

Open Call for the Associates Programme 2025-26

Open School East (OSE) is seeking applications from emerging artists and practitioners to join the twelfth year of our independent and outward-facing artist development programme.

We encourage prospective applicants to read through the entirety of this page before applying. To find out more about Open School East and our core programmes please visit our [about](#) page.

Contents

- A. Associates Programme - Overview**
 - B. Associates Programme - Practical Information**
 - C. Who are the Associates?**
 - D. Associates Programme Curriculum 25-26: *Home is where the garden is***
 - E. Application Process**
-

Deadline for applications:

Friday 20 June 2025, 5pm GMT

Interviews:

Week commencing Monday 14 July 2025 (30 minute interview per applicant)

Introduction with the OSE Programming Team:

Tuesday 13 May 2025, 7PM GMT

Join the OSE team for an online surgery session where you can hear more about the Associates Programme and ask questions about the programme and application process before applying. This session is free to attend - please book [here](#).

The Associates Programme runs from September 2025 - June 2026.



Associates Programme - Overview

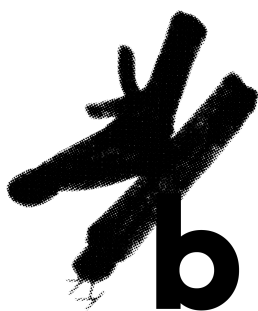
The Associates Programme is a free artist development programme that offers a critical and non-competitive environment in which artists can develop their practice and expand their professional networks. The programme is run according to principles of collaboration, experimentation and openness, and welcomes those who engage with these notions in different ways.

The programme lasts 10 months and culminates in a summer exhibition that features individual Associate projects and artworks, as well as collaborative cohort projects and artworks. The exhibition will also include works made through our Civic Programme.

Key developmental opportunities are delivered through an artistic curriculum that consists of practical workshops, theoretical modules and live projects with leading artists, as well as opportunities for self-directed Associate-led learning.

Up to 15 participants are selected to take part in the programme, who are provided with shared workspaces, access to the OSE library and AV equipment, and opportunities to develop their practices through workshops, 1:1 mentoring, artist talks and reading groups.

Please be aware that this programme is for artists and practitioners that, without this opportunity, may face challenges in accessing the arts sector and/or developing their practice due to barriers such as limited financial resources, discrimination, health challenges, disabilities and caring responsibilities.



Associates Programme - Practical Information

The Associates Programme 2025-26 will start on Monday 22 September 2025 and run until June 2026, with breaks in the winter and spring.

Open School East operates from a building at 39 Hawley Square in central Margate. The building is currently only accessible by stairs and we are working towards creating a fully accessible learning space in the future.

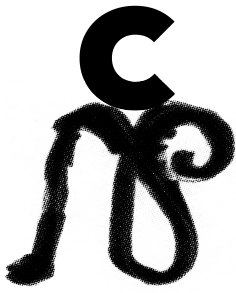
Associates are expected to move to the local area* and must commit to the scheduled two days a week timetable in person (Mondays and Tuesdays, typically between 10AM-5PM) at Open School East to receive tuition, meet their mentors, plan public activities and collaborate on projects. They must also be available for the duration of the install and summer exhibition period. We expect Associates to make use of their shared workspaces during the rest of the week, working around their own work schedules and commitments.

As a free education and learning programme, Open School East does not grant bursaries, nor does it provide Associates with accommodation. However, our team will provide guidance on finding accommodation and employment in Margate to anyone moving to the town. We will also further provide guidance on life in Margate, and on local social services and facilities.

It is crucial that successful applicants will need to ensure that they can fully commit to OSE for the duration of the programme. As such, the Associates should not engage in residencies or other durational activities, including starting a BA or MA, while undertaking OSE's Associates Programme.

Due to Open School East being a non-accredited programme, we regret that we are not able to sponsor visa applications for overseas Associates.

*If you have particular needs in this respect OSE will review this on a case by case basis



Who are the Associates?

Associates at Open School East are emerging artists and practitioners with or without a BA, MA or formal arts qualification, who are seeking a critical and non-competitive environment in which to develop their practice.

You will be part of a group of approximately 15 Associates from a diverse range of practices and backgrounds. Former Associates (alumni) continue to work collaboratively and programme events and projects at OSE, engaging in dialogue with the current cohort of Associates and forming a growing community of alumni, staff and mentors.

What experience do Associates need to have?

The Associates Programme is an opportunity to learn how to develop inter-disciplinary and collaborative ways of working. We expect this learning to be visible in the work and projects you develop in your own practice with us at Open School East, and firmly encourage an artist-led approach from each Associate. Varying research interests, skills and experiences ensures a diverse cohort which in turn ensures that we learn from one another as a cohort and as an organisation.

We are particularly committed to supporting applicants from under-represented backgrounds and encourage applications from those who have not received formal artistic training.

We do not expect you to have any previous experience of working within community and civic spaces. Associates do not need to be a 'social practice' artist but are expected to have an interest and willingness to learn about this way of working.

Taking part in the programme is primarily an opportunity to learn through working directly with each other, from leading arts professionals, and to open up and respond in new avenues within your own practice.

We look to bring together as diverse a cohort as possible, with varied skills, experiences and practices; from film-makers, sound artists, painters, sculptors, photographers, social practice artists, researchers and writers.



Associates Programme Curriculum 2025-26: *Home is where the garden is*

To find out more about our two-year programming model and approach to developing this year's curriculum please visit our [model](#) page.

The curriculum for 2025-26, titled *Home is where the garden is*, explores the garden as a metaphor for spaces of cultivation, rooting and unexpected encounters. It is built around a rhizomatic framework that focuses on the networks, systems and communities that form civic space. Throughout the programme the Associates will develop new artworks and produce events, exhibitions and resources with guest artists and community partners who we are currently working with through our *Civic Programme*.

This includes guest artists: Simeon Barclay, Marley Starskey Butler, Anna Cutler, Benedict Drew, Harun Morrison, Hugh Nicolson, Harold Offeh, Sally O'Reilly, Shenece Oretha, Camillo Pachon, Flora Parrott, Hetain Patel, Keith Piper, Samara Scott and Sara Trillo.

Home is where the garden is follows three research strands: [Civic Space](#), [Material](#), and [Produce](#).

In *Home is where the garden is*, we see [civic space](#) as an entwined mesh of shared social and political space shaped by material, social interventions and inter-relations. A space where people from different cultures, ages and lived experiences meet and cross paths.

Explorations in [material](#) unearth energies, knowledge and skills across space and (deep) time. Material mediates living and non-living ecosystems. Materials can engender and disrupt techniques and technologies. They can be malleable, rigid, raw, uncertain, virtual, charged, found and processed.

We understand [produce](#) as both a verb (to produce) and a collective noun that is connected to industry and land. In both directions it exposes the ways in which energy put in is processed and expelled; about how things are made; about transit and distribution; about how raw materials are changed by human and non-human forces.

Home is where the garden is invites prospective Associate artists who are interested or relate to these themes, to explore them through the development of artistic research, talks, workshops, collective projects and artworks with us and our various partners.

The Associates Programme is structured around three terms that include various projects, modules and activities. For the 2025-2026 iteration of the programme, the cohort will focus on the following activities:

TERM 1, September - December 2025

Guest Project with Flora Parrott & Sara Trillo: During the introductory fortnight at OSE, Associates will take part in a two-day workshop with Kent-based artists Flora Parrott and Sara Trillo. Together we will explore each artist's approach to 'fieldwork', an active and sensorial process of artistic research that places the artist directly on and amongst a shifting and interrelated landscape.

Mentoring (1-1): Throughout the year Associates meet their mentors for one to one tutorials to discuss their work, research and ideas, both in general and in preparation for public events and the final show. Recent mentors have included: Benedict Drew, Clair Le Couteur, Melika Ngombe Kolongo, Simeon Barclay, Shenece Oretha and Sally O'Reilly.

Previous mentors include: Anthea Hamilton, åbäke, Matthew Darbyshire, Kodwo Eshun and Anjalika Sagar (The Otolith Group), Marguerite Humeau, Paul Maheke, Janna Graham, Sophie Mallet, Sarah McCrory, John Douglas Millar, Tom Morton, Olivia Plender, Marijke Steedman, Trish Scott, Ed Webb-Ingall.

Peer Sessions: A weekly workshop series and dedicated space for Associates to share their individual skills and practices within the rest of the Associate cohort. Previous cohorts have used sessions as a space to test public programme ideas and simply as a space to learn a little more about each other's practices.

'Home is' Research Group with Hugh Nicholson: As part of a long-term commission with artist Hugh Nicholson, the Associates will take part in a four-part research group that unpacks and engages with the central strands of *Home is where the garden is*: Civic Space, Material and Produce.

Artist Reading Group with Harun Morrison: Running alongside the *Home is Research Group*, artist and writer Harun Morrison will lead a series of critical reading groups that provide context to wider themes explored throughout the programme.

Open House: To mark the end of the first term, the Associates will take part in a building-wide open studio event. This is an opportunity for Associates to open up their shared workspaces and share works in progress with the rest of the building and wider arts community in Margate.

TERM 2, January - April 2026

Civic Project with Samara Scott and Despacito Art School: This project is a collaboration between the Associates, members of OSE's Despacito Art School and visual artist Samara Scott, who has been working with OSE over the last year to develop a series of new artworks with Despacito Art School. This project is an opportunity to contribute to the project and to work collaboratively with young people. Works will be shown as part of the summer exhibition.

Social Practice Module: The Social Practice Module is a series of talks and workshops, devised by Polly Brannan (OSE Artistic Director), that explores and unpacks what it means to be working collaboratively with communities, and helps to form a deeper understanding of social practice and engagement.

The module invites guests that include commissioners, researchers, practitioners/artists, curators who are leading in their field. Past invitees have included; Viviana Checchia, Amal Khalaf, Anna Cutler, Sepake Angiama and Polly Brannan.

Associate-led Public Programme: A series of free, open public events, shaped by the Associates in response to curriculum thematics. Events are devised and led by the Associates cohort with support from OSE's programming team. The Public Programme nurtures artistic planning and delivery skills in a public setting. Sessions have included writing workshops, experimental film and radio production, performance, photography, short courses in electronics, ceramics, and music production. You can view our archive of events [here](#).

The majority of this programme is delivered in partnership with Turner Contemporary. Some specific events take place at OSE or in other civic settings.

Print Module: This module is led by George Harding (OSE Programme Producer) and explores publishing in artistic practice, looking at ways of sustainably distributing and/or communicating artistic research through print.

TERM 3, April - June 2026

Civic Project with Camillo Pachon and Despacito Art School: This project is a collaboration between the Associates, Columbian visual artist Camillo Pachon, and members of OSE's Despacito Art School. Together, we will develop a new performative work that explores pathways between science, spirituality and artistic practice, looking specifically at the 'mask' as a transformative technology. This project is an opportunity to explore and develop ideas around community-based artistic practice.

Mentoring (1-1): Throughout the year Associates meet their mentors for one to one tutorials to discuss their work, research and ideas, both in general and in preparation for public events and the end of programme exhibition.

OSE Exhibition 25-26: Associates work towards an end of programme exhibition, co-curated with an invited guest curator and with guidance from their mentors and the OSE Artistic Director and team.

The Associate Exhibition is an opportunity for the cohort of Associate artists to share their work with arts professionals (nationally), prospective collaborators, funders, peers and the wider public.

Guest Curator Sessions: Each year a curator is invited to shape the end of programme exhibition, pulling together outcomes from each of OSEs programmes. Associates will take part in 1:1 mentoring with the curator, as well as curatorial workshops and exhibition interpretation sessions.

Past curators include; Sepake Angiama (Iniva), Angelica Sule (Site Gallery), Cedric Fauq (Musée d'Art Contemporain de Bordeaux), Trish Scott (King's College London) Maggie Matic (Auto Italia) and Beatriz Lobo Britto (Iniva)



Application Process

Please note that we take applications from individuals only.

The Associates Programme is free to enable access to arts education that may not have been previously possible due to cultural barriers and/or socioeconomic factors.

Your application can take the form of either a .PDF file (maximum size 10MB) or a MOV video (maximum duration 6 minutes). Whichever form you choose, please title it following this model:

Firstname_Surname.pdf

Your application should contain:

1. **An artist biography:** please tell us about yourself, your background, your artistic practice and chosen mediums, as well as any theoretical interests. Please limit your response to 600 words or 2 minutes if using video.

For your biography please think about and answer the following questions:

- Why are you applying to Open School East specifically?
- What do you hope to gain from taking part in the next programme?
- How does the 2025-26 curriculum relate to your interests and practice?
- What would you like to bring to OSE? This could include practical skills, areas of interest and/or research ambitions.
- Can you explain why you feel that the free education and development offer at Open School East is important to your personal situation, and how will this help you and your development as an artist?

2. **An artistic cv:** this should be formatted as a formal cv that includes your artistic experience (awards, exhibitions, residencies, educational experiences). Please include your postal

address, telephone number and email address (1 side of A4 maximum – you can also incorporate this in the video, if that is your chosen format).

3. **A portfolio:** Up to 10 pages presenting your recent work. Besides images and captions, feel free to include text and web links to video and sound works – please do not send us wetransfer links. (If doing this part on video, please limit your response to 2.5 minutes.)
4. **An Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form:** The form is available [here](#). This data helps us to ensure that our processes are fair and transparent, and that diverse communities are represented. We cannot process your application without this form.

The deadline for applications is **Friday 20 June 2025, 5PM GMT**. Please send all of the above to: applications@openschooleast.org. You will receive an automated answer confirming receipt of your application.

Prospective Associates will be selected on the following criteria:

- Quality of ideas
- A recognised need to access free and informal education
- A genuine interest in being part of a group of people with different practices and experiences
- A curiosity to expand one's knowledge base and engage with a range of topics and ideas
- A willingness to work collaboratively and share space with others, be self-directed and interact with members of the public at different moments.
- Applicants must be able to commit fully to in-person and online sessions held as part of the programme.

All shortlisted applicants will be invited for an interview (duration 30-35 minutes per applicant) on the week commencing Monday 14 July 2025.

We expect a high number of applications, for this reason we are only able to give personalised feedback to applicants who are shortlisted for interview.

As an organisation committed to anti-racism, LGBTQIA+ rights and neuro-inclusion, we particularly welcome applications from individuals who identify with these ethics. We welcome access documents from any applicant who identifies as sick/crip/disabled/D/deaf and/or neurodivergent.

You can find more information through www.accessdocsforartists.com – an online resource created by Leah Clements, Alice Hattrick and OSE alumni Lizzy Rose. Please attach an access document with your application if there are any needs you would like to make us aware of.

For additional questions on the application process, or if you wish to discuss your application outside of the scheduled open evening or day, you can email: george@openschooleast.org and we will do our best to arrange a conversation with you. Before emailing us your questions and applying, we encourage you to have a thorough look at our website: openschooleast.org