



# **International producing surgery: Touring theatre & dance**

**Top tips and useful links  
with Grace Okereke**

Created in September 2021

**International touring has never been for the faint-hearted and it can often be daunting trying to understand how to get work seen in different regions. But with the double impact of Brexit shifting the way we are able to present work to our closest neighbours and Covid restricting the ability to travel, it could feel like a Herculean task trying to navigate the current waters. If you are thinking about presenting work internationally or are at the beginning of actively trying to (but are new to) touring dance productions internationally, then there are a few elements to consider to help you get started.**

## understand why

Before you embark on your journey, you should ensure you are clear about why you want to present work internationally. It is easy to think that international touring is just what you should aim for, but it doesn't have to be, nor is it right for every artist/company.

Ensure you understand the value you will gain from entering the different marketplaces, whether that is supporting the increase of income generation, or reaching audiences who the content or aesthetics of the work may better speak to, or a combination of several reasons. Whatever it is be sure and confident in your intent as this can be your anchor point that you may need to come back to when things feel tough.

## invest in you

Just like it took you time to get where you currently are professionally, it will take you time to build your understanding, knowledge and preferred approach/working style when touring internationally. You need to consider the investment you need to put into yourself for what is essentially a new strand of professional development.

Take advantage of any programmes that may be on offer from organisations such as caravan and FABRIC, or funding pots from British Council or Arts Council England: Developing Your Creative Practice to help you build your contacts and understanding of the realities of international marketplaces.

## do your research

It is really important that you understand the nuances of each region to better understand if the work you have to offer will be or can be of interest to local audiences.

It is also important to try and understand the nuances of other cultural workers (producers/venues etc.) to understand how they work and some of the issues they have to navigate to ensure you are more conscious and considerate about how to approach them.

Consider whether a first collaboration might be participation work rather than presenting a production as a way to build a relationship.

## audit your networks

Chances are that you know enough people with connections to people you want to reach in the various international regions, or that deliver successful international tours. Try and get introductions to them. When

making any approaches, be clear about what information you are trying to gather. Successful relationships are based on trust more than anything and that takes time to build. So consider trying to approach people with “no-obligation” conversations to simply try to understand their perspective and learn more about their region. People tend to be more open to such conversations.

As mentioned in the section, Invest in Yourself, if you are able to raise research money for you to travel, then consider trying to visit people in their own country. And if you can plan it around the time of their performance season or festival, then also watch what they programme and how audiences receive the work for further research.

## Funding

Mounting any tour is expensive, and then throwing in international travel, freight, visas and so on increases costs significantly. For many years Arts Council England haven't supported international touring, though things are changing. Nonetheless, balancing the bottom line is still tough, even with the higher fees often given by international venues.

As with many projects you will need to look at a plural funding structure (earned, grants, commercial etc.) to pull together a viable budget. One consideration to throw into the mix is whether you can access any funds from the region(s) you will be visiting. For example, is one of the regions you want to tour in encouraging international import of dance, therefore have subvention funding available? You may need to go through the local venue/organisation you are working with, which will need conversation and co-ordination, but could mean they can give you more than they could otherwise.

## useful links

Find more information in the [caravan guide to international touring](#).

### Touring in the EU after Brexit

The [European touring guide](#) from Artsadmin, LIFT and 1927 provides an overview of touring in Europe, in-depth details of 19 countries, including funding, VAT, tax and moving people, props and sets.

[Arts Infopoint UK](#) have a number of outgoing mobility resources, particularly focused on creative visits to the EU.

You must check with the presenting organisation about whether they will withhold tax from your fee. You may need to complete local tax forms and an A1 form in advance (or sometimes post) to your engagement. An [A1 certificate](#) is a form used to confirm the country in which an employee or visitor currently pays for their social security contributions.

Visit the [UK government website](#) for more information about the rules for UK companies.

## networks, Marketplaces and Funding

### Europe

- [IETM](#): international Network for Contemporary Performing Arts
- [European Dance Network](#): Network for European Dance Houses
- [European Festival Association](#): Network of European Dance, Music, Theatres & Multidisciplinary Arts Festivals
- [Tanzmesse](#): Biennale Marketplace (networking and showcasing) for dance (Germany)
- [On the Move](#): Cultural Mobility Funding – mainly Europe but crosses over with various parts of the world
- [Creative Europe](#): European funding that focuses on Cultural and Media.

### North America

- [CINARS](#): Biennale international performing arts marketplace (networking and showcasing) (Canada)
- [APAP](#): Annual Marketplace for performing arts (USA)
- [Under The Radar](#)
- [ISPA](#): International network for performing arts (USA)
- [Festival TransAmériques](#): Annual festival of dance and theatre (Canada)
- [CAPOCOA](#): Canadian Association For The Performing Arts

### East Asia & Oceania

- [PAMS](#): Annual International Performing Arts Marketplace (networking and showcasing) (South Korea)
- [YPAM](#): Annual International Performing Arts Marketplace (networking and showcasing) (Japan)
- [APAM](#): Biennale Performing Arts Marketplace (networking and showcasing) (Australia)
- [Dance Massive](#): Biennale Festival for Contemporary Dance (Australia)
- [Auckland Festival](#): Biennale Festival for Performing Arts (New Zealand)

Grace Okereke has been in the dance sector for 18 years, working on a national, pan-European and international level. She is Founder and Executive Producer of [Uprise Rebel](#), a company that supports Black female choreographers and administrators, and develops inclusive audiences. With Uprise Rebel, Grace is currently working with [Vicki Igbokwe | Uchenna Dance](#), [Alleyne Dance](#) and artist [Alesandra Seutin](#). As an independent producer Grace is currently Senior Producer for the [Horizon Showcase](#), Associate Producer for [Company Jant-Bi | Germaine Acogny](#), based in Senegal and Producer for [Diverse City](#), a disability led theatre company based in the South West of England. She sits on the board of Directors for [Dancing Strong](#), and regularly mentors emerging artists and producers.