

The Fringe Festival: Is it for me?

Call for Focus Group Participants:

Performing Artists Who Have Never Participated in the Vancouver Fringe Festival

Background: The Vancouver Fringe Festival was founded in 1985 with a mandate of “Theatre for Everyone.” The use of a first-come first served artist selection process was intended to favour artists who may not have the opportunity to participate in the theatre practice of the establishment. Over 30 years later, we are aware that we may be in danger of cultivating a “Fringe establishment.” Although we have maintained a non-curated, non-adjudicated, selection process, we are aware that our modes of communication, production and presentation have resulted in a festival where the majority of artists are white and come from euro-centric theatre traditions. Although we have participation from artists of colour, women, disability and LGBT2SQ+ artists, we seek to understand our lack of diversity more deeply. In doing so we aim to develop strategies to affect long term systemic change within our organization and in turn the wider theatre community.

Context: The Vancouver Fringe Festival is working with ShapeShift Arts to conduct a diversity audit, in addition to capacity building and strategic planning towards organizational systemic change. We hope to create a model that not only serves us, but other arts organizations who are committed to diversity and equity. As part of this process, we seek to connect with performing artists who have never participated in the festival (as artists, volunteers, or staff). This includes folks who work in/with performance and theatre-making of all kinds, and does not only mean those who identify as “Professionals.”

What: There will be 3 focus groups with 8-12 participants each. Participants will discuss their artistic practice, and in particular, their relationship (or lack thereof) with the Vancouver Fringe Festival. We will explore what is known/perceived about the festival, what barriers there are to participation, and what artists want/need to be able to participate in future.

Who: These focus groups are designed for folks who are currently underrepresented in the Vancouver Fringe Festival, including LGBT2SQ+ folks; indigenous, black and people of colour; folks living with disabilities; low income artists and artists living at the intersections of these identities.

When:

August 28th 5:30-7:30pm

September 1st 10am-12pm

September 2nd 12pm-2pm

Where:

The Post, 750 Hamilton Street

Details: Participants will receive a \$50 honorarium as well as 4 tickets for the 2017 Vancouver Fringe Festival

Accessibility Info:

- We have ASL interpretation booked for all three sessions, based on confirmed need. If you require ASL interpretation, please indicate in the registration form or contact us by the registration deadline.
- The Post is accessible for folks using mobility devices, and has an accessible gender neutral bathroom on site (detailed access information to be provided on registration)
- There are three additional gender neutral bathrooms available on site
- The venue we are using is a multi-use space, and we cannot guarantee that it will be entirely scent-free. However, we are committed to providing a scent-reduced environment and will send out detailed information regarding scents to all registered participants

How to Sign Up: To sign up, register [here](#), or please call or email us at: 604-649-6878 or contactshapeshiftarts@gmail.com. Registration entails completing the registration form (which can be done online or over the phone), and closes on August 21st, 2017.

