.uk](http://www.theatreorchard.org.uk), North Somerset’s arts development charity, to help **BARN** benefit theatre-makers in both Somerset and North Somerset.

Now we’re into the project’s final year, based on the experiences, successes and lessons learned from Years 1 and 2, we’re offering a programme that we’re really excited about. We hope you will be too as we continue to build the theatre-making sector in Somerset together!

Sarah & Mark, Co-Directors of Theatre, Take Art

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## What is BARN?

**BARN** is a three-year theatre initiative (2017-19) that supports Somerset's emerging theatre-making sector to develop, test and showcase new work in a predominantly rural context.

## Why is BARN needed?

Historically, Somerset's theatre infrastructure is both idiosyncratic and fragile. Real, grassroots issues have often hindered individuals and companies from remaining resilient, fed, connected and supported.

**BARN** is the first stage of a long-term development process, offering a programme of interventions that are needed now. We have rigorously tested our plans with theatre-makers and other professional colleagues across the county to ensure those needs are met.

## What does BARN do?

**BARN** resources theatre-makers to take risks, build resilience and sustain your practice, artistically and financially. It does this by nurturing emerging work, providing support and safe places for ideas to incubate, grow and flourish. It should give you confidence to make choices about what your work looks like. This ownership, we hope, will help to drive sustainability.

## How does BARN do this?

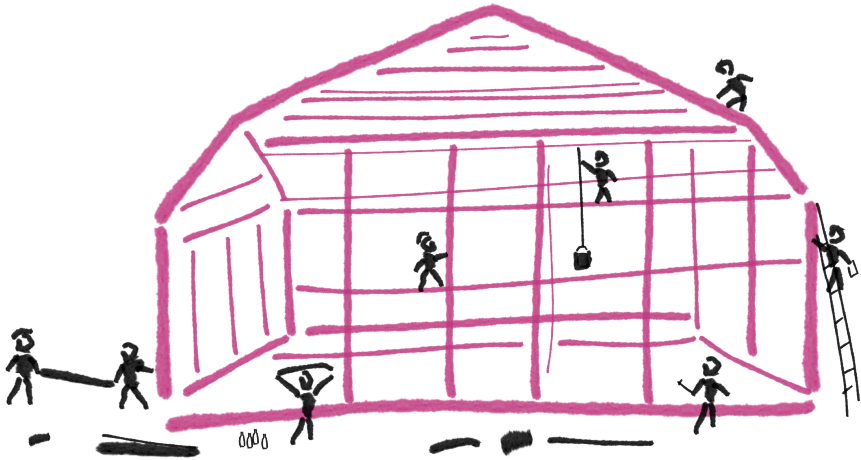
**BARN** features several activity strands that include

- an Ideas Fund;
- Scratch Events;
- R&D Residency / Creative Retreat;
- Work in Progress Events;
- Showcase Platforms;
- BARNfest;
- Access and Business Support;
- Progression and Signposting to other Opportunities.



## BARN-Raising

**BARN** is inspired by the North American rural tradition of barn-raising: ‘the collective action of a community coming together to build, or rebuild, a barn’.



**BARN** is a three-year initiative. If, between us, we get it right, Somerset’s theatre infrastructure will be in a different place by 2020. Along the way, we plan to listen, learn, adapt and work with you to address the most pressing needs in the most effective way.

Inevitably we may make mistakes, but we’ll learn from them and make changes as we go along.

We’ve recently seen several green shoots emerge. We’re proud to part of this growing sector, inhabited by generous theatre-makers who support each others’ work and want to thrive.

**Let’s continue to RAISE THE BARN together!**



## Key Features

- supports the making of new theatre in a predominantly rural context;
- represents a range of small, but meaningful, strategic interventions;
- focuses on work of different scales\* to meet the diverse needs of theatre-makers and audiences;
- encourages collective action;
- connects theatre-makers across the county, through regular activity networking and peer support;
- enables theatre-makers to create their own pathways through the different strands;
- offers flexibility, recognising that not everyone is at the same stage of the creative process or needs all the activity;
- values audience involvement in the making process;
- offers different ways to build critical mass eg ideas fund, platforms and progression opportunities.

\* with a particular focus on supporting small-scale, touring theatre

## Where we're coming from

As much as we'd like to, we can't support every project financially. But, at the very least, we will do our best to offer advice, broker relationships and signpost you to other opportunities.

Developing new work is risky. Though we'd love to see every project flourish, we know that not all of them will. As **BARN** supports risk as well as the right to fail, we will do our best to provide safe spaces where risks can be taken. Even if your project strays from its original intentions, we will help you to learn from the experience and move on positively.

We aim to be as application-lite as possible. But we also need to be accountable to the decisions we make as stewards of Esmée Fairbairn's funding. We want to support specific opportunities, rather than try and be all things to all people. Yet we want to keep the net wide, so that these opportunities are available to any theatre-makers in Somerset.

We want to support as much as we can. But we also need to manage expectations and not over-promise.



## Criteria

Although we don't want to limit the scope, imagination and creativity of your work, there are several criteria that we will take into consideration when programming **BARN's** activity this year:

- Are you living, or making work, in Somerset?
- How will the project address your professional and/or artistic development needs?
- How will the project enable you to sustain your practice, artistically and financially, longer term?
- Does the work strive for excellence with high aesthetic values?
- What element of risk is involved: artistic, financial? How could that be supported and/or mitigated?
- Does the project represent a truly collaborative approach?
- Does the work demonstrate potential to become tour-ready?
- How might audiences be involved in the making process?
- What is the likelihood of the project happening without BARN's support? Are there other opportunities that are more appropriate?
- Collectively, do the projects offer a geographical spread across Somerset?

## Plans for 2019

The next few pages offer an outline of our plans for this year. Please keep an eye on our website for information about when the activities go 'live':

<https://takeart.org/barn>. We also send out regular emails, so contact [barn@takeart.org](mailto:barn@takeart.org) if you would like to be added to the mailing list.



## ACTIVITY STRANDS

### Ideas Fund

The Ideas Fund aims to support 1) ideas and projects that create the potential for new work and 2) professional skills development. It acts as a stepping-stone to enable you to benefit from other BARN activity strands, eg Work in Progress events. We anticipate offering £50 to £250 to successful applicants.

There are no deadlines to apply; you can make a request a time that's right for you. In the interest of fairness, we anticipate that we will be able to support one request per individual/company this year, but we will review this during 2019.

Further information: <https://takeart.org/barn>

### Scratch Events

We plan to offer a couple of Scratch Events this year as an opportunity for theatre-makers to present early stage ideas and receive peer feedback.

### R&D Residency / Creative Retreat

At the network meeting in January 2019, several people expressed an interest in taking part in a residential creative retreat; an opportunity to get together, share skills, experiences and play that everyone could both contribute to and benefit from. We are exploring ways to make this happen and/or other opportunities for theatre-makers to develop new ideas or ways of working.

### Work in Progress Events

We will programme Work in Progress Events, linked and organised with venues and village halls in Somerset, providing opportunities for work to be shared and tested with peers, promoters and rural audiences.

### Showcase Platforms

We will programme Showcase Platforms of tour-ready work targeted at an audience of village hall promoters, arts centres, theatres, festival promoters and theatre-makers. As it proved successful last year, we plan to produce an Edinburgh Preview Showcase for companies taking work to the Festival in August 2019.



## BARNfest

Targeted at makers and their peers, promoters, theatres and arts centres, **BARNfest** is an annual, small-scale festival to celebrate theatre in Somerset and the South West. It will feature:

- showcase performances of work made in Somerset and/or supported through Venues South West;
- a panel of theatre professionals (eg makers, producers, promoters) to stimulate lively debate around best practice in contemporary theatre;
- an opportunity for recipients of the Ideas Fund to raise the profile of the work they've created;
- peer networking, learning and sharing.

Individuals/companies invited to perform at Work in Progress Events, Showcase Platforms and BARNfest will be offered a modest budget to cover some production costs and travel.

## ONGOING ACTIVITY

### Access and Business Support

We're mindful that some theatre-makers require **access support** such as assistance in writing applications; supervision to make work or physical access needs at platform events. We've allocated a budget for this activity and would be very happy to **have a conversation** with anyone requiring additional support.

We will programme several **training events** each year in developing business skills, such as producing, business planning, budgeting or managing sustainability. They will be promoted on our website and via our mailing list. Please **let us know** if there are any particular areas you would like us to cover.

### Producers' Event

In response to the growing need for producing support for work being made in Somerset, we plan to run an event to explore what this support could look like, what resources are needed, and how we might be able to address these needs in the long term eg setting up a producers' forum.





## Progression and Signposting

Although we're not able to support touring costs, we can

- broker relationships between theatre-makers, presenters and promoters to develop performance opportunities in Somerset eg rural touring scheme; InspirED education programme; and Somerset venue partners;
- signpost to other progression opportunities (festivals, funding, producers, training, networking events) regionally and nationally.

Where appropriate, we'll work with regional and national partners to extend touring opportunities beyond Somerset.

We also have allocated time to offer advice on funding applications (including Arts Council National Lottery Project Grants), particularly if you wish to use them as match funding for any support (actual or in kind) you may receive through **BARN**.

## Venues South West

Venues South West is a network of venues and organisations committed to supporting artists and developing the South West theatre sector by collaborating to enable quality work, better communication and a stronger regional touring infrastructure.

**Routes In**, a resource for artists in the region wanting to tour work within the South West, can be found on a website:

<https://takeart.org/artist-support/resources>



## FAQs

### Who will BARN support?

**BARN** is for anyone with a demonstrable commitment to theatre-making in Somerset; who aspires to grow and sustain their practice, artistically and financially; wants to work collectively with other professional colleagues and audiences to build the county's theatre infrastructure; and buys into the spirit of **BARN**'s intentions.

### What do you mean by Somerset?

**BARN** supports theatre-making in the area currently administered by Somerset County Council, which includes the five district councils of Mendip, South Somerset, Sedgemoor, West Somerset and Taunton Deane. In partnership with The Theatre Orchard, we are able to extend **BARN**'s support to the unitary authority of North Somerset but NOT to Bristol or BANES.

### What do you mean by 'emerging'?

By 'emerging', we are referring to the theatre-making sector in Somerset, not individuals or companies.

### How do you define theatre and theatre-maker?

This is self-defining. If, having read about the initiative, you feel that there is a good fit for you and/or your project, then we'll be happy to hear from you.

### Is BARN an artist development scheme?

Maybe, who knows? Fundamentally, BARN addresses what's needed in Somerset at the moment. It supports the making of new work as well as the people doing the making. We want to create sustainability both for this work and the makers' practice, artistically and financially.

### Why involve audiences in the making process?

By being part of the creative process, audiences and promoters are able to engage with the work at an early stage and feel more inclined to support it when it tours. In developing a relationship with the theatre-maker, they invest their own ideas and energy. In that sense, they become great advocates for the work, thereby contributing to the value and sustainability of the sector.

### What sort of venues will BARN work with?

We have identified a number of venues and promoters (theatres and arts centres as well as village halls) who would be willing to support R&D, showcase platforms etc.



## Who are Sarah and Mark?

**Sarah Peterkin**, Rural Touring Director and Theatre Co-Director since 1991, has significant knowledge and experience of rural arts practice.

**Mark Helyar**, Co-Director of Theatre since 2009, has significant experience in strategic and business planning, project management, directing, producing and dramaturgy. He has been artistic director of two touring companies (Proteus and West 28th Street) and has commissioned, directed and composed the music for several tours across the south.

Mark is employed part-time at Take Art: the rest of his time he is a freelance theatre-maker, writer, musician and university lecturer.

## Contact us

Thank you for reading this handbook!

If you have any questions about **BARN**, the best way to contact us is via email:

[sarah@takeart.org](mailto:sarah@takeart.org) and [mark@takeart.org](mailto:mark@takeart.org)

If you prefer to call, the office number is 01460 249450.

Please also keep an eye on the website for regular updates.

If you are based in North Somerset, you might like to contact our colleagues at Theatre Orchard:

Fiona Matthews, Creative Director: [fiona@theatreorchard.org.uk](mailto:fiona@theatreorchard.org.uk)

Becky Condron, Producer: [becky@theatreorchard.org.uk](mailto:becky@theatreorchard.org.uk)

rural touring   early years   theatre   dance   music

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