

## NEON Awards 2024 Nominations

### Category

NEON Widening Access Partnership Award

### Names of institutions involved in the partnership

Guildhall School of Music & Drama, RADA, Theatre Peckham & Young & Talented

### Brief Description

Performing arts subjects in state-schools are in decline, with Drama A-Level and GCSE entries down 18.3% and 15% respectively since 2018. Free opportunities to develop acting skills are therefore limited, to the detriment of low-income actors entering competitive drama school auditions. Originate, a collaboration between leading drama schools and industry partners, offers 8-months of free training to marginalised young actors in London, developing skills and confidence, providing a brave and creative community, and introducing drama schools and the industry. Supporting 106 actors in 6-years, at least 35% progressed to prestigious drama schools and 21% went straight into industry, in high profile, award nominated and winning roles.

### Why has this project been nominated

The 2019/2020 Arts Council England Equality and Diversity report showed 43% of paid artists were White, compared to 18% Global Majority; 54% did not have a disability, compared to 5% who did. HESA student characteristic data shows White students are considerably more likely to study design, creative and performing arts subjects (83.3% 2019/20-2021/22). Performing arts subjects in state-schools are in decline, with Drama A-Level and GCSE entries down 18.3% and 15% respectively since 2018. Originate young actors training launched in 2017. A collaboration between Guildhall School of Music & Drama (Guildhall), Royal Academy of Dramatic Art (RADA) and the Young and Talented (Y&T), it was first based at Theatre Royal Stratford East before rebranding as Originate and moving to Theatre Peckham (TP) in 2020. It provides accessible, sustained training to marginalised young actors in London, developing skills and confidence, providing a brave and creative community, and introducing them to drama school training and the acting industry. Three-hour classes occur weekly, over eight months, and it culminates in a professional industry showcase. We also offer an exclusive workshop to unsuccessful auditionees, ensuring every eligible applicant has a skill development opportunity. Targeted shortlisting means we consistently work with the marginalised young actors for which Originate is designed. 94% of the 22/23 cohort were Global Majority; 88% had an IMD Q1-2 postcode; 29% had a household income below £25k; and 18% had a disability. This helps each organisation to meet objectives (e.g. APP milestones), whilst supporting efforts to diversify the broader acting industry.