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NATIONAL THEATRE ANNOUNCES NEW ASSOCIATES AND PETER HALL BURSARY RECIPIENTS

The National Theatre announces today that Director **Rufus Norris** has invited playwright and actor **Natasha Gordon** and voice coach and performer **Hazel Holder** to join the National Theatre as Associates. Leading artists, creatives and theatre makers who have made an outstanding contribution to the life and reputation of the National Theatre's work are invited by the Director to become NT Associates.

The Associates provide thought leadership and advisory input across all areas of the National Theatre's artistic mission, galvanising change and providing fresh incisive perspectives on the decisions of the Directors and senior managers. They take on special projects that they both initiate and at the request of the Director, as well as make their own work.

The Peter Hall Bursary is awarded every two years by the National Theatre foundation to support directors, both financially and artistically. Each director will have the opportunity over the next two years to gain a greater understanding of the workings of the NT and be supported to develop work for the National Theatre's stages.

Following extensive engagement with productions staged across the country the Peter Hall Bursaries have been awarded to **Atri Banerjee** and **Rachel Bagshaw**. This year a short-list of directors was considered which had a focus on the particular skills and expertise that are not currently represented among the NT's Associate and Resident Directors. The bursary recipients were then selected by Rufus Norris, Nina Steiger, Head of Play Development, and the NT Associates based on the exciting contribution and richness of practice each director will bring to the National Theatre and wider industry as a result of their appointment.

One of the NT's Associate Directors will work closely with the Peter Hall Bursary Directors in a mentor capacity and the two-year Bursary will support a period of artistic development and research and create a space to explore and further develop their own creative practice.

Speaking about the appointments **Rufus Norris**, National Theatre Director, said: "I am thrilled to not only be inviting two new artists to join as Associates of the National Theatre but also to be able to extend the Peter Hall Bursaries to two extremely talented directors. The breadth of skills and expertise that Natasha and Hazel will bring as Associates will be invaluable in continuing our aim of producing world-class theatre for our stages. Atri and Rachel are two exceptional directors creating incredibly exciting work and I'm delighted to be able to support them at this stage in their careers through the Peter Hall Bursaries from the National Theatre Foundation."

Playwright and actor Natasha Gordon made her playwrighting debut with *Nine Night* at the National Theatre in 2018. *Nine Night* transferred to Trafalgar Studios in the West End making her the first black British female playwright to be produced in the West End. Natasha won the Most Promising Playwright Award at both the Evening Standard Theatre Awards and the Critics Circle Awards in 2018. Natasha is currently under commission with the NT.

Voice coach and performer Hazel Holder has worked across film, television and theatre including with pioneering companies such as Clean Break, Marginal Voices, Cast Women's Charity and Clod Ensemble as a Performing Medicine Associate Artist. Her recent work for the National Theatre includes *Blues for an Alabama Sky*, *Trouble in Mind* and *Rockets and Blue Lights*.

Atri Banerjee's has received acclaim for his re-imagining classic texts and canonical titles for big stages. His recent work including, *The Glass Menagerie* (Royal Exchange) and *Britannicus* (Lyric Hammersmith) both demonstrate his ambition to use bold casting, beautiful design and a refreshed lens to share these stories, at scale and in new ways. In 2019, for his production of *Hobson's Choice* at the Royal Exchange Theatre, Atri won The Stage Debut Award for Best Director. He was recently named in The Stage 25 list of theatre-makers to look out for in 2022 and beyond.

Rachel Bagshaw is an artist with a seasoned experimental practice whose work spans devising, immersive technologies and the integration of creative access. Rachel has worked extensively on

plays for young audiences, radical adaptations and ensemble-led projects with young people. Her recent work includes *A Dead Body in Taos* (Fuel) and *Augmented* by Sophie Woolley (Royal Exchange/Told by an Idiot) and her critically acclaimed work *The Shape of Pain* won a Fringe First at Edinburgh in 2018.

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For images click [here](#)

About the National Theatre

The National Theatre's mission is to make world-class theatre, for everyone. The NT creates and shares unforgettable stories with audiences across the UK and around the world. On its own stages, on tour, in schools, on cinema screens and streaming at home, it strives to be accessible, inclusive and sustainable. The National Theatre empowers artists and craftspeople to make world-leading work, investing in talent and developing new productions with a wide range of theatre companies at its New Work Department. Our nation thrives on fresh talent and new ideas, so the National Theatre works with young people and teachers right across the UK through performance, writing and technical programmes to ignite the creativity of the next generation. Together with communities, the NT creates ambitious works of participatory theatre in deep partnerships that unite theatres and local organisations – showing that nothing brings us together like theatre. The National Theatre needs your support to shape a bright, creative future. For more information, please visit nationaltheatre.org.uk

About the National Theatre Foundation

The National Theatre Foundation is a separate charity with a remit to support the welfare of National Theatre workers, past and present, and those closely associated with the NT, through making need based benevolent grants alongside other initiatives to support financial and mental health and wellbeing.

The Foundation also supports the ongoing artistic, educational, operational and financial sustainability of the National Theatre by making grants to support a wide range of projects that ultimately enable the NT to fulfil its overarching mission.