

**Blast Theory Communications Manager**  
Recruitment pack, April 2021



A Philadelphia citizen walks in *Spit Spreads Death: The Parade* (2019) in honour of a 1918 flu victim.  
Photo: Tivern Turnbull

*“Since the mid 1990s, the group [has] followed the trajectory of the development of media, with their acute and in-depth psychological analyses. I would call them the most contemporary media-poet of this age.”*

Soh Yeong Roh, head of the Selection Committee for the 2016 Nam June Paik Art Center Award

### **Summary**

Hi! We're Blast Theory, an artist group internationally renowned for making interactive art. We work across performance, installation, apps, games and film. We're seeking a full-time Communications Manager to join our friendly team in Portslade, Brighton.

As Communications Manager you'll be responsible for all aspects of our communications, audience engagement and audience development. With support from the Business Director and Director, your immediate focus will be on creating a

realistic delivery plan for our new strategy to build Blast Theory's brand and reach new audiences. We've also set aside a marketing budget for you to allocate accordingly. And we're totally up for experimenting: trying new things, analysing the results, and changing our approach if needed.

Working in a small team means you'll have a broad range of responsibilities. We'll work with you to prioritise the activity listed in the job description below. Our talented and nurturing team is here to support you, and we'll take into account your talents, interests and personal development objectives to shape the role and help you succeed.

We take an 'always be learning' approach to everything we do and will help you build your skills in areas you're less confident in. So even if you don't 'tick all the boxes', please apply.

### **Why work with Blast Theory?**

- International reputation with four BAFTA nominations and many awards including the prestigious Nam June Paik Arts Center Prize
- Close-knit, supportive team of nine – we all have lunch together between 1pm and 2pm, every day, regardless of how busy we are
- Beautiful, spacious studios in a converted Victorian icehouse with a terrace overlooking Shoreham harbour, secure bike storage and shower
- International travel opportunities
- Generous annual leave allowance (20 days' basic + bank holidays + up to 8 additional days off over Christmas + additional days for long service)
- £200 towards a new bike
- Personal development budget of £300 per year
- Distinctive sabbatical policy
- Engaged and talented Board of Trustees including two communications experts to support you

If all of that sounds good, please read on.

### **About us**

Blast Theory creates interactive art to explore social and political questions, placing audience members at the centre of our work.

Led by Matt Adams, Ju Row Farr and Nick Tandavanitj, the group draws on popular culture, performance, technology and games, often blurring the boundaries between the real and the fictional.

In virtual and physical spaces from pubs, canals and abandoned warehouses to libraries, museums and apps – we go to unexpected places to make our work accessible to everyone.

### **Where we're going**

After a five-year period of intensive work on ever larger projects – *Karen, My One Demand, Operation Black Antler, 2097: We Made Ourselves Over, Bloodyminded, Spit Spreads Death: The Parade, GIFT* – the artists spent time in 2020 to reflect and develop new ideas. This was already part of our plans, which made it easier to adapt to the pandemic.

With a strong reputation and financial position, we are about to make a step change in our communications with a strong focus on audience insight and audience development. Our commitment to inclusion and underrepresented voices will feature strongly in our future work.

### **The role of Communications Manager**

You'll play an important role in delivering the new communications strategy, making sure it responds to audience needs and the company's objectives. Audience development and communications (both via organic reach and promotional activity) are a strong focus over the next period and we're willing to invest to achieve our ambitious goals. We'll encourage and support you to develop your skills professionally as part of this.

You'll work closely with Business Director Anne Rupert and Director Matt Adams (who is also one of the Blast Theory artists and a founder of the company). You will be supported by a team with skills in graphic design, video editing and software development.

### **About you**

You might be a freelance comms professional looking for more stability. You might have a keen interest in the arts, currently working in the commercial or charity sector and looking for a new challenge. Or you might be coming from an entirely different direction where you can demonstrate your skills in communicating and building a following.

We do not expect you to have experience across all aspects of the job description and person specification. We will support your professional development in areas that you are less experienced in, building your confidence and making sure you feel part of the family here.

## **Our ethos**

We strive to provide a warm, welcoming, creative and collaborative environment. We don't have a rigid hierarchy and you will interact with decision makers in the company, often in a relaxed and informal way.

It's important to us that we take care of each other; we have an ongoing organisation-wide dedication to individual support and professional development, including a distinctive sabbatical policy. We currently have a gender-balanced staff ratio (including at senior level) and encourage the empowerment of employees and volunteers.

It's important for us to offer a workplace that is accessible and designed to help you succeed. We care about mental health and will make reasonable adjustments to accommodate your needs.

## **Our work**

Blast Theory was founded in 1991 by a group of friends who worked at the same cinema. Since then, the group has grown to a team of nine.

We have collaborated with the University of Nottingham's Mixed Reality Lab for over 20 years which is, to our knowledge, the longest and most productive partnership between a university and group of artists anywhere in the world. It has yielded 12 new works, four BAFTA nominations, the Golden Nica for Interactive Art at Prix Ars Electronica and over 40 academic papers of international significance. This dialogue between scientific and artistic research forms a core thread of Blast Theory's practice.

Our business strategy supports innovative art practice and ensures that the company has the resources to deliver a creative and visionary programme. The company has been regularly funded by Arts Council England since 1994 and is a National Portfolio Organisation. Additional sources of funding come through a mixed economy of grants, commissions, consultancy, earned income and philanthropic giving. Blast Theory is a charity led by Chair Anthony Lilley OBE.

Since 2004 we have worked in research partnerships with the BBC, British Telecom, Sony and Nokia among others. Our relationship with the commercial sector includes being represented by the Creative Artists Agency and work with the BBC, Channel 4 and Microsoft.

Blast Theory has won many international awards including an International Mobile Games Award and three Lovie Awards.

Internationally, Blast Theory's work has been shown at the Tribeca Film Festival, Sundance Film Festival, Walker Arts Center in Minneapolis, the Venice Biennale, ICC

in Tokyo, the Chicago Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney Biennale, National Museum in Taiwan, Hebbel Theatre in Berlin, Basel Art Fair and Sonar Festival in Barcelona.

### **Our studio**

We are based in a former Victorian ice house overlooking Shoreham Harbour, in Portslade, Brighton. Designed by award winning architects Block, our building has been developed to act as a meeting point for artists, scientists and industry to collaborate, research and exchange knowledge.

We rent out two studios, run an international Residency Programme, frequently mentor emerging artists and practitioners, and (when restrictions allow) run occasional talks, workshops, showings and public tests.

Until Covid restrictions are lifted fully, we currently have a hybrid model of remote and studio working. We use Slack and Zoom to stay connected and have a 15-minute huddle each morning to say hi and discuss the day's priorities. We can provide any tech that you need when working from home. Our studio is spacious enough to allow effective social distancing.

The studio is on one level. Access is via a series of stairs (with a continuous handrail). We have an accessible toilet and can arrange wheelchair/level access during office hours via the yard to the rear. Please let us know about any access needs when you apply so we can discuss these with you.

### **Diversity & Inclusion**

We have an ongoing, active commitment to Diversity & Inclusion and encourage applications from people of colour, people with disabilities (including 'invisible' disabilities or neurodiversity such as autism and dyslexia) and people from lower socioeconomic backgrounds in particular, as these groups remain underrepresented in our sector.

While we recognise that there may be some restrictions that apply to specific disabilities, we'll try our best to make reasonable adaptations to accommodate your needs. If you have access needs, please email [info@blasttheory.co.uk](mailto:info@blasttheory.co.uk) with details so we can:

- Support you to make an application in a format that suits you (video, audio or phone)
- Make reasonable adjustments if we invite you to interview (for example short breaks during the interview; a longer interview slot with more time to respond; large print documents available; assistance to access the building; or something else).

## How to apply

Please send us:

- A **cover letter** (no more than two sides of A4)
- Your **CV** (no more than two sides of A4).
- A completed **Reference & Disclosure form**
- A completed **equal opportunities monitoring form**. Please note this form is anonymous and will not be read with your application.

Please upload these documents and complete the relevant forms via our SurveyMonkey form here:

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/CommsManagerapplication>.

You are welcome to apply in a format that serves you best, such as audio, video or via a phone call. If you prefer to apply in a different format please contact dan@blasttheory.co.uk for more details.

**Please note:** we will use a scoring system to assess applications so please make sure you show clearly how you meet the essential skills and experience for the role. All relevant experience is valid, even if gained outside a professional context (for example through personal projects, or volunteering). Please include on your CV links to successful campaigns or relevant projects you have worked on.

We're looking for talent and aptitude so even if you don't have all the experience, please apply and explain how the role would help you grow and develop.

Applicants must be aged 18+ and have the right to work in the UK.

### Key dates

Applications due: 2 June 2021, midday (strict deadline)

Interviews: 9/10 June 2021

Start date: ASAP after appointment

We will email shortlisted candidates on Friday 4 June with an invitation to interview. Regardless of whether you are invited to interview, we will email you to let you know the outcome of your application.

As part of our commitment to Diversity and Inclusion we will offer feedback to any job applicant who self-identifies as being a person of colour; from a lower socio-economic background; or with a disability. In giving you feedback we will pay close attention to your strengths and identify areas for improvement, offer concrete actions and, where relevant, support to address these. This is regardless of whether we invite you to interview.

## Terms and conditions

Hours:	Full-time
Salary:	£28,000-£30,000 per annum
Annual leave:	20 days' holiday per year plus bank holidays The studio is closed for the Christmas/New Year break which is additional paid holiday (usually two weeks)
Period of notice:	Two months
Office hours:	Normal office hours are 10am-6pm, Monday to Friday
Reports to:	Business Director
Location:	Blast Theory's studio at 20 Wellington Road, Portslade, Brighton, BN41 1DN The role may involve national and international travel.

## Job description and person specification

### Purpose of the job

The Communications Manager is responsible for:

- Developing and implementing the communications strategy, in consultation with the Director and Business Director
- Delivering effective, engaging, tailored content across Blast Theory's channels (website, newsletter, social media) to attract, retain and grow audiences and build Blast Theory's brand
- Using analytics and audience insights to test, review and adjust the strategy
- Leading on content marketing and other promotional activity to build brand awareness and grow audiences
- Overseeing asset production and managing comms interns, assistants and freelancers where relevant
- Bringing an imaginative and vibrant communications viewpoint

### Principal tasks

#### Strategy

- Segment audiences for Blast Theory communications, defining messaging and channel strategies
- Use audience insights and analytics to review and adjust the strategy on a regular basis
- Identify how different communities engage with Blast Theory and put in place ways to address barriers to access and engagement

#### Content

- Work with the artists to create content that reflects the richness of Blast Theory's work and extends and enriches Blast Theory's reputation

- Create a confident and distinctive tone of voice to invite in new audiences and increase audience engagement
- Deliver tailored content for all channels (website posts and blogs, newsletter and social media)

#### Website

- Increase audience acquisition and organic traffic in line with objectives:
  - Develop and implement an effective SEO strategy to increase organic traffic
  - Use Google Ads to drive audience acquisition
- Regularly audit website content and performance and lead on redevelopment as needed

#### External relationships

- Manage comms relationships with external partners and commissioners
- Procure and manage agency and freelance support where required, for example web development, advertising and PR

#### Promotional activity

- Set up and run paid social ad campaigns
- Identify profile raising and publicity opportunities for Blast Theory's works and the three artists, including awards and media engagements
- Support PR activity including writing press releases, liaising with press, setting up interviews, creating press packs etc.

#### General

- Represent Blast Theory at network events and conferences (we will support you to build your confidence if you are less experienced in this)

#### **What we're looking for**

Please see 'How to apply' for more information about how we will assess your application.

We do not expect you to have experience across all aspects of the job description and person specification. Even if you feel you don't tick every box, please apply. We will support your professional development in areas that you are less experienced in, building your confidence and making sure you feel part of the family here.

#### Essential skills, knowledge, interests and personal qualities

- A flair for good content and engaging copy
- Strong organisational skills and an ability to prioritise your workload

- Strong understanding of social media channels and audience engagement
- Knowledge of email marketing techniques and tools (we use MailChimp)
- Attention to detail and high standards
- Adaptable and quick learning
- A commitment to Diversity and Inclusion
- A good knowledge of and interest in communications and marketing trends
- An interest in working for Blast Theory

#### Essential experience

- A proven track record in a communications, marketing and/or press role (ideally, we would like to see at least three years' experience; if you have less than this but can demonstrate experience across relevant projects, please do apply and explain how the role will support your development)
- Running effective cross-channel campaigns, with proven impact
- Promotional activity (for example paid for social media; advertising; influencer marketing)

#### Desirable skills, knowledge and interests

- Writing clear and engaging campaign briefs for suppliers, partners and colleagues
- An interest in data and audience insights
- Interest in and knowledge of visual art, digital media, film and contemporary theatre
- Content Management Systems (we use WordPress for the Blast Theory website)
- Google Analytics, Google Data Studio, Google Ads
- SEO
- Social media analytics
- Google Ads and Google Ad Grants
- Adobe Photoshop, InDesign and Illustrator
- Video editing (for instance Premiere Pro, Final Cut Pro)
- Public speaking, presenting or training

#### Desirable experience

- Building and managing external stakeholder relationships
- PR campaigns and PR activity
- Engaging influencers to develop new audiences
- Line management (this can include volunteers and freelance staff)

- Communications for fundraising campaigns
- Procuring agency relationships and managing service agreements with agencies and freelancers
- Media partnerships
- E-commerce

*“Since forming in 1991, (Blast Theory) have spun together artistic and scientific concerns into an extraordinary practice comprising site-specific research projects that turn the place of presentation into a space for role play.”*

Frieze