

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

‘New Conversations’ unveils exciting first round investments in UK-Canada creative partnerships

British Council, Farnham Maltings, and the High Commission of Canada in the UK are delighted to announce £62,300 of investment in nine new creative partnerships between UK and Canadian performing arts companies. This is the inaugural investment from the **New Conversations** programme, funded and delivered by the three partners.

Initially a two-year pilot, **New Conversations** aims to increase cultural exchanges between the UK and Canada, allowing for more artist mobility and international opportunities, with a goal of initiating long term partnerships that benefit both the UK and Canadian arts sectors.

Gavin Stride, Director of the Maltings, said: “Our involvement in this programme is made possible through support and investment of Arts Council of England. We received more than 100 applications for this unique program and narrowing them down was a true challenge. Those selected demonstrate clear objectives and a curiosity to explore new ideas and ways of working. The hope is that this initial support will lead to long term partnerships.”

Mariya Afzal, Country Director, British Council in Canada, said: “We are pleased to witness the beginnings of many new and timely conversations between UK and Canada. The selected projects highlight the value, importance and need for cultural exchanges which speak to the British Council’s mandate for creating opportunities, building connections and engendering trust.”

Janice Charette, High Commissioner of Canada in the UK, said: “Canada is proud to support these artistic collaborations between our country and the UK and we are especially pleased to be able to give some of these arts organisations their first chance to share their work internationally.”

The successful applicants are:

Bucket Club (UK) and Ghost River (Canada)

Is theatre dead? A provocation will explore, reframe and rediscover what theatre is – and what it can be - through week-long residencies in the company’s home towns of Calgary and Brighton.

Wild Works (UK) and The Only Animal (Canada)

Conversations will see each company participate creatively in the others' R&D process in order to explore the potential for a new, outdoor, site specific co-production.

Flintlock Theatre (UK) and Gwaai Edenshaw (Canada)

Sovereign Nation will explore the potency of "empire" and how we relate to our shared past, and will lay the groundwork for a new international touring production.

The Marlborough Theatre (UK) and Buddies in Bad Times (Canada)

A Queer Conversation aims to produce an empowering exchange between the two organisations that paves the way for the LGBTQ+ artists to be able to tour more easily between Canada and the UK.

Forest Fringe (UK) and The Chop (Canada)

Playing Fields will explore land, ownership, ecology and the complex, inextricable histories of the two countries using the game of soccer and will investigate the possibility of a new collaborative performance.

Rachel Warr (UK) and Théâtre de la Pire Espèce (Canada)

Working Models will combine creative exchange, skills sharing, and network building, with the aim of opening new doors and increasing the visibility of visual theatre in both countries.

Poetic Unity (UK) and R.I.S.E Edutainment (Canada)

Through performance opportunities, leadership knowledge-sharing and work with local artists, *Poetic RISE* aims to build a sustainable international network for spoken word artists.

Action Hero (UK) and Mia & Eric (Canada)

Development of Collaboration is a residency that will initiate an experimental process designed to incubate a new, shared way of working and a long-term collaborative relationship.

Lyth Arts Centre (UK) and Pat the Dog Theatre Creation (Canada)

Women's Room: North aims to create a template for supporting the development of female artists based in rural locations through exchange visits, new commissions and discussions.

The second round of **New Conversations** will be announced in March 2019.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

New Conversations is funded by Farnham Maltings, British Council, the High Commission of Canada in the UK. Farnham Maltings' involvement in made possible by support from Arts Council England.

1. **Farnham Maltings** is a cultural organisation based in Surrey, England and working on a local, national and international level. We support, collaborate with and invest in artists to make new theatre and reach new audiences. We believe that the arts help us to make sense of the world, bring people together and articulate new ideas. We support a network of 180 venues across the south east of England, organise a bi-annual showcase of new English performance for an international audience, produce a stable of independent theatre companies and are working to diversify the makers and audience for the arts in the UK. Farnham Maltings is an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation and receives specific support for its international programme. Registered charity no 305034. **farnhammaltings.com**
2. **The British Council** is the UK's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. We work with over 100 countries in the fields of arts and culture, English language, education and civil society. Last year we reached over 75 million people directly and 758 million people overall including online, broadcasts and publications. We make a positive contribution to the countries we work with – changing lives by creating opportunities, building connections and engendering trust. Founded in 1934 we are a UK charity governed by Royal Charter and a UK public body. We receive 15 per cent core funding grant from the UK government. **www.britishcouncil.org**
3. **The High Commission of Canada in the United Kingdom** is the country's diplomatic mission to the UK. The High Commission works to enrich the Canada-UK relationship across cultural and creative industries through a range of activities including exhibitions hosted in our gallery space within Canada House on Trafalgar Square, events that showcase Canadian culture across the country, our work with partners such as the British Council and Farnham Maltings and a quarterly Culture Canada newsletter to build awareness of Canadian cultural presence in the UK.