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## **FERTILE GROUND ANNOUNCES 2021 FESTIVAL PLANS Virtual Production for 12<sup>th</sup> Annual New Works Festival Festival Curated by Community Panel RACC Grant Funds New GROW AWARD**

**PORTLAND, OREGON – August 1, 2020** | The 2021 Fertile Ground Festival, a program of the Portland Area Theatre Alliance (PATA), will become a free, virtual festival running Thursday, January 28 through Sunday, February 7, 2021. Additionally, in order to serve a wider range of artists and audiences in the community, significant actions are underway to create an equity-infused process that prioritizes inclusivity for the 12<sup>th</sup> annual new works festival. To accomplish these ambitious shifts, both the festival framework and decision-making structures have been revised which are departures from previous years.

Fertile Ground’s virtual festival will present pre-recorded “acts of creation,” submitted by producing organizations and artist-producers. Recorded premieres will be live-dropped at scheduled intervals over the course of the 11-day festival, and streamed on Fertile Ground’s Facebook and YouTube channels. The show time slot for each premiere will be randomly assigned.

Moving the festival to a virtual platform will result in a limited number of available festival slots, therefore making Fertile Ground 2021 a curated festival. While festival curation is a departure from one of the key founding tenets of Fertile Ground, this shift offers an opportunity for the festival to evolve and to ensure representation of underserved communities, and actively engage in pro-inclusivity and power-sharing practices.

Fertile Ground organizers are intent on fostering a festival that is more inclusive of and conducive to the participation of underrepresented communities. Demonstrating Fertile Ground’s commitment to broadening representative inclusion of local artists, a panel has been instituted that is composed of individuals whose identities encompass a spectrum of underrepresented voices, along with Fertile Ground and PATA representatives. Panel development is underway and will be announced soon.

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This decision-making body will curate Fertile Ground 2021 with attention to the inclusion of underrepresented communities,\* artistically interesting and culturally relevant “acts of creation,” and projects with an innovative concept for a recorded piece intended for a digital media platform. Fertile Ground is seeking submissions from a wide range of artists on a variety of topics and welcomes an array of artistic genres and disciplines.

Fertile Ground was recently awarded Regional Arts & Culture Council Arts Equity & Access funding (Cycle 2). These funds are intended to formalize and expand the organization’s initiatives to address equity and access barriers to participation in the festival that exist for underrepresented artists. The grant will allow Fertile Ground to distribute funds to a number of artists/producers through the GROW AWARD program. Five artists/producers will receive a \$500 GROW AWARD. The newly convened community panel will also adjudicate applications for the GROW AWARD made possible by the RACC Arts Equity & Access grant.

“At this time, in our local and national landscape, our community needs artists’ voices more than ever,” said Dre Slaman, Fertile Ground Managing Director. “This re-imagined virtual Fertile Ground is about innovation, inclusion, and, most of all, the resilience of our local artistic community.”

“I believe we have a pivotal, vital opportunity to meaningfully invite new artistic voices into the festival while challenging all artists to innovate their work for this new kind of digital performance, and in doing that evolve Fertile Ground,” said Nicole Lane, Fertile Ground Festival Director. “We are working on these changes intentionally and swiftly with more pieces falling into place daily. It has been inspiring to work with an incredible group of people to redesign Fertile Ground with our sights set on a bringing a vibrant festival of new work to at-home audiences that features inventive ‘acts of creation’ from an array of local artists who are emphatically representational of our entire community.”

*\*BIPOC, LGBTQ2IA+, Disabled*

## **KEY LINKS**

[Fertile Ground Festival](#) website for overview information about Fertile Ground 2021

[Portland Area Theatre Alliance](#) (PATA) producer information page on applying for Fertile Ground 2021

## **KEY DATES**

August 1	GROW AWARD Application Submission Begins
August 1	FG21 Application Submissions Begins
August 24	GROW AWARD Application Deadline
September 1	GROW AWARD Announced
September 4	FG21 Application Submission Deadline
December 1	Fertile Ground 2021 Projects & Schedule Announced
January 28	FG21 Start
February 7	FG21 End

## **ABOUT FERTILE GROUND**

Fertile Ground Festival of New Works, a program of the Portland Area Theatre Alliance (PATA), is an 11-day arts festival that is held every January/February in Portland, Oregon. The Fertile Ground Festival of New Works, serves our community’s artists and audiences by offering a new works festival that features a myriad of artistic endeavors by local artists.

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The festival provides art-makers and producers a marketing umbrella and professional development opportunities. The annual festival offers a platform that fosters relationships between artists, producers and arts patrons, and deepens an appreciation for the abundant “acts of creation” in our community. Fertile Ground is committed to the continued examination and expansion of efforts toward equity, inclusion, diversity and accessibility at every level. The festival works toward creating an inclusive, welcoming festival platform shared by intersectional identities and underrepresented voices across race, ethnicity, color, age, gender identity and sexual orientation (*LGBTQ2IA+*, and physical or intellectual ability).

A program of the [Portland Area Theatre Alliance](#), whose goal is to increase the quality, quantity and professionalism of theatre produced in Portland and the surrounding areas, Fertile Ground was launched in 2009 to provide a platform for Portland theatre companies to showcase their commitment to new work. Today, the festival encourages all artists, of every background and discipline, to jump in to elevate a wide swath of voices and generate an exciting array of arts-centric offerings. Fertile Ground establishes for both artists and arts patrons that Portland is truly fertile ground for creativity, innovation and daring acts of performance.

The Fertile Ground Festival of New Works is a program of the Portland Area Theatre Alliance and is funded in part by a 2020 Arts Equity & Access grant from the Regional Arts & Culture Council.

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

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