



Emergent Residency Programme 2025

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is Emergent?
2. Who can apply?
3. Do I have to be disabled to apply
4. How do you define disabled
5. Can I apply if I have won previous awards, prizes, or had significant exhibitions?
6. How do I apply? What is the process?
7. What art forms do you accept?
8. Do you cover travel costs for the residency?
9. In your section asking about barriers I face, what are you looking for?
What do you mean?
10. What do you mean by a socially engaged practice?
11. I need support with my application, can you help?
12. How will artists be selected?
13. I have applied before, can I apply again?
14. I am not based in the UK. Can I still apply?
15. Can someone else complete my application for me?
16. If I am not selected, will I receive feedback on my application?

What is Emergent?

An innovative programme run in partnership between Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead (Baltic) and Shape Arts, London (Shape). The programme is designed to support emerging disabled artists in the post-pandemic landscape through an accessible approach to digital and physical support and residency experiences.

We offer:

- A hybrid residency, consisting of blended remote and on-site support, run in partnership between Baltic and Shape teams
- An on-site residency at Baltic with remote support and mentoring either side from mid-October 2025 to mid-February 2026
- Remote support will be by Zoom or similar tools

Support areas will cover artist needs and include:

- Curation (the impact of your work according to context)
- Technical issues in your practice (for example digital working)
- Engagement (connecting with audiences, raising your profile)
- Access (your own, and wider considerations for access curation)
- Sustainability (your career in the wider arts ecology)
- Finance (budget management, fundraising opportunities)

The awarded artist receives a £5,000 bursary. This is designed to support their practice in the ways they most need.

There will be support and development opportunities for a small group of shortlisted artists. These artists will be notified following the shortlisting process.

Who can apply?

Artists must be 18 years of age or over.

You must usually be based/living in the UK (you will be asked for proof of this).

You must be in the first five years of your career (your CV or biography should reflect this).

You must not be in full time education.

You must self-identify as disabled (we appreciate you may use another word or term, but the important thing is that you face disabling barriers).

You must have not been shortlisted in previous years of the Emergent programme.

Do I have to be disabled to apply?

Yes. You need to self-identify as disabled – you are welcome to use your own preferred word or term for disabled in your application (deaf, have depression, neurodivergent, survivor of mental health system, blind/partially sighted, and so on). The main thing is that you have direct lived experience of disabling barriers.

You are welcome to contact us if you have queries on this. We will not be asking for any form of health certification or validation.

How do you define 'disabled'?

We have a broad and inclusive approach to what disability means.

Some people will meet with access barriers on a daily basis; others may have a mental or physical impairment or health condition which is invisible to others or which they prefer to keep to themselves; some people may not even have considered themselves to be disabled until something has happened to make them reflect on the issue. If you consider yourself to be disabled under this broad definition, then please indicate so in the monitoring form and where applicable in your application.

The partners work to the social model of disability and applications are not dependent on a health or medical diagnosis.

[Learn about the Social Model of Disability on Shape's website](#), where you can find an animation and an Easy Read document.

Can I apply if I have won previous awards and prizes, or had significant exhibitions?

Yes, you are welcome to apply. However, we are looking to target support for disabled artists who face barriers to progression. This means that, as part of the selection process, we will give greater weight to applicants who identify significant barriers to progression than those who have a strong track record of success. If you were previously shortlisted for the Emergent programme, your application will not be accepted.

How do I apply? What is the process?

1. Complete the application form on Submittable.
2. Make sure you reply to each part of the form, even if sending us answers by audio or video. Without these details we cannot process the application.
3. The panel will contact shortlisted artists to arrange a conversation. This will be conducted in a relaxed and flexible format, using remote tools such as zoom.
4. Afterwards, we will make an award and announce the awardee and final shortlisted group.
5. Other artists will be notified about their applications before this announcement is made.

When is the deadline for applications?

The deadline for submitting your application is Sunday 10 August 2025, 23:59.

What art forms do you accept?

We welcome applications covering a variety of contemporary art forms, including but not restricted to: painting, drawing, sculpture, film, audio/sound, photography, mixed media, text, performance, textiles and so on.

If your practice is research-based there must be an aspect to it which connects with audiences and can be broadcast or showcased in some form.

Do you cover travel costs for the residency?

There will be a travel grant of up to £500 made available to selected artists for travel to and from the residency location in Gateshead. Any costs above this figure should be covered by the £5k bursary grant.

In your form, you ask about barriers I face. What are you looking for? What do you mean?

This project is aimed at supporting disabled creatives who have faced difficulties in getting their career off the ground, or making progress beyond an initial start. You might feel stuck or frustrated, or not know what to do next.

By identifying external barriers to progress, artists will help us understand what changes are required to make the arts sector more supportive and easier to navigate. This might include: financial issues, geographic isolation, lack of accessible studios or facilities, or lack of accessible arts education.

It might include people's negative attitudes and inaccessible application processes, or a lack of accessible support, advice and mentoring.

We appreciate as well that there may be other discriminatory processes at work, and you are welcome to tell us about these too.

Emergent's focus will mainly be on exploring ways to remove external barriers. Our aim is to share learnings with our sector, so that greater numbers of emerging artists can successfully sustain and develop their careers.

What do you mean by a socially engaged practice?

We have a broad approach to this, and are looking for artists who in some way are addressing societal issues. This might include a creative dialogue with audiences, or a specific community, that promotes greater awareness of societal barriers and the means of removing them. Your work should have some capacity to spark debate, thought and discussion around issues affecting marginalised people, or those whose voice struggles to be heard.

This does not mean you have to identify as a political activist, and your focus does not have to be confined to disability-related issues. It is more about us supporting artists whose work is relevant to contemporary society and its development, and who can demonstrate that they are considering how people live, and treat one another.

Do you cover access costs?

We have a budget to cover access support costs, and this will be discussed on an individual basis.

I need support with my application, can you help?

If you need support with your application, please contact us via exhibitions@shapearts.org.uk. It will be helpful if you could let us know what support you need when doing so.

How will artists be selected?

Artists will be selected by a panel process with representatives from Baltic and Shape.

I have applied before, can I apply again?

If you were previously shortlisted in the Emergent selection process, we cannot accept another application from you. If you have previously applied, but not been successful, we can accept your application.

I am not based in the UK. Can I still apply?

No. Applicants must usually be resident or based in the UK.

Can someone else complete my application for me?

Yes. As long as they have your full consent and you are happy with what they are submitting on your behalf. If you don't have support, and need assistance to complete and submit your application, please contact us via exhibitions@shapearts.org.uk.

If I am not selected, will I receive feedback on my application?

It is hard for us to know in advance how many applications we will receive. The more we get, the harder it is for a small staff team to collate and return meaningful feedback. We will explore options, given our capacity and number of applicants. This might mean giving more general feedback to a number of people, rather than individual feedback.