

## **Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee**

### **Creative Scotland – Regular Funding 2018-21**

#### **Written submission from Neo Productions**

Neo Productions is a black & minority ethnic theatre company focusing on bringing together African and Scottish influences particularly through musical theatre.

We've not pursued Regular Funding as we are trying to work from a model of being self-financing though we noticed in the recent Regular Funding round that there was little representation of specific black & minority artistic activity or organisations.

This is interesting given the results of consultation articulated in the report of the Cultural Strategy Engagement Report just published a couple of days ago. Primarily about better diversity of artistic 'product' being created and offered, issues around the affordability of a career in the arts for those in lower socio-economic levels of society (frequently where black people are) with the current funding system being 'described by some as favouring people with established networks and privileged backgrounds'.

We think the barriers in the funding system for black & minority ethnic artists and groups need to be examined. We have asked Creative Scotland for more details about the proportion of funding, success of achieving funding, and levels of funding which black & minority ethnic groups and individuals have received. We have still not had any responses to the questions posed.

We hadn't been happy with our experience with the Scottish Arts Council so didn't pursue funding from that agency. Recently we thought we would try for funding from Creative Scotland as it was a new agency. We met with a Creative Scotland to discuss possibilities and thought it was worth applying for funding through the Open Project funding scheme. We were not successful but sought feedback about what would need to be changed if we were to re-submit the application and have a better chance at success. Unfortunately we have just learnt that the re-submission was not successful and feel that the reasons given appear to reinforce the barriers that black & minority ethnic and those relying on volunteer effort, often have found when seeking funding. We are currently waiting on the full information about the decision so may have further comments once we have it.

We think the experiences of black & minority ethnic artists and groups seeking either Regular and Open, or both, funding should form one of the aspects being examined in the Committee's review of Creative Scotland's funding and would be interested in giving further comments on the area.