

## ONLINE APPLICATION FORM - ANSWERS TO KEY QUESTIONS COPIED HERE

### **Provide a short description of your work or practice, along with any relevant biographical information. (approx. 250 words)**

Emma is a dancer, theatre maker, collaborator, facilitator, movement director, trainee intimacy coordinator, choreographer, advocate, micro-activist and occasional drag king. She asks questions and is obsessed with asking better questions.

From creating dance with rural communities to working in 'established' mid-scale theatres, her politics always underline her practice with a focus on narrowing the gap between ideology and actions, questioning inherited working structures and developing shareable approaches. Since 2018 her research has concentrated upon failure from both individual and societal perspectives. Emma is currently a PushProject.Eu Artist, Associate Artist with the Scottish Mental Health Arts Festival and recently undertook an Associateship with Scottish Dance Theatre/ Dundee Rep supported by the Surf The Wave Seed Generator. Her facilitation practice includes working with Federation of Scottish Theatre, EPAD, Imagine and IETM. She has also advocated for freelancers rights as a speaker in Holyrood at the Cross Party Group for Culture. Her work will be done when practices that encourage mental well-being are embedded across the arts sector.

### **Provide a short description of your organisation. (approx. 250 words)**

Cultured Mongrel is the creative company for the practice of Emma Jayne Park; dancer, theatre maker, collaborator and micro-activist. From her base in Dumfries and Galloway, Scotland she works locally, nationally and internationally. Cultured Mongrel was established as a means to invite people to work with her, ensuring collaboration is at the heart of her work. As such, Cultured Mongrel is a fluid, evolving collaboration between artists and freelancers, each bringing their unique skills, experience and insight to a project.

Tackling challenging themes, Cultured Mongrel's work connects with audiences through its authenticity and honesty. Aiming to create space for dialogue about the complex matters that impact our everyday lives. The artistic focus includes questioning perceptions of identity, failure, autonomy, authorship/ re-authorship, questioning inherited power structures, cultural change and rescaling performance. Cultured Mongrel is currently exploring work across three themes:

- Epic Fail - a collection of projects exploring failure, as both an academic concept and lived reality.
- Moving Slowly - a long term piece of creative research looking to question the pace of our work and lives in the 21st Century.
- Coming Home - a body of works that question the sensation of home and place making.

**Project name** - Critical Friends

**Which art form or creative area is the main focus of your application?** Dance

**Tell us about your idea/proposal:**

*What do you want to research and explore? How will it benefit you and your sector?  
(approx. 500 words)*

Emma Jayne Park aspires to work at scale and with ambition. For freelancers, this typically involves one of two options - formally incorporating as a company or organisation, or partnering with organisations who have such traditional models. This proposal looks to explore an alternative model - one that retains the agility and flexibility of freelance life, whilst developing trustworthy models of governance, checks and balances.

Critical Friends looks to explore what support structures could bring greater oversight to Cultured Mongrel, inform a sustainable business model, and investigate new governance structures that better reflects and respects the realities of freelance work, and Emma's work as a rural, disabled artist.

This project will recruit five Critical Friends to work with EJP - and with each other - over five months, to explore governance structures and options for future financial sustainability for Cultured Mongrel Dance Theatre. Each Critical Friend will bring their own knowledge and experience of these areas, and will be tasked with exploring and researching other insights or models of relevance to CMDT. The Critical Friends will meet twice as a group for half-day working sessions to share, discuss and inform a new financial business and governance model, which will shape the future of CMDT.

To date, Emma Jayne's work has been largely grant-funded - support which to date has enabled her to explore projects at both a small and ambitious, region-wide scale. However, working on a large, long-term scale as a freelancer comes with challenges including:

- The increasing challenges (competition for) of grant funding, especially over the long term and in the arts.
- The reliance on the priorities and themes of funders, which do not always match the needs of a region or an artist.
- The increased financial pressures of the pandemic highlighting the importance of a resilient business model.

At the end of this project, Emma Jayne will:

- Have a clearer understanding of a future business plan, which balances other forms of income alongside grants to offer scalability, financial sustainability, resilience and opportunity for growth.
- Have explored the role of a team of Critical Friends in shaping, influencing and guiding the governance of Cultured Mongrel.
- Be able to apply these insights to the future of Cultured Mongrel, and share them for the benefit of artists exploring non-traditional models of growth and governance.

## **Sharing**

*You will be expected to share your experience at a Creative Scotland sharing event. In what other ways will you share your learning? (approx. 250 words)*

Emma Jayne Park is a well-known and well-connected artist, frequently invited to speak about her experiences in challenging and questioning established ways of working in the arts. She is particularly known for advocating for the role of freelancers in the arts, most recently joining the Freelance Taskforce (working with the National Theatre of Scotland). Emma is an active member of Freelancers Make Theatre Work - an independent, voluntary group of freelancers working to centre and champion the voices of freelance artists. As such, Emma will share the learning from this research via Freelancers Make Theatre Work's 'Experiments in Governance' programme, which looks to explore and share how freelancers might be better supported to develop and contribute to governance structures in the arts. Emma will host at least one event, and write at least one newsletter, in this group to share this research.

In addition, Emma is Associate Artist for the Scottish Mental Health Arts Festival (SMHAF), and an invited contributor for What Next? Emma will use both of these opportunities to share learning from this project with established Scotland and UK networks.

## **Covid-19 Risk Management**

*Your project should comply with all current UK and Scottish Government guidance on Covid-19 and should be conducted remotely. Describe how you will manage any risks (e.g. absences during the research period). (approx. 400 words)*

This project has been designed so that it can be carried out entirely through remote working. This will embrace the needs of Critical Friends who are based across Scotland and / or who have access needs, as well as working confidently within the changing restrictions of Covid-19. All meetings can be carried out by phone and / or by Zoom, and

the project can - if necessary - be achieved entirely without travel or face to face meetings.

Absences and changes to the project timeline may be required due to Covid-19, other illness, or the restrictions or changes necessary to accommodate disability, caring responsibilities etc. As a disabled artist who is actively exploring alternative models of work, Emma Jayne is a skilled and thoughtful practitioner who works flexibly and empathetically with others. It may be beneficial for Critical Friends to work at different paces, intensities or timelines to one another, and the project will be flexible in accommodating different needs, whilst drawing together learning and a coherent manner. The project timeline has been chosen to reflect this likely need for flexibility.

**Project Timeline** 15th July 2021 - 31st November 2021

### **Project Budget**

- 5 x £400 (2 days @ £200 pd) for 5 x Critical Friends (£2k). That's time to research / share their experience on business models, and attend meetings to share CMDT's business.
- £1000 (5 days @ £200pd) for EJP's time. That's time for finding the CF, attending research meetings, contextualising learning and sharing.
- **TOTAL £3k**