

The 2022 Rhubarb Festival (Winter 2022, tentatively February 2 - 12, 2022)

Call for Submissions

Deadline: 11:59 pm EDT on Friday, September 10, 2021

Festival Director: Clayton Lee

Design Lead: Andrea Shin Ling

[Click here to apply.](#)

We are currently seeking expressions of interest for the 2022 Rhubarb Festival, Canada's longest running festival of new and experimental performance. Like this past February's [Book as Festival, Festival as Book](#), Rhubarb is transforming once again for 2022.

After more than a year away from the theatre, we are craving the spectacle of live performance and the possibilities of the theatrical space. Yet, instead of rushing a return to the *before* and the inherent failings within, we seek to activate a renewed relationship to time, collaboration, and context. As such, we've invited architect and installation artist, Andrea Shin Ling to create a large-scale installation for the Buddies in Bad Times Theatre Chamber space, conceived in conversation with Festival Director Clayton Lee. **Participating Festival artists will create works that respond to and engage with Andrea's prompt and installation.**

The Prompt

[Andrea Shin Ling](#): "As an artist and architect who works with decay and biology as a media for cultural expression, passage through time is fundamental to my practice. Biological systems are inherently dynamic, and processes like growth and degradation rely on a temporal flow of energy and material exchange between organisms. Decay and regeneration are paired processes, where the entropy of one system is used for the organization of another; in a circular ecology, one process cannot exist without the other.

What does it mean after a year such as this, to regenerate one's practice?
What have we left to deteriorate, and what do we use as fodder and fuel for

new creation? I ask this in the most literal sense, as the work I make is often designed to actually decay, employing and partnering with other organisms to assist in the process. The scale (temporal and physical) at which decay and regeneration occurs may not always be perceptible to the human eye – geological time and microbial time are challenging to understand – but they are happening nonetheless and the consequences are concrete rather than speculative.”

For this year’s Call for Expressions of Interest, we are asking artists working in live performance to consider Andrea’s statement, to contemplate where decomposition through time can be seen as valuable to constructive and sustainable growth and where the result might not be what one had initially predicted.

The Process

If the idea of responding to a large-scale installation and Andrea’s above statement pique your interest, we want to hear from you. The 2022 Festival will be intentionally smaller and we will be prioritizing artists who are specifically interested in creating work around this prompt. Grounded in experimentation, we want to work directly with Festival artists to nurture and grow their artistic impulses in relationship to Andrea’s work. Your idea does not need to arrive fully formed; instead, for the initial application, we simply want to know about you: your practice, your questions, and your response to Andrea’s statement.

Following the written application, we will organize interviews with a number of applicants to discuss and imagine what their project within this framework could be. Selections will be made by Festival Director Clayton Lee in consultation with the Programming Committee who will read applications and interview artists.

The Rhubarb Festival provides artists with the space and support to create new works that are grounded in experimentation, that resist, respond, adapt, mutate, and challenge the status quo. Embedded in all of this is an activation of a Rhubarb that, in spite of its constraints of time and resources, is responsive and flexible to an artist’s needs; that resists the flattening of identity and the intersections within, while gesturing towards the non-human; and that balances the inherent legibility of a festival as product, while indulging the illegible.

Selected artists will receive technical, production, promotional and artistic support. As we continue to work to create more equitable and sustainable standards of pay across our sector, we will be working with a per-project funding model of at least \$1,500.

Office Hours & Additional Questions

Over the next few weeks, in advance of the submission deadline, Festival Director Clayton Lee will be holding Office Hour sessions to provide context for this year's call. The Zoom link will be posted on the day-of the event. [Click here to sign up for an event reminder.](#)

Thursday, August 19 - 2 to 3 pm EDT

Tuesday, September 7 - 6 to 7 pm EDT

If neither of these sessions work for you, or if you prefer a 1-on-1 conversation, you are encouraged to e-mail Festival Director Clayton Lee at clayton@buddiesinbadtimes.com to schedule a conversation.

ASL Interpretation is available for the Office Hours and the 1-on-1 conversations upon request.

Expressions of Interest Guidelines

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[Click here to apply.](#)

1. Artistic Practice (1000 words max)

We want to know about you, your practice, and your response to the prompt. Please use all the questions below to guide and organize your thoughts:

- Describe your artistic practice. What forms and contexts are you interested in? What questions are you thinking about?
- What is the lineage of your practice? Who has done or has been doing similar things?
- What are you looking for or what do you need in your artistic practice?
- What parts of Andrea's statement are compelling to you? Why?

2. Support Materials

We want a sense of your previous work. Please send links to archival photos or videos or text or script samples that you feel are relevant to your body of work. Please specify time stamps as needed. We will spend at least 5 minutes going through your support materials.

If you have any questions about the Festival or your application, prefer alternate methods of submission (different languages, recorded video/audio, etc.) or need support to complete your application, please contact:

Clayton Lee // Festival Director

clayton@buddiesinbadtimes.com

About The Rhubarb Festival

Established in 1979, the Rhubarb Festival is produced by Buddies in Bad Times Theatre and is Canada's longest-running festival of new performance. For over three decades, Rhubarb has encouraged established artists to take new risks and emerging artists to explore the possibilities of performance in a supportive space. Over the course of its history, Rhubarb has had an immeasurable impact on the local and Canadian cultural landscape by acting as a seeding ground for new work. A great number of Rhubarb projects have gone on to be further developed and presented in Toronto, across Canada and internationally.

About Buddies in Bad Times Theatre

Buddies in Bad Times Theatre creates vital Canadian theatre by developing and presenting voices that question sexual and cultural norms. Built on the political and social principles of queer liberation, Buddies supports artists and works that reflect and advance these values. As the world's longest-running and largest queer theatre, Buddies is uniquely positioned to develop, promote, and preserve stories and perspectives that are challenging and alternative. The theatre sits in the heart of downtown, adjacent to Toronto's Gay Village.

For further information please contact:

Clayton Lee // Festival Director

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