

CLEAN BREAK

PRESS RELEASE

CLEAN BREAK WELCOME NUBIAN COHEARTS AS ITS FIRST EVER ASSOCIATE COMPANY AND ANNOUNCES ITS WRITERS ON COMMISSION

Clean Break introduces **Nubian CoheARTs** as the first ever Associate Company in its history. The relationship will include access to free rehearsal space, training, support from Clean Break's artistic team, and opportunities to R&D its work with audiences.

Bringing Nubian CoheARTs on board as Associate Company is part of Clean Break's drive to support and platform women artists with lived experience of the criminal justice system or those on its periphery, at a time when they face ongoing barriers to entering the arts.

Nubian CoheARTs is a Black women-led theatre company formed by Clean Break Members **Nicole Hall** (*More Than We Can Bear*, Almeida), **Jennifer Joseph** (*Shakespeare Trilogy*, Donmar Warehouse) and **Eddy Queens** (*Typical Girls*, Sheffield Theatres). The company creates authentic work which instils hope for women who've had challenging life experiences, sending the message that you can always carry on.

Continuing to place Members at the heart of its programme, Clean Break also announces new seed commissions to two of the company's Member artists, Ro Florence and Shona Babayemi, who will be developing full length plays with support from the company. These writers join our existing writers on commission, including the brilliant babirye bukilwa, **Emma Dennis-Edwards**, **Yasmin Joseph**, **Gurpreet Kaur Bhatti**, and the newly joined **Somebody Jones** and **Iman Qureshi**.

Lakesha Arie-Angelo, Clean Break's Associate Artistic Director: *"The founders of Clean Break were artists, women, with entrepreneurial spirit and a hunger to have their stories heard. Bursting with this same passion as our founders, we are delighted to welcome Nubian CoheARTs as our first ever Associate Company. We look forward to working more closely together and seeing the possibilities that will flourish from this new relationship."*

We are also thrilled to have offered seed commissions to two Clean Break Member artists, Ro Florence and Shona Babayemi. Both Ro and Shona have unique and vibrant voices, and will be working on new plays which platform narratives about women and non-binary people navigating oppressive systems.

Providing opportunities, tools and resources for success for artists such as Nubian CoheARTs, Ro and Shona highlights the next steps in Clean Break's journey: championing new talent and offering opportunities for women from our Membership who have gone on to become artists in their own right."

Nubian CoheARTs: *"All three members of Nubian CoheARTs have had a life changing experience with Clean Break. We're twice the women we were before we came here, and we've never looked back. We started as Students, then ex-Students, before that title changed to 'Member'. Becoming Members gave us a real sense of responsibility and importance. It meant we would always have a reason to stay connected with Clean Break, whether that's coming back to perform, or getting involved in fundraising campaigns and festivals. Whatever we encounter in the world, we always*

have the security of Clean Break to come back to. So building on that relationship and becoming an Associate Company as Nubian CoheARTs was mind-blowing. To become the first Associate Company attached to Clean Break has re-confirmed our importance to the company. It feels like all the learning and growing we did as students and Members was put in place for this moment. We're living proof that Clean Break changes lives, and will always be fierce ambassadors and contributors to the work.

Going forward, we're excited to discover the potential for this relationship, and the mutual benefits for both Nubian CoheARTs and Clean Break. At a time when funding for the arts is in crisis, having the backing of a company like Clean Break will be a great support to us in securing funding for our work."

Lucy Kirkwood, playwright (Clean Break commission *it felt empty when the heart went at first...*): *"It's so wonderful to see Clean Break Members gaining in artistic confidence and ambition, not just taking opportunities but making them for themselves, and I'm so proud of the company for supporting them so enthusiastically. As a Clean Break writer myself, I know how much a commission from this company can inspire, support and challenge you, and I can't wait to see the work that comes out of this."*

Recent Clean Break activity has included a tour of ***Scenes from Lost Mothers*** by **Gurpreet Kaur Bhatti**, which will be performed at the House of Commons in July. Based on research from the University of Hertfordshire and the charity Birth Companions Lived Experience Team, this timely play highlights the unbearable challenges faced by women who are separated from their babies in prison. The company also recently sold out a special screening of the highly anticipated film *Lollipop*, which features multiple Clean Break Members in its cast.

For information on supporting Clean Break's Artistic work, please contact
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[LINK TO IMAGES](#)

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NOTES TO EDITORS

Clean Break changes lives and changes minds through theatre – on stage, in prisons and in the community. It produces ground-breaking plays with women's voices at the heart of its work. Founded in 1979 by two women in prison who believed that theatre could bring the hidden stories of women who are criminalised to a wider audience, Clean Break remains true to these roots. The company has been inspiring playwrights and captivating audiences with award-winning plays on the complex theme of women and criminalisation for over four decades.

Clean Break's commissioned playwrights have included Alice Birch, Deborah Bruce, Lin Coghlan, E V Crowe, Vivienne Franzmann, Tanika Gupta, Katie Hims, Sam Holcroft, Theresa Ikoko, Lucy Kirkwood, Chloë Moss, Rebecca Lenkiewicz, Winsome Pinnock and Rebecca Prichard.

Current productions include *Scenes from Lost Mothers* by Gurpreet Kaur Bhatti (national tour), *Bliss-ta* (an audio drama by the late Sonya Hale, BBC Audio Drama Award winner), *Sweatbox* (a film of Chloë Moss's acclaimed play set in a prison van) *Hope* (a film by Nicole Hall, Michelle Hamilton, Kirsty Housley, Carina Murray, Natasha Jean Sparkes, and River, available on Clean Break's Knowledge Hub).

Recent productions include *The Trials and Passions of Unfamous Women* (co-created by Janaina Leite, Lara Duarte & Athena Maria, Yvonne Wickham, Sarah-Jane Dent, Dominique Lavine Wood-Whyte, Kim Teresa (KT) Marsh and Rachel Valentine Smith, LIFT Festival 2024), *Dixon and Daughters* (by Deborah Bruce at National Theatre, now available on NT at Home), *Catch* (a small-scale touring play by Sonya Jalaly), *Favour* (by Ambreen Razia, Bush Theatre) and *Typical Girls* (by Morgan Lloyd Malcolm, Sheffield Crucible).

Nubian CoheARTS are three Black female artists who have combined storytelling through the lens of our lived experiences. Our newly formed theatre company is based on the ethos of 'Carrie On' – in memory of Clean Break Member Carrie Rock. This ethos was created because no matter what, or where, or wherever you're coming from there's always opportunity with the right help to carry on. Because we are Members of Clean Break Theatre Company, we are passionate about telling stories that are relatable and have a solution, if you believe in hope and faith.

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Supported using public funding by
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