

Artsadmin Bursary 2020

First Name Paul

Surname Hughes

Project additional details

Channing Tatum create exhibitions, publications, performances, events and pedagogical projects.

Since 2014, we have worked across stages, galleries, studios, universities and digital spaces, including: festivals DISKURS'17 (Giessen), Nottdance'19 (Nottingham) and DRAF for Frieze Week 2018 (London); a solo exhibition at 4/4 (Nottingham) and group shows at ICW (Blackpool) and The Harris Museum (Preston); and residencies at Hospitalfield Arts (Arbroath), PACT (Essen) and Siobhan Davies Studios (London).

Our movement across disciplines fosters – and is nourished by – diverse artistic communities. With a signature irreverence and resourceful wit, our work brings together philosophical thought, material experimentation and critical enquiry. Provisional formalism rubs against dead-pan humour to ask troublesome questions. Our process is sensitive to texture, context, history, composition and expectation; we keep things fresh by working with things we don't already know about. Our commitment to the unjustifiable has continually lead us to new and unexpected ways to think about power, relationality and the role of art.

The collective is currently Rohanne Udall and Paul Hughes, and based in London and Nottingham. Our work currently focuses on three strands:

- Extra-institutional / unfunded projects that invite peers from across disciplines to develop and share practice, such as our weekender residencies Plus One, or our infrequent radio station Radio Play that presents original audio works live online. We navigate complex power dynamics through transparency, trial and error, and a positive sense of mutual and un-payable debt. This year, Only Losers Left Alive, our free choreography school offers "losers, loners, lovers and doubters" across the East Midlands support for individual and collective research. OLLA challenges a previous lack of accessibility within our pedagogical practice for participants with severe learning disabilities.

- A preoccupation with the frictional relationship between artists and institutional staff. We contribute to existing conversations (e.g. 'Artist Gathering' network) and raise direct discussion with institutions we work with. Through Ghosting (supported by LADA's DIY programme), we facilitated a group of participants to haunt institutional space; our solo exhibition As If Nobody's Watching at 4/4 Gallery, co-current with our involvement at Nottdance'19, critiqued the international dance festival's relationship to Nottingham's artist-led ecology. Our new project Table Dances and Boardroom Games will present table dances on the office desks' of arts organisations – decelerating working rhythms and retuning to the 'trans-generational contract' of the institution – before hosting a discursive séance with the diverse stakeholders of these spaces (staff, artists, public, civic officers, funders, the dead, the not-yet-here).

- We make performance that can navigate institutional markets in order to reach audiences outside of our immediate context. These include performances This (2018) for open spaces, and Can You Feel It? (2019) for stages. The still-in-progress Two Hander (eta 2021) is a historical drama written by playwright Andy Edwards. Funny and formally innovative, these performances are accessible, critical, and are frequently compared to the work of Gary Stevens (*blush*). We haven't yet cracked how to 'sell' our work to programmers though. We're currently (re-)developing all works for low- fi/flexible spaces to experiment with DIY touring-models.

Project additional details

Our practice is tugged by contradictory impulses towards peer-led organising, and taking up space in established institutions. This bursary would support a period of reflection and repositioning as we tread this careful line; bolstering independent projects (Table Dances, OLLA), alongside our movement within and toward inter/national institutional networks.

Key questions: How do we take up space in – and seek to transform – conservative institutions without losing agency and dignity? What is the urgency and risk of extra-institutional artist organising?

We will seek counsel, pore over maps, equip ourselves in armour, sharpen our tools; we will broker conversations and dance on tables. We will listen to artists and professionals who have found radically different answers to the questions that trouble us. We will encounter and soak in diverse knowledge and attitudes. We will abandon dead-

ends, refine our existing commitments and forge new resolve.

The bursary would support a range of activities that might look like:

- meetings with artist-mentors or artist-led organisations who take different positions around independent/institutional tensions. (4 x 0.5 days) - public evenings of conversation with invited artists to invite collective thought around key questions in the research (3 x 0.5 days)
- meetings with Artsadmin staff to reflect on artist-institutional relations, and to support the re- articulation of our practice to inter/national performance markets. (4 x 0.5 days) - meetings with key institutions across the UK, raising the profile of our practice (4 x 0.5 days) - hosting of Table Dances / Boardroom games within three key institutions (3 x 0.5 days)
- time to write and publish a set of materials to empower both artists and institutions. (5 x 0.5 days)

Supporting two artists at £140pppd, this would leave roughly £800 to supplement the additional funds to pay invited peer-mentors and travel.

Why is this the right moment to have the support of this particular Bursary offer? (500 words)

Our practice is encountering a swell of visibility and investment. In the past 18 months, we have worked at Nottdance festival (a rare bastion of experimental dance in the UK); David Roberts Art Foundation Frieze Week (our first significant encounter with the international art market); PACT Zollverein (one of the most important centres for performance in Europe); presented our first solo exhibition; and received our first Arts Council England grant. These experiences have simultaneously troubled and galvanised us.

This bursary would equip us to meet this gear-shift in two key ways:

- Our practice has been embedded in dance and visual arts. Through the visibility and legacy of the bursary, and Artsadmin's networks, we believe this platform will connect us to inter/national networks of theatre and Live Art. Artadmin could support us to finally enter into and contribute to these spaces.

- We think it is not enough to organise independently, or to practice only in progressive institutions. We must enter into and contest institutional space that is resistant to critique. We want to encounter these spaces, markets, networks, stages – yet we want to do so on our terms and with knowledge. This Artsadmin bursary would support us to engage with this increased activity and visibility in inter/national networks; but to do so with agency, strength, critical reflection and dignity.

We feel swept up with a wider shift in the arts. For better or worse we are trying to do what we can – asking questions of ourselves and others – sharing smiles, trouble and art – and keep working into whatever feels scary and ill-advised yet totally necessary. We think at some point we might try take on directorship of an existing institution (for 5 - 10 years); we all need to take responsibility within this mess.

Responding to both this moment of our practice, and these wider crises, we wish to share our thoughts with people making work in, and transforming, the arts sector. We anticipate producing materials that could look something like:

- We think well-meaning institutions are currently paralyzed by uncertainty about how to work with artists. We would use the studio space granted by the Bursary to work on Table Dances and Boardroom Games (supplemented by funding from an a-n bursary and Chisenhale Dance Space). This work offers artists, audiences and organisational staff new principles of ownership, stewardship, responsibility. We would present three performances of this at key sites of contested ownership across the country.

- We want to respond to the erosion of dignity we so often experience when undertaking residencies as artists. We would create a flexible document / contract for artists to present to institutions as a tool for discussion and agreements.

- In the face of the decline of networks for touring performance in the UK, we feel the urgency of self-organised touring networks. We would produce a cautionary and critical manifesto – for ourselves and any others – that is informed by conversation, research, practical information and our experiments.

Please upload your CV in PDF format (2 sides of A4 max)

Websites (URL) www.channingtatum.info



Our first solo exhibition (4/4, Nottingham, Oct-2019), 'As if Nobody's Watching' presented a collection of works that expressed a hesitant relationship to their own visibility and display. Paint rollers were precariously balanced to form a crude and futile barrier; sliced up plastic water bottles were re-arranged into shy and miserable figures; newsprint images of footballers were reassembled into tender and ironic suggestions of classical painting. Visitors to the exhibition finally met with 'Been there, done that', an endlessly replenished pile of free and one-off lino print t-shirts. Pictured: Cordon (paint rollers and florists wire), A Totally Different Game (newsprint collage).



Ghosting (Toynbee Studios, Oct-2019) was a research project commissioned through LADA's DIY scheme, through which we supported over twenty participants to transform themselves into ghosts and haunt institutional spaces (studios, offices, public and store-rooms). The project experimented with the physical presence of artists in institutional space, and with ways to position ourselves to "bad feeling and the histories we'd rather forget". The project has a forthcoming digital publication, composed of written reflections on artist-institutional relationships, the persisting legacy of empire, and the aesthetics of distance.



This (2018). A performance for exhibition, foyer and studio spaces. Presented Rich Mix and Central Saint Martins (London), Vivid Projects (Birmingham) and Backlit Gallery / Nottdance festival (Nottingham). Two idiots introduce and explore a pair of collapsible tables. Lost

somewhere between scientific enquiry and childish recklessness, body and furniture contort around one another. Driven by the unpredictable movements of the collapsible tables, 'This' is a lo-fi performance for any space big enough. This wild and joyful work draws together the restless bodies of slapstick with contemporary choreography and sculpture, to critically responds to its presentational context.



Radio Play is an independent, infrequent and idiotic radio station hosted by Channing Tatum; a platform to host artworks and thinking by artists we admire. It has run since early 2018 as an online evening-length broadcast every two or three months. First developed at Summer Lodge 2017, Nottingham Trent University, Radio Play is an experiment in organising an independent space for artworks, discussion and ideas. We exercise our radio host fantasies as we learn the technical ins and outs of producing and distributing sound.



Empty Gestures A 15min performance presented at Attenborough Arts Centre, Leicester (May 2016), Rich Mix (2016), Tender Loin (2018), Salon Rose (2019). To the unassuming beat of a metronome, two figures synchronously perform a series of unique hand gestures. The gestures are stripped of their context - the only certainty left is the labour of the performers to learn and reproduce them. A deceptively simple premise produces a poetic and complexly intimate encounter. Empty Gestures questions the role of the faulty body within a world in which information is produced and circulated more rapidly and widely than ever before.



Can You Feel it? (Oct-2019) A stage performance made in collaboration with lighting designer Alex Fernandes. Developed with support from PACT Zollverein, DanceXchange and Arts Council England. First presented Rich Mix, London. 60 mins duration. Can You Feel It? presents a virtuosic, excessive, and mischievous laboratory of feeling, in which two performance thread an (impossible) line between feeling and fakery. The work questions appropriation and vampiric empathy; our insatiable desire to feel something; and our terror at feeling nothing. Gels are swapped and lanterns move; a once bare stage is transformed, and re-framed through shadows and tapestries of colour.

Do you want to add video?

Video: File/URL <https://vimeo.com/217874112>

Do you want to add audio?

Audio: File/URL

Description

We made It's Out of Our Hands in the summer of 2017. We think it is a good introduction to our work. A simple proposition – of dropping objects – unfolds into complexity, suggestiveness, humour, and compositional and auditory pleasures. A destructive childish idleness raises questions about responsibility, pleasure and the body's relationship to the material world. It has last been exhibited at The Harris Museum, Preston in May 2019 as part of GRAFT group show.

Description

This year a number of bursaries will be awarded to artists of colour as part of Live Art UK's Diverse Action Programme.

No [No]

Have you been in contact with or received advice from Artsadmin's Artists' Advisory Service? Yes, in the last one to three years [Yes, in the last one to three years]

In what region of the UK are you based? The areas in England are based on Arts Council England's area boundaries

England Midlands [England Midlands]

How did you find out about the Bursary award? Tick all that apply

Artsadmin Twitter [Artsadmin Twitter] Artsadmin Instagram [Artsadmin Instagram] Artsadmin email/e-newsletter [Artsadmin email/e-newsletter] Artsadmin E-digest newsletter [Artsadmin E-digest newsletter] Word of mouth [Word of mouth]

Please specify which other source here

I have read the application guidelines and I confirm that I am eligible to apply and that the information in this application is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge.

Y

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