



NEW/NOW

The Houston Artist Commissioning Project

Submissions due by midnight on June 15, 2025

Premiere Performances: March 20 & 21, 2026 | Cullen Theater, Wortham Center

Frequently Asked Questions

What is NEW/NOW?

New/Now: The Houston Artist Commissioning Project was launched in 2020 with the goal to promote and sustain Houston's working artists and artist communities by supporting the creation of new works across all performing arts disciplines. Each year the project awards 2-4 artists with commission funding to present original work in the Cullen Theater at the Wortham Center as part of Performing Arts Houston's mainstage season.

When will awards be announced?

Two to four awardees will be announced publicly in September 2025.

How are commission awardees identified?

Applications are evaluated by a panel comprised of past New/Now winners, members of the Performing Arts Houston staff and Board of Directors. All applications will receive feedback from the judging panel. Judges evaluate work using a rubric that considers genre diversity, artistic merit, strength within an artistic discipline, and the demonstration of the capacity of each applicant to realize a professional live presentation.

Application and Adjudication Timeline:

June 15, 2025:	Application window closes
July 2025:	Awardees Notified
July/August 2025:	Publicity photos and asset creation for Awardees
September 2025:	2025/26 New Now Cohort Announced
March 20-21 2026:	World Premiere Performances in the Cullen Theater

Is there a focus or theme for this commissioning project?

Performing Arts Houston welcomes project proposals in all performing arts disciplines and across genres or content areas. We are intentionally non-prescriptive regarding content for proposed work. Submissions will be considered based on their alignment with our values of Excellence, Artistic Expression, Equity & Inclusion, Community, Exploration, and Celebration (as outlined in our Strategic Plan).

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Houston is the most culturally diverse city in the nation. In celebrating artists' voices here at home, we promote more connected and thriving communities. Performing Arts Houston believes Black artists, Indigenous artists, artists of color, artists in the LGBTQ+ community, artists with disabilities, and woman artists must be centered through this project. To that end, we strongly encourage applications from artists with these identities or members of other marginalized communities.

What is included in the award amount?

The Award

Each awardee receives a commission valued at \$40,000 which includes a monetary award of \$7,000 – \$10,500 to support the creation of a new, 20–30-minute work. This award also includes the following full presentation support:

- Creation of professional promotional photos and marketing
- Promotion and marketing as part of Performing Arts Houston's 25/26 mainstage season
- Complete technical support including IATSE crew for load in and performances, modest lighting design, and production consulting throughout the process
- The Cullen Theater week of performance space for shared load in, tech, and 2 performances
- Studio space as available at the theater the week of the performance
- Professional video recording of the performances to use in future marketing and promotion
- An additional artist fee will be allocated to projects with more than 5 artists on stage
- Awardees will have future opportunities to collaborate with PAH on future projects

In addition to the premiere, awardees will participate in:

- One pre-performance virtual conversation
- One post-performance panel discussion from the stage of the Cullen Theater
- One Education program through Performing Arts Houston's involvement in local schools and community organizations
- Student-friendly performances may be selected to participate in an open rehearsal for local area students during the dress rehearsal
- A number of in-person cohort meetings, including but not limited to an opening meeting & venue walk-through, half-way check-in, studio visit/midway production session, a post-performance Cast Party, and closing de-brief session

Important Note: PAH does not have rehearsal space to offer (we wish we did!).

What is expected of commission awardees?

Awardees will be expected to set aside time to complete a walk-through of the theater six months in advance of the premiere. Clear deadlines to submit production information will be provided by Performing Arts Houston, in addition to logistical details and a technical schedule of events that **all participants of the performance must attend**, to ensure the highest quality production. Performing Arts Houston has limited flexibility in the space and awardees may not reschedule technical tours or rehearsal times.

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Awardees will be expected to attend a number of in-person cohort meetings, including but not limited to the following:

- September: Opening meeting & walkthrough of Cullen Theater
- December: Mid-way gathering and group check-in
- March: Post-performance Cast Party
- April: Closing Debrief Session

Can an artist be awarded a commission two years in a row?

Artists who were awarded commissions in the prior year will not be eligible to receive a commission in the subsequent season. After one year out of the awardee cycle, previous winners will again be considered for awards.