

The Pocket Guide to

Global Majority Role Models and Leaders in the Performing Arts

How to find one, be one
and make a difference



MAYA PRODUCTIONS

Language is important as it can shape how we understand each other. In this guide, we use phrases such as 'young', 'emerging', and 'global majority'. These can have different meanings for us all. For this guide, we are using the following definitions:

Young:

This includes children and anyone aged 16 - 30 years old.

Emerging:

Anyone who is just starting their career in the arts. You could have been an artist your whole life, but are now being paid for your work or are looking for paid opportunities in the arts. You may have worked in other industries, and are now switching your profession.

Global majority:

All ethnic groups except white British and other white groups, including white minorities. This includes people from black, Asian, mixed, and other ethnic groups who are often racialised as 'ethnic minorities'.¹

Is it important to you that the arts and culture industry is representative and reflective of our diverse society?

Do you know why global majority role models and leaders are crucial for developing a rich and diverse arts workforce and audiences?

Could you be a role model or leader who supports diversity?

Are you a young or emerging global majority artist or industry professional, looking for advice to support a career in the arts.

This guide is here to help.

¹ <https://www.ncvo.org.uk/news-and-insights/news-index/why-language-matters-in-building-belonging/>

Global majority role models and leaders are important for increasing workforce diversity. Seeing global majority artists in the spotlight builds ambition in young people and motivates individuals to step into a career in the arts. Listening to global majority leaders in positions of power inspires confidence in the ability of the industry to reflect the rich tapestry of our society. Including more global majority workers across the industry takes us closer to the creation of great art that can speak to a wide range of people.

Role models come in different types, **BRIGHT LIGHTS**, **GUIDES**, **FORGERS** and **ENABLERS**. In different ways they all can influence others and make a difference.

This guide shows how global majority role models can help challenge and change the status quo. It shows how role models can change perceptions of who should and shouldn't work in performing arts. It shows how leaders and organisations can take practical steps to open the sector up to a more inclusive workforce. And it shows how to seek out role models and learn from them.

This guide is designed to help more Bright Lights, Guides, Forgers and Enablers take the stage and make the performing arts a more inclusive place to work.



Suzanne Gorman
Artistic Director Maya Productions
Where Am I? Project Leader

The first edition of this pocket guide was produced in 2017 in collaboration with Professor Doris Ruth Eikhof (now University of Glasgow) and the CAMEo Research Institute for Cultural and Media Economies (University of Leicester).

Bright Lights

Bright Lights flick a switch. They shine in an instant, transformative moment and prompt us to make a leap forwards, change direction and do something new. Bright Lights can have a short term but highly powerful impression on aspiring global majority artists.

"oh wow, she is writing as well as acting [....] and it was so funny and witty and heartfelt at the same time.

Those things really inspired me and really made me think ooh, I want to do this"
(on Meera Syal)

Visual reflection in terms of ethnicity is key to a Bright Lights moment on stage. Real, authentic, portrayals of global majority characters are vital.

Meera Syal

Photo: GL Portrait

“

looking back, maybe it was because they kind of looked like me and I subconsciously identified with them that I walked out thinking yeah let me give this a go.”

Reaction to Ishy Din's 'Snookered'

Ishy Din's 'Snookered'



Photo: Lewis Wileman



Guides

“
some of the power and beauty, I saw in Nina Simone and Billy Holiday; that I was too underconfident to recognise in myself.”

Nina Simone

Photo: Philippe Gras

Guides chime with our values. Their star quality or exceptional work draws us towards them where we find positive behaviours to emulate. They challenge us to think and act differently and give us a route map for doing so.

"you watch it and sometimes you copy it. Sometimes you think 'I am going to think about things like that' or 'I am going to do that', 'I am going to approach it like that'"

Often in the public sphere and leaders in their field, Guides can be observed from a distance or can be someone we are in direct contact with.

Forgers



Forgers carve a path that others want to follow. They have often fought hard to become leaders, breaking down barriers and taking risks to lead the way. Importantly, they have not closed the door behind them, inspiring and promoting difference. Their trail blazing creates an environment in which those from global majority backgrounds can succeed.

Role models who express their individuality and own culture can be particularly inspiring and empowering:

*"young black man, athletic, brilliant personality, great character, small afro, I had never seen that working in the arts before, a hoody on that said BRAT across the back and he walked around like he ran the show [...]
For me, coming from working at The National where the only people who really looked like me were the security guards and the cleaners, like really, that was like wow"*
(on Anthony Gray)

“
...they do their own
thing and they don't
have to work within
the industry and the
industry kind of comes
to them after a while.”

(on Rikki Beadle Blair)

Rikki Beadle Blair



Photo: Gary Beadle



Enablers



Enablers are active individuals who want to promote change. Making themselves accessible they intervene and contribute directly to others' careers. Enablers take the time to give strength, support, insight, knowledge, encouragement, permission and access. Opening doors, demystifying the theatrical process and empowering others are but a few of the significant actions that lead to a legacy of inclusion. The impact of being supported by an Enabler role model can be profound and can particularly support global majority leadership in the arts.

Vicky
Ireland



Photo: Pamela Raith.

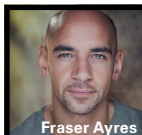


“

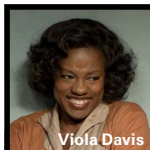
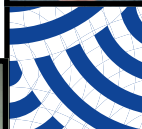
She was always at the end of the line, offering support, wise words and encouragement. She modelled a way of mentoring that I carry through today, creating a relationship that can build confidence and self belief. Vicky enabled me to in turn enable others.”

(Kumiko Mendl on Vicky Ireland)

BE A ROLE MODEL WHO SUPPORTS DIVERSITY



Fraser Ayres



Viola Davis

Mentor: Make a commitment to the next generation of global majority artists. Give regular practical support to those that you can, whenever possible.



Be generous with time: Make yourself available for conversations with students and early career professionals. Offer that cup of coffee.

Demystify: Give everyone the insider knowledge that they need to progress and succeed. Be honest about how the industry works.

Empower global majority talent: Encourage everyone to reject the notion that if you are from a global majority background you need to be twice as good as white counterparts. Create a space for global majority practitioners to succeed, but to also learn through failure.

Share your knowledge and experiences: widely at conferences, events, shows, networks. You will have something unique to offer.

Be yourself: You don't have to be perfect to be a role model. Have the courage to be your authentic self and that will inspire others. Difference encourages a richer arts workforce.



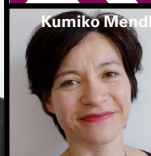
Janet Steel



Change recruitment processes: Build an inclusive culture that values difference. Don't just hire who you know. Make the effort to advertise widely. Recognise your bias and then challenge it. Take the implicit association tests: www.projectimplicit.net



Hilary Carty



Kumiko Mendl

Be visible: Your work and career as a global majority artist or leader can inspire others. Consider using your networks, blogging and social media to shine a light on you and your work.

Open doors: We know it's hard to get a foot in the door, but you can make the arts more accessible by actively seeking out, highlighting and bringing in global majority talent.

Photo Credits: Fraser Ayres: Michael Wharley. Janet Steel: Mark Andreani. Viola Davis: David Lee. Hilary Carty: Janey Airey. Kumiko Mendl: Elaine Wong.

HOW CAN ROLE MODELS HELP ME?

Identify:

five people in the arts or in society that you like or admire.

Describe them:

What are their values? Key qualities? What jobs have they had? What actions have inspired you? What have been their challenges?

Make a note:

of the qualities and skills that they have in common. Why are you drawn to these qualities? Do you have them or can you develop them? What do your role models say about you? Have you discovered anything new about yourself?

Create a list of arts jobs:

Do any of the qualities and skills you have or want to develop match? Can you see a natural next step? What advice can you give yourself?

Take action:

Write down three achievable actions that you can take in the next two weeks that will help you move forwards.

Inclusion Boost:

Inclusion Boost is Maya Productions' interactive online toolkit for individuals seeking to work in the theatre sector. It was created in collaboration with six inspiring theatre industry professionals from black, asian and latin american backgrounds who share career insights, personal journeys and advice.



FIVE INDUSTRY ACTIONS TO TAKE

Organisations can be role models too. They can Guide, Forge or Enable global majority workforce diversity. Which one is in your company culture?

- 1 Paint a picture with colour:** Do a detailed mapping exercise to find out where global majority artists / practitioners and leaders are working and publish it. This will increase visibility of and improve access to global majority role models.
- 2 Raise the profile:** Seeing a number of global majority role models is key. Invite more global majority artists, practitioners and leaders to share their experiences at industry-wide conferences, symposiums, round table discussions, careers days and other events.
- 3 Change recruitment practices:** Recognise inherent white bias, unconscious and otherwise, in recruitment procedures. Bring diverse perspectives into decision making processes and remember that talent is a social construct. Embrace positive action to be inclusive.
- 4 Keep the conversation focused on change:** Create a space to facilitate regular, honest, open discussions on workforce diversity. Focus on actions that can deliver change for individuals, organisation and industry practices. Make sure that gatekeepers, decision makers, funders and leaders are in dialogue with global majority artists, students and young people.
- 5 Designate a legacy of inclusion:** Ensure boards and senior leaders look at how Enabler activities can be incorporated into leadership and other relevant job descriptions. Make workforce diversity the responsibility of everyone.

Suzanne Gorman is Artistic Director of Maya Productions and a Clore Fellow.

Maya Productions brings together individuals and organisations who passionately want their work to enable racial justice and social change. Our vision is of a world where everyone, regardless of age, ability, culture and class enjoys enriching theatre, arts and heritage experiences.

Making theatre led by South Asian, African, Latin American diaspora and global majority artists, we share authentic stories, build new audiences and profile role models on and off stage.

Engaging with children, young people and under-represented communities across the UK we unlock the creative potential of our participants and inspire the next generation of artists and industry professionals.

We build inclusive workplace practices by raising awareness of barriers to progression, supporting career pathways through coaching and mentoring and offering practical steps to make change through research projects and Race and Allyship Training programmes.

Our training offers an understanding of how racism manifests itself in the workplace and how allyship tools can be employed to combat racism and make a change in the industry and can be booked via emailing info@mayaproductions.co.uk

To book training and find out more about our work scan the QR code below.



“

I found the Pocket Guide very valuable in planning projects when I was Workforce Development manager at the National Theatre. There is a real need to extend this work across the sector, especially at this time when pursuing a career in the arts could seem even more unviable, making the importance of positive role models who represent the full diversity of the UK population greater than ever.”

Gemma Baxter
Support Squad

“

Role models are crucial to making our world more inclusive. This Pocket Guide helps you identify what kind of role model you can be yourself. And it shows you how your organisation can spot and support role models.”

Professor Doris Ruth Eikhof
University of Glasgow

This Pocket Guide builds on a Clore Leadership Programme and AHRC supported project, **Where Am I?** undertaken by Suzanne Gorman, as part of a Clore Fellowship and in collaboration with CAMEo Research Institute, University of Leicester.

The project examined the impact of role models and explored what global majority professionals in the arts found important about them.

The quotes in this booklet are taken from interviews and focus groups conducted with cultural leaders, arts practitioners and drama students.

This project aims to facilitate change. We hope to spark vital conversations and actions that will support a diverse workforce and see confident, adaptive and resilient global majority professionals and leaders across our cultural sector.

To find out more about how we can support you and your organisation please contact Suzanne Gorman.

 MAYA PRODUCTIONS	 www.le.ac.uk/cameo	
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