



## Anthropocene - Call for new commissioned works

**Push the Boat Out (PTBO), Edinburgh's International Poetry Festival is looking to support the creation of three new poetry-led performance pieces, responding to the prompt *Anthropocene: The Human-Altered World*.**

**Supported by the National Theatre of Scotland**, PTBO will award three £1,500 commissions to Scotland-based artists or groups of artists working in poetry or a related art form. Each will produce a new piece, to be performed on the Sunday of our 2025 festival (21<sup>st</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2025) in Edinburgh's Pleasance.

PTBO is an environment where all variations of poetry are encouraged to grow, evolve and collide with other vital art forms. The programme features a vibrant mix of poetry, spoken word, lyricism, music, performance, discussion and installations across our three-day festival. PTBO aspires to be a catalyst for new work and encourage work that challenges the boundaries of poetry and explores intersections with other art forms.

As we enter our third year collaborating with NTS, these commissions continue to respond to feedback on a lack of opportunities to develop and platform longer poetry-led pieces and the high value they have already brought to recipients. Artists are asked to propose works of 15-20 minutes in length. These works should be 'in conversation' with another art form, and we actively encourage collaboration. Any artist living and working in Scotland in poetry or a related art form may apply and submissions are welcome from artists working in any of Scotland's indigenous languages or BSL, and from people under-represented in the literature sector.

If there is a close match with the theme, you may apply for support for works already in progress, but the first presentation should take place at the Festival and be able to be staged in the Pleasance Theatre.

The National Theatre of Scotland will offer bespoke support based on the needs of successful applicants which could include:

- Support and advice around technical aspects of lighting and sound
- A half day of input from their dramaturg and/or directorial feedback
- Access to props or costume from their store if required
- Up to 3 days of rehearsal space at their base, Rockvilla, in Glasgow

PTBO encourages divergence, exploration and experimentation when responding to *Anthropocene: the Human-Altered World* both in terms of theme and form. This is PTBO's strand exploring the climate emergency, arguably the most important and pressing issue of our time. Submissions should clearly outline how they see their relationship to the theme. Still, within this we are happy to consider it as a point of broad inspiration (e.g. we are interested in exploring the ways that the things we have created as human beings have changed our world - and even our own bodies - in potentially irreversible and unanticipated ways. We're considering things like microplastics, forever chemicals, waste and the built environment, amongst many other aspects). Artists are invited to form their ideas in a direction that feels in keeping with their practice and speaks to their current intentions for their work.

**Details:**

- Artists will be paid £1,500 for their commission including presentation of their work at PTBO Festival (21-23 Nov 2025).
- The work must be 15-20 minutes in duration when performed.
- The piece may be a work in progress, but it must be ready for its first presentation at PTBO Festival.
- The piece must be poetry-led and in conversation with another art form.
- Applications are welcome from artists living and working in Scotland.
- Applications are welcomed for works in English, Scots, Doric, Gaelic and BSL.
- Applications can be written or submitted via video.
- The panel will consist of representatives from PTBO's programming committee and NTS

**Timeline:**

- Deadline for application: Monday 7th July 2025
- Successful applicants contacted: w/c 21<sup>st</sup> July 2025
- Initial conversations about support available from PTBO and NTS: August/September
- Rehearsal space available if required: late Oct/ early Nov
- First draft / Interim report due: Tues 21<sup>st</sup> October
- Final technical requirements due: Friday 7<sup>th</sup> November
- Performance: Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> November

**To apply please send:**

- A proposal of max 1 page (written) or 5 minutes (video) detailing how you would intend to respond to the brief. This should clearly outline how you are responding to the theme and allow us to understand how the work would be presented on stage
- Up to 3 links to previous work
- CV for lead artist (max 2 pages) and short biographies for any identified collaborators
- A simple provisional budget outlining how you would spend the £1,500. Please detail any access costs in addition to the £1,500, if applicable. You do not have to budget for travel and accommodation to attend the performance; reasonable travel and one night's accommodation if required for those out with the central belt will be covered in addition to the £1,500.

Proposals should be sent to Annie Rutherford, Creative Producer, PTBO: [annie.rutherford@pushtheboatout.org](mailto:annie.rutherford@pushtheboatout.org)

Questions or requests for informal discussions should be sent to Emma Collins, Director, PTBO: [emma.collins@pushtheboatout.org](mailto:emma.collins@pushtheboatout.org)

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