

# Case study: NDT Broadgate

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## What is it?

A partnership between New Diorama Theatre & British Land, and based in City of London, NDT Broadgate is a large rehearsal and artist development complex exclusively for independent artists.

Opened 16th August 2021, NDT Broadgate is a truly revolutionary space and is completely free for freelance and independent artists to use throughout this post COVID-19 recovery year.

With inclusion at the heart of its culture, more than half the available space is reserved exclusively for artists from the global majority and work that is disability or D/deaf-led.

Alongside New Diorama, NDT Broadgate will be co-programmed and overseen by four NDT Broadgate Associate theatre companies: Nouveau Riche, The Pappysow, Migrants In Theatre and Chinese Arts Now. Each of the NDT Broadgate Associates has dedicated office and rehearsal space, and is able to gift space at NDT Broadgate to their own networks.

## Why do you do it?

For New Diorama, we knew that freelancers in the arts have been by far the worst hit by lockdown and the pandemic. This project makes their return to activity more viable, bringing artists together after a year in isolation.

Across this COVID-19 recovery year, NDT Broadgate will provide:

**108,924** hours of free creative space

In total, NDT Broadgate unlocks 108,924 hours of totally free space for creative projects and for artists to dream; invaluable time during a year where resources may be increasingly scarce.

A footfall of more than **80,000** artists

Over this reset year, the space will welcome thousands of artists, developing hundreds of projects – all using NDT Broadgate totally free of charge. This will support artists, enliven Broadgate campus and support the return to the City.

**>20,000** sq ft

Providing over 20,000 square feet of free space and resource, this will support artists who'll focus funds saved on space to fuel a more equal arts industry.

**29** creative spaces **2** floors

NDT Broadgate will feature 16 rehearsal studios, more than 10 meeting and presentation spaces, a large designers' studio & make space and communal areas.

**8** new jobs

NDT Broadgate will be fully staffed. Recruited through an open process, with NDT Broadgate Associates central to the process. And there's a commitment to paying all staff, including the cleaning team, London Living Wage or above.



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We all want to come back better, and for NDT Broadgate to drive that change. We want artists who save money on space to invest in, for example, improving freelancer pay. Or to invest in more inclusive practice or improving access for audiences.

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## It was our ambition to bring the arts community out of isolation and spark new, unexpected collaborations that wouldn't have happened in the old world.

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For British Land, over the past 10 years we have built a strong partnership with the New Diorama Theatre at our Regent's Place campus, so we were proud to welcome them to Broadgate. After a challenging year for international theatre owing to the pandemic, this is the opportunity for us to support the creative industry's recovery, in particular the creatives and the freelancers. This exciting partnership in such a vibrant and diverse part of London will play an important part in supporting the UK's cultural recovery and will pave the way for similar projects across the country and abroad.

## How do you do it?

### Project Partnerships & Resourcing

Bringing together a wide number of partners – from the arts sector, the private sector and the public sector – NDT Broadgate is a partnership between New Diorama Theatre and British Land, in partnership with the City of London Corporation, and generously supported by Arts Council England, Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, Jerwood Arts and Theatre Deli.

The project has required New Diorama leveraging support and funds to make this responsive project happen as quickly as possible to provide the timely support that this period demands.

Partners were selected due to the resource they had to offer (i.e British Land) and also the insight and expertise they could bring to the project (i.e Jerwood Arts – who have supported the NDT Broadgate associates with their own decision-making processes).

### Selecting & Supporting Artists

Alongside the associate model, where the four NDT Broadgate Associates can select artists for their spaces independently of New Diorama, any independent/freelance artist can apply for space through New Diorama.

All applications for space at NDT Broadgate made through New Diorama are selected via randomised lottery, with no application judged on artistic merit or quality terms. This has the primary aim to maximise footfall and make best usage of the space over that period.

Freelance and independent artists can apply through the simple portal, most questions are multiple choice, with set answers, and artists will need to type no more than a total of 200 words across the whole process. In total it should take no more than 10 minutes from start to finish – making it friendly for independent artists and removing time burden as much as possible.

## What has happened/is happening?

We're still in the early phases of the project. In our first four weeks of the project, over **8,500** hours of free artistic space have been gifted.

Before Christmas 2021, more than **530** artists will have used NDT Broadgate, accumulating – at a minimum – an astonishing **21,082** artist hours of gifted studio space.

Conceived as an inclusive and accessible space, to date we've met and far exceeded our initial goals around diversity. **42%** of work at NDT Broadgate is being led by Black, Asian and Global Majority Artists, **48%** of the space run by artists who identify as Working Class and **23%** of work in our space being led by Disabled or deaf artists.

And we're just getting started. October 2021 sees the opening of our large Design Studio, writer's rooms and co-working spaces. Throughout this year we'll remain in constant dialogue with freelance creatives, working to refine and improve our offer, making NDT Broadgate an essential space for artists, for the recovery of the wider arts sector, and for City of London, helping to achieve the best possible vision of "coming back better".



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## What's the learning so far?

### Need

We have been overwhelmed by the response and demand from artists for space, resource and support – far exceeding our initial expectations.

### Challenges

There are significant challenges around launching responsive projects with a diverse partner mix, with arts organisations leading a project alliance of private and public sector stakeholders. Primarily around resource and capacity disparities.

An increasingly challenging funding climate and extended turnaround times significantly enhance project risk. These turnaround times have been further compounded by COVID-19.

If we were to run a similar project in future, we want to employ a project partner liaison to handle requests and conversations not directly related to the delivery and development of the project. With such a diverse mix of partners, there are many shifting priorities and demands that fall well outside the initial project outline, this has been challenging for a small team to accommodate – particularly during intensive delivery periods. However, in the current climate resource for this role would be unlikely to present itself.

**“The New Diorama Theatre and British Land should be applauded for this ingenious programme and we are proud to support it. COVID 19 has had a devastating impact on the capital's cultural sector. But collaborations between the creative and commercial industries will boost London's economic growth and help us build back better from the pandemic. We want to promote stronger collaboration between the culture and business sectors, and encourage owners, occupiers, and employers to make unused space available for creatives for mutual benefit.”**

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ALDERMAN WILLIAM RUSSELL

And already we are receiving feedback from artists at what has been made possible by the free space and resource they have received. Even this morning we have had an email from artists saying “The £4,000 we saved thanks to the lottery of rehearsal space has meant us paying everyone above London living wage (and there are LOADS of us)/above union minimums.”



### For more information

Visit [www.newdiorama.com/ndt-broadgate](http://www.newdiorama.com/ndt-broadgate)

### The Project Blueprint

This sets out initial ambitions, plans and modelling – designed to encourage others to replicate the project in their own country/community.

<https://newdiorama.com/ndt-broadgate/blueprint-vision>

## Culture & Commerce Taskforce



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