

Warmth



Ort Gallery 2021
Research and Development Report
supported by East Street Arts

Community

In late 2020 we embarked on an internal Research and Development phase called “Warmth”.

In early 2021 we decided to share initial findings on our Instagram channel to make a lot of things more transparent as we realised that we had never previously shared certain workings from within our organisation.

It was important to us to encourage feedback, debate, criticism, sharing, even if it meant us starting again from scratch.

We also welcomed people copying what we do as we wanted to start sharing more. To us community means learning together!



Why Warmth?

The arts sector needs to become more caring, supportive and accountable in order to be truly inclusive and ensure marginalised and racialised creatives and audiences feel part of it.

We support the people we work with, empathising and trusting the creatives and audiences. Going forward we want Warmth to underpin all the work that we do.

Care is radical.

Our Ethos

Ort Gallery – Bridging gaps with Art and Warmth

We are on a social mission to challenge the traditional role of visual art spaces in Birmingham.

We believe everyone should have access to high quality art experiences and aim to provide that standard. We contribute to making Birmingham more inclusive by actively rejecting the exclusivity often found in the visual arts sector.

We celebrate the differences of all of our visitors, artists and staff for they are a part of our Ort community and inform our work.

We are proud to provide exhibition opportunities to Black and Brown artists, those from working class backgrounds, the LGBTQ+ community and artists with disabilities.



We are focused on investing in and engaging with community members of the Balsall Heath area that are often overlooked. We use our space to provide our community with art focused events, activities and volunteering opportunities.

We believe that art holds transformative power for mental wellbeing, bridging community gaps and increasing employability. We believe that you are never too young, too old or too different to learn a new skill or engage with art.

We always compensate artists, creatives and staff for their work and contribution to our space- no matter the stage of their careers. We aim to provide paid opportunities from entry level positions to governing roles. We strive to provide further earning opportunities through extending artists networks and offering opportunities to sell work.

Leadership

No CEO

Ort Gallery is set up as a Community Interest Company (CIC) with 4 directors registered with Companies House:

Ridhi Kalaria-Kendall
Ian Sergeant
Josephine Reichert
Sammy Willbourne

Legally these four directors are responsible for the organisation and sign off yearly accounts and CIC documents.

However, the Ort Gallery team is self-managed.



Self-Management

Self-Management means that we do not believe in a hierarchical management structure where the people at the top make decisions for the people at the bottom.

Instead we believe that all individuals who work for us (paid or volunteers) have a right to challenge, influence and steer the organisation.

We meet, as a team, in regular intervals and discuss any successes and issues that have happened or are coming up. We believe that talking about issues is the best way to resolve tension and to avoid a conflict escalating.

Rotating Power

Our plan for the next 5 years is to set up a governance structure where the artistic lead of the organisation changes every 4 years to allow for succession planning to be built into the organisation and to ensure we take self-management seriously.

The artistic lead can be reelected for a 2nd term but not immediately following their first term. They cannot be reelected for a 3rd term.

Artistic leads can stay within the organisation after their term ends and take on other duties and roles if there are vacancies.

Repairing the Ladder

We will create concrete progression routes for inexperienced team members who want to take on the role of the artistic lead by supporting them with professional development.

This is a work in progress but we want to ensure this is something we work on continuously and learn and improve constantly.

We also pay our directors a fee of £100 per directors meeting (usually board members are voluntary roles) to ensure people from all walks of life can afford to sit on our board and steer Ort Gallery.

What we pay

Our work in regards to equity can not be achieved without us being publicly transparent with what we pay our artists, producers, curators and workshop leaders (as freelancers) and our staff and directors.

We want to do this to make it easier for people wanting to enter the industry to find out about pay rates and we want it to be easier for people who work with us to hold us accountable.



We have created table on the next page in the first instance so anyone can find out more details about exactly how much we pay all our workers.

We always pay freelancers and staff within a week of them submitting invoices.

Maximum Pay

We want this to be a guiding principle to ensure there is a minimum and a maximum amount people are paid regardless of experience, expertise, race, gender, sexuality or disability.

It is important to us to introduce a “Maximum Pay” amount to ensure there are no pay disparities between team members.

Going forward we want to create video content with the team explaining in more detail the wage breakdown, upload our working budgets online and hold public workshops that explore pay with selected artists and administrators.

Worker	Project Fee	Day Min Rate	Min Wage (PAYE)	Maximum Rate
Exhibiting Artist Fee	£2000 excluding expenses	Equivalent to 10 days x £200 day rate	n/a	This is the minimum & maximum rate for 2021 - 2026 and will be reviewing every 6 months
Exhibition Materials Budget	£1000	Not a fee and only mentioned for information	n/a	n/a
Artist Event Fee	n/a	£150 excluding expenses	n/a	£300
Performer Event Fee	n/a	£85 excluding expenses	n/a	£300
Workshop Lead Fee	n/a	£150 excluding expenses	We do not currently have salaried workshop leads	£300 (depending on available funding we hope to pay £250 per workshop)
Curator & Producer	n/a	£150	n/a	£300
Photographer or Videographer	n/a	£150	n/a	£300
Consultant Fee	n/a	£150	n/a	£300
Technician Fee	n/a	Living Wage (£9.50 ph in 2020)	We do not currently have salaried technicians.	Up to a max of £300 day rate if funding is available
Directors Fee	n/a	£100 per directors meeting x4 a year	n/a	£40,000 per annum (pre tax) Directors are not currently salaried but should this be possible due to funding then this would be their maximum earnings.
Salaried Staff (Diversity Officer, Producer, Artistic Director, Marketing Officer)	n/a	£150-£300 day rate for extra or offsite work	£18,000 per annum (pre tax)	£40,000 per annum (pre tax) The difference between 18 & 40 is not based on experience or expertise but on available funding
Expenses	£50 travel expenses and £50 over night stay expenses per project as a minimum	n/a	n/a	Depending on available funding more expenses will be covered, we also cover travel expenses and food at £5 per day maximum each

Accountability

We want to be a pro-Black space where Black lives are celebrated, supported and equity is taken seriously. We know this is going to be a work in progress and we will continue to explore, learn and radically listen to our team members and audiences for feedback.

We have started sharing the work from our Warmth research in order to open ourselves up to criticism, make the conversation around these internal elements public, gather feedback, use this feedback to inform future versions of working methods and generally become more transparent.

Accountability is a difficult term to get to grips with so the following lines out some methods we will start implementing.



Radical Listening

We will learn how to listen in a supportive and radical manner, by giving people space and time to speak, by listening to what is being said and what is not being said.

We will have 15 minute check ins at the start of each session to allow people time to just be in the space and share what is going on.

Taking mental health seriously

Just like for physical illness we will give time off for mentally ill health. We will work with partners and funders to avoid putting unnecessary pressure on individuals.

We will offer counselling if possible or if not, we will sign post individuals to free services, we will encourage conversations in the team about mental health to take away stigma and stereotypes.

We will offer support with food and travel costs to everyone who works with us to ensure that each team member starts the day having covered their basic human needs.

Dependents

We will support our team and freelancers by speaking to them about their dependents and what kind of support they may need.

This may be time off, bringing dependents to the work place, identifying services that could support the individual.

We will take the toll that caring for a dependent takes on an individual seriously.

Professional Development

We will offer training, one to one time, mentoring and other professional development sessions to all our staff and freelancers to ensure that we can all develop our careers in a supportive and non-competitive manner.

This will include creating leadership progression routes within our team.

Exploring Boundaries

We acknowledge that different people come to work from very different places and experiences. We know that there is a strong correlation between race, disability, gender identity, class and success in the arts.

We will therefore take this conversation seriously and explore within our team how we can support each other to bring our whole self in, what is professional and what is unprofessional, what boundaries there are and how we can break through them.

Sitting with conflict and discomfort

Conflict is part of every day life and is more likely to take place when people from different backgrounds come together. We will learn to sit with difficult emotions, take time to think and feel, stop ourselves from reacting in a defensive manner and use empathy to understand where others are coming from. We will endeavour to create safe spaces for the team to share experiences of conflict.

We will discuss issues as a team, ensure everyone is listened to, empathise with each person about the issue they raise and their circumstances. We will make a decision with them, not about them.

We know that we are not experts and we will therefore look for support from relevant experts.

Access

As part of our work centring on warmth and care it is vital to our organisation that we take Access seriously.

We know that accessible events and exhibitions benefit everyone in society and that we can only be truly inclusive if we keep striving to do better by including accessibility plans from the beginning.

This is how we already think about access and what we want to do in future.

Access Guide

Our access guide is publicly available. The idea behind the document is to give people a clear indication of what to expect before visiting Ort Gallery. It covers parking, physical access, toilet facilities, breakout rooms and support for neurodivergent people. We also have a video to go along with the guide.

The document is for everyone and not aimed specifically at people with disabilities or health conditions.

Access Provision

- A Breakout room / Prayer room
- A clear, daily work plan: start time, break time, end time and activities between
- Printed paper documents
- Access Training
- Reading and circulating access riders
- Flexibly setting out working tasks & deadlines
- Flexible rest or prayer breaks
- Understanding limits
- Understanding cultural needs
- Cater for dietary requirements
- We are based in a dry building and will not offer alcohol at events



Prompt Sheet for Access Requirements

The intention of this document is to support staff, freelancers, directors and volunteers working within our organisation to think and talk through their access requirements with the rest of the team or 1-1.

If someone is new to thinking about their requirements it can give them a starting point and hopefully the confidence to speak up.

It can also support producers and curators planning events to ask the right questions and design their event or exhibition in an inclusive way.

Curating exhibitions & events

Our exhibitions and events are accessible and we follow Shape Arts guidelines. The below are adapted from their work. Two important things to remember when working with artists are:

We ask artists how they'd like to be presented or written about and how they want to identify publicly. We will not assume to know the answer to this.

We pay disabled and racialised artists equitably. It's common for disabled and racialised artists to incur more costs in many aspects of their work and lives, yet they are less likely to be paid fairly for their labour and expenses. We will remember that disabled and racialised people are also far more likely to experience unemployment, low income and poverty.

Future Plans

In future funding applications we plan to budget for:

- BSL interpretation
- Live streaming or video documentation and transcription
- Childcare
- An access budget for artists and curators
- Audio description of exhibitions