

## Press Release: OutdoorArtsUK Announce New Director

OutdoorArtsUK (OAUk) is pleased to announce Sho Shibata as its new Director, starting in February 2024.

OAUk brings together many diverse parts of the Outdoor Arts sector, facilitating creative and beneficial connection between its members. As a membership organisation, OAUk celebrates and promotes the amazing work, talent and achievements of the individuals, companies and organisations working in this most accessible of presentation forms. OAUk is an Arts Council England Investment Principles Support Organisation currently core funded 2023 – 2026.

Sho will be leaving his current role as Executive Producer at Stopgap Dance Company, an organisation that creates international touring works with exceptional disabled and non-disabled creatives. Sho joined Stopgap in 2008 and has since built its profile in the outdoor arts sector. Sho is also a trustee of ISTD, Play to the Crowd (umbrella organisation for Winchester Theatre Royal, Hat Fair and Playmakers) and a member of the South East Area Council for Arts Council England.

Sho Shibata, says of the appointment, 'I am really looking forward to pouring my focus and energy into supporting the sector through OAUk. Outdoor Arts has the power to bring diverse communities together and inspire them with joy and wonder. I think the sector is growing in importance right now, when communities are expecting to face multiple challenges for some time yet. I am determined to help the sector carry on delivering fantastic work and play their part in lifting the spirits of communities everywhere.'

OAUk's Co-Chairs, Camille Ben Soussan and Lorna Rees, said, 'We're excited to see OAUk's continued development with Sho's extensive experience in working for a leading company that has made memorable outdoor work in the past 15 years. We know Sho will both lead and represent our members with knowledge and understanding, and with a comprehensive view of the wider arts and cultural sector both nationally and internationally.'

OAUk currently has a strong Board; committed core team and more members than ever.

For further information visit [outdoorartsuk.org](https://outdoorartsuk.org) and follow:

Twitter (professional): @OutdoorArtsPRO

Twitter (public): @OutdoorArtsUK

Facebook: @OutdoorArtsUK

Instagram: @OutdoorArtsUK

**ENDS**

### Notes to Editors

For further information contact Phoebe Rodway, Communications Manager at OAUk, at [phoebe@outdoorartsuk.org](mailto:phoebe@outdoorartsuk.org)

### About Sho Shibata

Sho was actively involved in the performing arts in Japan as a child, performing in various children's television and film productions as well as on stage with 'Les Miserables' directed by John

Caird and 'Waiting for Godot' directed by the late Yukio Ninagawa. He moved to UK in 1995 and graduated from London School of Economics and Political Science in 2005 with a degree in Philosophy and Social Psychology. His studies gave him a theoretical understanding of how discrimination and segregation come about in social settings. After graduation, Sho worked at Arts Council England, South East and joined Stopgap Dance Company in 2008. Sho managed Stopgap's outreach and dance development projects, as well as tours of indoor and outdoor productions in the UK and abroad. Sho is currently a trustee of the dance education board ISTD, Play to the Crowd (umbrella organisation for Winchester Theatre Royal, Hat Fair and Playmakers) and a member of the South East Area Council for Arts Council England.

### About OAUk

OutdoorArtsUK is a national membership and strategic organisation that aims to bring together the many diverse parts of the Outdoor Arts sector. OutdoorArtsUK celebrates the amazing work, talent and achievements of the individuals, companies and organisations working in this most accessible of art forms.

OutdoorArtsUK began in the late 1990s as ISAN (The Independent Street Arts Network) when a group of programmers and producers began to meet, network, pool resources and lobby for greater investment in Outdoor Arts, particularly from Arts Council England and local authorities.

OutdoorArtsUK took its new name in 2018 to reflect the developments in the sector and to allow us to more fully represent organisations and artists working in the public realm and beyond buildings.

Now, OutdoorArtsUK has over 400 members and is an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation for the funding period 2023-2026.