



## Press Release

For immediate release

## **FACTORY INTERNATIONAL ANNOUNCES LATEST ROUND OF OPPORTUNITIES FOR NORTHERN CREATIVES, MUSICIANS AND MORE**



- Applications are now open for the 2025 Factory International Fellowship, offering six artists in the North the opportunity to learn alongside international creatives by working on a production at Aviva Studios and the upcoming Manchester International Festival.
- South Asian artist collectives based in the North, ready to scale-up their practise are invited to submit proposals for the latest Artist Takeover in Aviva Studio's vast warehouse space, from 21 October.
- Opening on 4 November, Factory Sounds is a talent development programme offering a range of support for people working in the music sector across Greater Manchester.

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Factory International announces its latest round of artist development opportunities as it looks to support the next generation of creatives. Focused on artists from the North of England, particularly

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those most underrepresented in the sector, Factory International initiatives support the many creative communities in Manchester and the North with opportunities at the world-renowned Manchester International Festival and year-round at Factory International's new home, Aviva Studios.

Reflecting its commitment to developing the next generation of creative talent, particularly those most underrepresented in the sector, Factory International's opening year has seen **over 100 artists** from all stages of their careers given opportunities to develop and learn through programmes such as the annual **Factory International Fellowship**, **Factory Sounds**, and **Artist Takeovers**. Further to this, networking and collaboration events such as **Artist Socials**, **Artist Drop-Ins** and **Global Creatives** have provided platforms for more than **500** creatives to connect this year alone.

### FACTORY INTERNATIONAL FELLOWSHIP

Applications are now open for the Factory International Fellowship 2025 - a nine-month scheme which sees six artists with a variety of artistic practices, invited to go behind-the-scenes during the creation of some of the large-scale productions taking place at Aviva Studios and Manchester International Festival. The fellowship is open to independent artists and creative practitioners based in the North, who are at a pivotal point in their career, to develop new knowledge, experience, skills and networks.

In 2024 **Elkanah Wilder, Flematu Sessay, Gemma Lees, Maya Chowdry, Seren Marimba, and Tommy Ryoma Hannaway** have had exclusive access to Factory International commissions and creative teams and have developed their practice through mentoring, observational placements, and peer-to-peer learning.

Factory International has previously offered Creative Fellowships for Greater Manchester-based artists every two years since Manchester International Festival 2017, with the 2017 and 2019 cohort of Fellows supported by Jerwood Arts. The beneficiaries, who work as comedians, theatre-makers, dancers, musicians, photographers and more, have gone on to exhibit and perform across the UK, take up artist residencies overseas, be featured in national press, and secure artistic commissions from major funders including Sky Arts, BBC Arts, BFI, Arts Council England, British Council and the Princes' Trust.

**Flematu Sessay, Cultural and Creative Producer and Factory Fellow 2024, says:** *"I've been shadowing the Sweet Dreams production. Following the show, working with the team, and seeing just the practicalities of putting on something of that scale has been incredible."*

Watch a video about Flematu's experience as a Factory International Fellow [here](#).

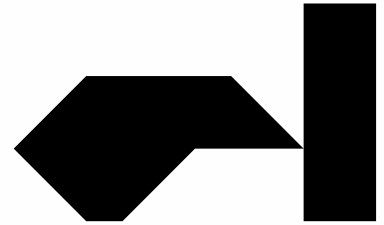
### ARTIST TAKEOVER

The Spring 2025 Artist Takeover applications will open on 21 October 2024 for groups and collectives of South Asian artists from any discipline based in the North of England, who have a minimum of five years of professional practice. In May 2025, Factory International will hand over the keys to the vast Warehouse space at Aviva Studios for use by a South Asian artist group or collective who want to

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Aviva Studios  
Water Street, Manchester M3 4JQ  
[factoryinternational.org](http://factoryinternational.org)



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experiment, play and create work at an epic scale that is not possible elsewhere. Artists will be offered financial support of up to £10,000 to explore and realise their idea as well as dedicated guidance from industry experts within the Factory International team.

Factory International's first ever Artist Takeover at Aviva Studios was led by three artists: **Jennifer Jackson, Rosie Elnile** and **Craig McCorquodale**. The trio invited 100 professional and non-professional performers including babies, a brass band and a local cheerleading group into the space to experiment and play with malleable materials.

Following this, **54: Manchester** used archive film materials, sound and material design to turn the South Warehouse into an immersive audio-visual installation, investigating the Black British experience in the North West.

The third Artist Takeover in September was led by **Studio Tonto**, formed by co-founders of the Liverpool-based Invisible Wind Factory. Studio Tonto used a combination of tactile interfaces, projections and sound to create an enchanted garden.

**Jennifer Jackson, Artist Takeover co-lead artist Summer 2024, said:** *"It's not often you are invited to experiment without the pressure of delivering a final product to a building, so it felt like there was an immense freedom to play."*

**54: Manchester, Artist Takeover collective Summer 2024, said:** *"The experience was invigorating in every aspect—empowering for us as artists and incredibly enjoyable. It exceeded all our expectations."*

## FACTORY SOUNDS

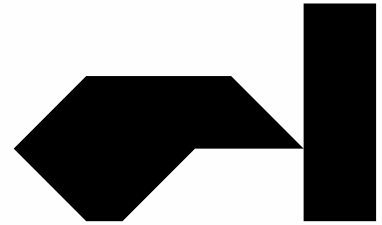
Factory Sounds is a development programme for those involved in Manchester's music scene. Applications for the 2025 cohort open on 4 November 2024. Successful applicants are offered £1,000 of financial support towards the creation of a new project, peer-to-peer support, networking opportunities and a series of regular masterclasses in artist management, promotion, and fundraising.

For 2024, this programme supported the artist and producer **RenzNiro**, community station **STEAM Radio MCR**, the soulful R&B performer **Rumbi Tauro**, Reggae rap artist and spoken word poet **J.Chambers**, electronic producer and vocalist **Caitlin LM**, DIY rapper and producer **Algernon Cornelius**, the drone band **Thraa**, DJ and Radio host **CHARMS**, singer-songwriter **Saint Harmony**, artist, producer, composer **Danny H**, and queer electronic night **FLUFF**.

## ARTIST SOCIALS

Factory International hosts monthly meet-ups for local creatives. The monthly Artist Drop-Ins are a chance for artists to come together and share ideas. These casual get-togethers are a chance to get to know Factory International staff including Artistic Director & Chief Executive **John McGrath** and Creative Director **Low Kee Hong**. The next Artist Drop-In will be taking place in the evening of 30 October.

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Artists from outside the UK are also invited to the Social for Global Creatives. The next Global Creatives social is scheduled for the afternoon of Saturday 2 November and will be a chance to enjoy conversations in a relaxed environment – facilitated by **Stella Barnes** (the ex-Creative Director of Community Arts North) and **Mahboobeh Rajabi**.

### QUOTES

**Kee Hong Low, Artistic Director at Factory International, said:** *“Our Artist Development opportunities at Factory International are designed to provide a platform for emerging talent to grow, realise their artistic visions, and to venture boldly into collaborations and artistic conversations not possible elsewhere. It’s essential for us to nurture the next generation of artists, especially those from underrepresented backgrounds, and create a supportive environment where they can thrive. I can’t wait to see what the talented individuals who progress through our programmes will achieve.”*

**Punam Ramchurn, Talent Development Manager at Factory International, said:** *“I’m excited to launch three new Artist Development Schemes this Autumn. One of the most rewarding aspects of my role is offering opportunities that embrace our uniqueness in scale, representation, and international reach. Now that we’ve had the keys to Aviva Studios for over 12 months, we can truly give artists space to think, explore, and be ambitious. Who knows where that journey will take them...”*

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### ARTIST DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES LISTINGS:

- **Factory International Fellowship** - Applications Open: 11 October 2024. Deadline: 9 December 2024.
- **Artist Takeover** - Applications Open: 21 October 2024. Deadline: 16 December 2024.
- **Factory Sounds** - Applications open 4 November 2024. Deadline 15 Jan 2025.
- **Artist Drop-In** - 30 October, 6-7pm.
- **Global Creatives meet-up** - 2 November and 7 December, 2:30-4pm.

**Find out more about Factory International’s artist development opportunities and how to apply [here](#).**

***Ends.***

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### NOTES TO EDITORS:

#### ABOUT FACTORY INTERNATIONAL

Factory International is the organisation behind Manchester International Festival (MIF) and the city's landmark new cultural space, Aviva Studios.

Factory International commissions, produces and presents a year-round programme of original creative work and special events at Aviva Studios, its landmark new home in Manchester, online, and internationally through its network of co-commissioners and partners. It also stages the city-wide Manchester International Festival every other year.

Factory International builds on the legacy of Manchester International Festival, one of the world's leading arts festivals, and the first to be entirely focused on the commissioning and producing of ambitious new work. Staged every two years in Manchester since 2007, world-renowned artists from different art forms and backgrounds create dynamic, innovative, and forward-thinking new work in venues and spaces across Greater Manchester.

A space for invention and discovery, Aviva Studios was designed by the world-leading practice Office for Metropolitan Architecture (OMA), with Ellen van Loon as lead architect – their first major public building in the UK. Its development was led by Manchester City Council, with backing of £99.05m from HM Government and £7m National Lottery funding from Arts Council England.

Ultra-flexible in design, the building is based around large, open, adaptable spaces that can be constantly reconfigured, enabling artists to develop and create large-scale work of invention and ambition of a kind not seen anywhere else in the world. A unique canvas to make, explore and experiment, audiences can enjoy the broadest range of art forms from major exhibitions and concerts to intimate performances and immersive experiences.

Factory International plays an important role in the lives of Greater Manchester residents, bringing jobs, skills, training, and creative opportunities. Through the Factory Academy and Factory International Schools partnerships, Factory International is training the creative workforce of the future, while its pioneering Creative Engagement and Artist Development programmes create year-round opportunities for local people to get involved, from participating in flagship commissions to shaping the organisation through involvement in its public forums.

Factory International is an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation.

[factoryinternational.org](http://factoryinternational.org)

#### ABOUT ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND

Arts Council England is the national development agency for creativity and culture. We have set out our strategic vision in Let's Create that by 2030 we want England to be a country in which the creativity of each of us is valued and given the chance to flourish and where everyone of us has access to a remarkable range of high-quality cultural experiences. From 2023 to 2026 we will invest over £467million of public money from Government and an estimated £250 million from The National Lottery each year to help support the sector and to deliver this vision.

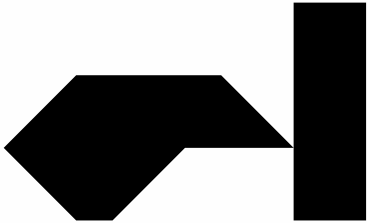
[www.artscouncil.org.uk](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk)

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