

## SQUARE ROUTE MANIFESTO

Square Chapel is and has always been about arts and community; bringing people, stories and ideas together to create a collective experience that might just make you look at the world slightly differently. For over 28 years we have provided a platform for artists and companies from across the UK and internationally to present their work for local audiences, and our community outreach programme, which is now 13 years strong and counting, has opened all kinds of doors for all kinds of people: from tiny tots experiencing theatre for the very first time, to older people whose highlight of the week is attending our Monday afternoon art classes.

Square Chapel as we know it is on the brink of dynamic change. Building work is underway for our £6.6m capital development project which will bring us a second, more intimate, performance space – with a cinema screen – for film and studio performance; as well as a brand new foyer, box office and café-bar, improved facilities and level access throughout, due for completion in Spring 2017. Square Chapel will sit alongside the extraordinary Piece Hall (which boasts a 7,500-capacity courtyard for outdoor performances and events), state-of-the-art Orangebox young people's centre and the new Central Library, together forming a stunning cultural quarter for the town.

But – our new building would be empty without a shared artistic vision and driven community spirit – so, this is an open invitation to all artists, creatives, makers and shakers, audience members and communities, to help us fill it.

We believe that the best kind of art should be fearless, compelling and responsive to the community in which it is presented and it is our intention to work more closely with artists, companies and creatives at all different stages of development to offer access routes into the arts and progression opportunities beyond that. We are committed to building a more diverse network of artists and recognise that this needs to start at grassroots level. We are aware of our responsibility as a community venue to provide experiences and opportunities that children and young people may no longer find in schools, and are rising to the challenge. We believe in life-long learning and skills-sharing across art-forms, sectors and generations. We welcome anyone and everyone through the doors of Square Chapel and invite you to take ownership of the space, but we also know that the work we do outside of our four walls and inside our local communities is equally important. We want to facilitate an ongoing dialogue between artists and audiences to inform the way in which new work is made and challenge the people who make it. We advocate curiosity, experimentation, a sense of ambition and a willingness to fail; and understand that there is far more to 'value' than finance, and greater 'success' than an end product. We are a home for human creativity.

By creating an artistic infrastructure of networks, platforms, provision and professional development opportunities, our aim is to support the ecology of innovative new work coming out of Halifax and nurture a new wave of emerging and existing artists who aren't afraid to push boundaries, ask questions and be truly representative of the vibrant and varied communities we serve.

Square Route is our talent development programme designed to support this ambition. Over the last twelve months, we've been talking and listening to artists, companies and creatives from all over the country and internationally, at various stages of their career, to find out what they really need from their arts centres. We've learnt a lot and we plan to learn more. So, we want to hear from you – whether you're an artist, performer, writer, director, producer, audience member, educational institution, business, fellow arts organisation or simply someone with a passion for making things happen. To express your interest in becoming part of the network or supporting this initiative in any way, email [alison@squarechapel.co.uk](mailto:alison@squarechapel.co.uk). Let's begin the conversation.