

Artist Assistant for Viv Gordon

About me

I am a theatre maker, arts and mental health campaigner and survivor activist. I create shows and projects that creatively articulate trauma narratives based on my lived experience as a survivor of childhood sexual abuse (CSA), connecting my personal story with wider socio-political perspectives. My work is a campaign to forge survivor voice, visibility and community and agitate for change.

I am currently making a new show Cutting Out which is about the scale and impact of CSA in the UK. I also hold a Develop Your Creative Practice Grant from Arts Council England to network with survivor activists, artists and academics in the UK and US. My previous touring work includes : I am Joan (2016/17), PreScribed (a life written for me) (2016/17) ORAL (2019) and The Book of Jo (2019/20). I am an Associate Artist with Strike A Light.

Alongside making work, I campaign for access and inclusion for artists and audiences with mental health needs. Part of this is taking a robust approach to my own access needs by recognising and managing the impact of post traumatic stress responses, anxiety and dissociation. Access measures include having ongoing supervision from a Dance Movement Therapist, delivering a personalised mental health awareness briefing to all collaborators, setting up a mental health friendly working environment, supporting collaborators to engage with challenging themes, addressing travel and accommodation needs and working with an Artist Assistant to support me practically and emotionally to do my job.

About the Artist Assistant Role

The Artist Assistant is a vital part of the company and creative process. The role is primarily to support and work alongside me in devising and rehearsal processes, on tour and at meetings, workshops or conferences to address my access needs. We work with an evolving access model that responds to my different needs in different contexts and recognises that these change over time.

The role is varied and interesting and would suit someone who enjoys creative environments, meeting new people and social justice issues.

You will need to have the stamina and flexibility to work irregular hours, split shifts and to stay away from home as needed. There may be periods of waiting around. On a par with others in the creative team, sometimes the days are long, particularly in the lead up to a show.

I am looking for someone who is mature, empathetic, patient and warm hearted with a good sense of humour. You will have listening skills – maybe you will have a background in counselling, therapy or a related field. You will be able to assert yourself when necessary and make good judgements under pressure.

You will be very grounded, level headed and able to self manage well in sometimes stressful situations. You will be a practical person who likes to muck in and get involved in whatever is going on – happy to make tea, sweep up, run lines or do light admin tasks. I do not need personal care. If you have massage skills that is a bonus. You need to own a reliable car, be happy driving and live within easy reach of Glastonbury.

The work involves ongoing exposure to content about mental health, childhood sexual abuse and trauma – you will need to be confident that you can manage this and maintain confidentiality where necessary.

Core responsibilities are:

- Driving me to/from performances and some other events (or accompanying on public transport for longer journeys) Managing route planning, tickets, accommodation check ins etc. I drive myself where possible.
- Helping me emotionally prepare before and debrief after work
- Helping me stick to my pre-show schedule and other agreed wellbeing actions
- Being alongside me in rehearsals and meetings ready to respond in agreed ways when needed
- Holding boundaries to make sure my access needs aren't compromised by competing needs eg. by venue staff
- Getting on well with colleagues, being polite and diplomatic when needed
- Being punctual, reliable and consistent

The role is paid at £100/day plus travel (over 30 miles). Private accommodation and meal allowance provided when away from home. This is a freelance position – you will be responsible for your own tax and National Insurance.

The initial contact is for up to 21 days between February and May – to include:

PLEASE NOTE: Except the 14th–18th April these dates are flexible for the right person

- 2 x induction days tbc
- 27th Feb – Tedx Talk (Salisbury)
- 28th Feb – Workshop (London)
- 5 days Cutting Out rehearsals (probably w/c 9th March tbc)
- 6th–10th April – Cutting Out rehearsals venue tbc
- 14th – 18th April – Cutting Out Production Week and 1st show – Strode Theatre, Street, Somerset

- 2 further Cutting Out shows April/May Gloucestershire and Birmingham (tbc)

Please apply by sending me a short video (up to about 5 minutes - video quality not important - just on your phone is fine) telling me:

- a bit about yourself
- why you would like to work with me in this role
- how you fit the person specification
- your relevant experience.

Additionally please:

- Supply contact details (email preferred) for 2 referees
- Confirm you have a full driving license and your own vehicle
- Confirm you are available for the majority of confirmed dates - you must be available 14th-18th April - most other dates are flexible for the right person.

If making a video is a barrier for you then you can apply in writing (no more than 2 sides of A4). Video is preferred so I can get a sense of who you are.

Please send your application to vivgordonco@gmail.com

I welcome applications from all sorts of people.

Deadline for applications is 5th Feb

Interview notification by 7th Feb

Interviews 10th Feb (Bristol or Glastonbury)