

YOU CAN BE MY WINGMAN

a hosted retreat for artists

Ice man: You can be my wingman any time.
Maverick: Bullshit. You can be mine.

-Top Gun

You Can Be My Wingman is a week-long, hosted retreat for artists. Produced by Action Hero, supported by Dartington Trust, and with mentoring from Canadian artist Maiko Yamamoto, *You Can Be My Wingman* will bring together mid-career performance makers to explore new collaborative processes in a supported, friendly and restful environment. The retreat will run from Saturday 15th February - Friday 21st February 2020.

The retreat is aimed at facilitating new collaborations between artists who may know each others' work and practice, but who have never worked together before. If you and another artist have always wanted to work together, or you've discussed a collaboration before but have never found the time, then *You Can Be My Wingman* is for you.

Artists are invited to apply together, to spend a week exploring an area of mutual interest; this might mean a point of crossover in your respective practices, a desire to work together on a shared process, or even just a conversation you both want to have. The focus of the retreat is simply to explore new territories in a self-led and non-pressurized way, with no prescribed outcome. These shared explorations could serve several functions: to help artists to reflect back on their own practice by taking time to work slightly outside it, to find new impetus or new inspiration, to exercise your 'art muscle', to get into the nitty gritty of a new area of enquiry with a new collaborator, or simply just to nourish your practice by giving it a 'spa week'.

The proposed collaboration can be between 2 solo artists for example, or between 2 companies/existing collaborations, or between a solo artist and a company; there are lots of possible combinations. The retreat is aimed at supporting a range of performance collaborations and practices. We are expecting to invite up to 10 artists in total to join the retreat. *You Can Be My Wingman* will take place at Dartington Hall in Totnes, and will be hosted by Action Hero. [Maiko Yamamoto](#), artistic director of Vancouver based company Theatre Replacement, will act as a mentor and guide for the artist-collaborations during the week. *You Can Be My Wingman* is artist focused; it will be run by artists, for artists. Collaborations will have studio spaces available for use, however there is no pressure to use them.

The following will be provided:

- Accommodation at Dartington Hall
- All meals
- Travel within the UK
- Studio space
- Mentoring and support from Maiko Yamamoto
- A friendly, restful and welcoming environment

Artists who wish to join the retreat are invited to apply, **together with their proposed collaborator**, by answering the following questions. We are happy to receive applications (no more than 2 pages of A4) in writing or via video (no longer than 5 mins). Please send completed applications to info@actionhero.org.uk by **5pm on Mon 2nd December**.

- Please give us some background information on your respective practices and career.
- What is the shared area of interest you want to explore on the retreat?
- How could Maiko Yamamoto support this process?
- Why would this retreat be useful to your respective practices right now?
- Please let us know the total number of people in your proposed collaboration, and everybody's name. Please also confirm all these people are available for the duration of the retreat, 15th-21st Feb, 2020.
- If there is anything you might additionally need to support your time in the retreat, please let us know.

We will contact everybody by **Friday 20th December**.

Additional Info

Q: Who Can Apply?

A: Artists who make theatre, performance, dance, movement, live art and other artists/practitioners whose work deals with the live moment are all welcome to apply. We are looking for artists who are mid-career, and who have an established practice. We are primarily interested in artists making new work, but this does not exclude people who might define themselves as writers if they are exploring experimental approaches to text in performance, or directors who are working with non-traditional forms.

We encourage applications from artists of all backgrounds, and are particularly interested to hear from people based in the South West.

Q: How do I know if I'm a mid-career artist?

A: 'Mid-career' can be a slippery term, and there is no definite answer! It's more about how you feel in relation to your work. We would define it like this: if you're not at the beginning of your professional practice, and you don't feel like 'emerging' is always the right descriptor for you, then you can probably consider yourself mid-career. Another way to think about it might be in relation to time; if you've been working on your own practice in a professional context for more than 5 years or so, you can most likely consider yourself mid-career. If you think you *might* be mid-career, you probably are! If you're still not sure but you want to apply, then apply anyway & tell us why this is the right time for you to undertake this kind of retreat.

Q: How Will The Collaborations Be Selected?

A: We're aiming to host around 10 people on the retreat. As well as selecting the artists whose applications are most suitable, we'll also be balancing the group as a whole. Gemma & James will make a shortlist, and will make the final selection with Maiko.

Q: What kind of retreat is this?

A: *You Can Be My Wingman* isn't a residency or a workshop. Instead of being 'productive' time, the retreat is intended to be open-ended and a space for exploring creative curiosity. The intention is that it will be a week that is restful and nourishing to your practice. The time will be self-led but supported by an experienced artist.

Q: I'm a theatre director and I want to work with a choreographer on a play I'm directing. Can I apply?

A: This retreat is about shared collaborative practice, so it's unlikely we'll accept an application that is explicitly led by one person with a pre-existing project in mind. If you and the choreographer are both interested in seeing what ideas might emerge from time spent together, then you can apply.

Q: I'm part of an existing collaboration and we want to work with another collaborative group. Can we apply together?

A: Yes. But be aware that we will be looking to invite a total of 10 artists on the retreat, so if the number of artists in your proposal is very large, we might prioritise supporting a greater number of collaborations instead.

Q: I've worked with this collaborator before, can I still apply?

A: We want to support new collaborative practice and help create space for new things to grow. If you've only worked together a handful of times and haven't made a piece of work collaboratively it's ok to apply. You may've worked as a writer on your proposed collaborators previous show for example; in this case you could still apply to work together on something that is genuinely a shared area of enquiry. But if you're an established collaboration you might find it harder to make the case.

Q: The person I want to work with lives outside the UK, can we still apply together?

A: Yes, but we can only cover UK travel costs.

Q: I want to apply but I can't make the whole week. Can I still apply?

A: Everybody in your collaboration must be able to attend the whole 7 days. Everybody will arrive during the afternoon of Sat 15th Feb, and leave on the afternoon of Fri 21st Feb.

Q: Who is organising this?

A: The retreat is being organised by Action Hero. Action Hero is the collaboration between artists Gemma Paintin & James Stenhouse. We have been working together since 2005, and in that time have created work that sits in (and inbetween) various forms - theatre, live art, durational work, installation, sound & video work & digital practice. We are primarily a touring company, and have toured to more than 30 countries across 5 continents. Our current project is Oh Europa, a journey through Europe collecting love songs sung by strangers. In 2018, we became a National Portfolio Organisation of Arts Council England, and are [one of the few artist-led organisations in the portfolio](#). *You Can Be My Wingman* is a project that we doing as part of our 4 year NPO period.

Q: I have a question that isn't answered here. Who can I talk to?

A: If you have a question or you just want to chat about your application, please feel free to get in touch with Action Hero's producer, Sarah Warden on sarah@actionhero.org.uk

More about Action Hero: <http://www.actionhero.org.uk/>

More about Maiko Yamamoto: <http://theatreplacement.org/>

More about Dartington Hall: <https://www.dartington.org/>