

Candoco Curatorial Statement

Candoco curates dance that is **bold, transformational** and **unexpected**, work that expands what dance can be and who it is for.

We believe **dance is better when difference is celebrated**, and that belief sits at the heart of everything we do.

Candoco is a producing company and artist development organisation. We don't bring a fixed ensemble to an artistic vision, we bring the creative conditions that allow a choreographer's vision to be realised, fully and faithfully, with the collaborators they need.

When we choose to support a maker's work, we're asking not just what the work is, but what Candoco makes possible for it, what this artist's vision requires, why it belongs in this context, and what the journey of making it will mean for both them and for the audiences they reach.

We carry a legacy that has long surprised and pushed at boundaries, creating powerful shifts in how audiences encounter disability and dance. That legacy continues to drive us forward.

Candoco's work brings together technical rigour with exploration, at times playful, sometimes risky, and always complex. It moves beyond traditional dance frameworks, making space for possibilities that don't yet exist.

Candoco lives in a dynamic tension: between mainstream visibility and radical practice, between legacy and future evolution, between structure and experimentation. We've come to understand that these tensions do not need to be resolved and that they are the very conditions that make work distinctive. The most original art, we believe, emerges from having the courage to stay inside these tensions.

Curatorial priorities (for Artistic Assembly Members)

Assembly members should prioritise work that expands what dance can be. In doing so, they should weigh the following considerations.

We look for work that does the following:

Artistic qualities.

- Offers something new, aesthetically, structurally and/or conceptually
- Demonstrates artistic experimentation
- Holds contemporary relevance, whether in what it says or the movement vocabulary it adopts
- Recognises art as a form of activism, whether explicitly or implicitly

Creative Leadership & Process.

- Centres D/deaf, disabled and neurodivergent artists' agency, authorship and leadership, including voices not yet represented

- Recognises lived experience of disability and intersecting marginalisations as expertise that shapes artistic and curatorial decisions
- Is shaped through co-creation, collaboration and dialogue

Audience

- Demonstrates a clear sense of who the audience is
- Shows consideration for what the audience experience will be
- Centres access for D/deaf, disabled and neurodivergent audiences, and prioritises integrated and artistic responses to accessibility

How we define excellence

Candoco does not adopt a fixed or mainstream definition of excellence, and scale alone is not a measure of ambition. We value quality on its own terms, including clear artistic intention, coherence, and a strong sense of purpose. We recognise embodied knowledge and specificity, and support work that may challenge dominant

ableist aesthetic expectations. Quality is defined by the depth of the work, its impact on those who experience it, and the integrity with which it is made and presented.

The Candoco difference

Not all work needs Candoco. We therefore prioritise work that would not exist in the same way without the specific conditions we create:

- A context in which diverse movement languages, bodies and aesthetics can coexist
- Time and space for experimentation
- An environment where D/deaf, disabled and neurodivergent artists are actively centred and celebrated
- A framework where access is integral to the artistic process and audience experience, not separate from it
- Opportunities for meaningful visibility of D/deaf, disabled and neurodivergent artists

Before making a decision, we ask

- **Artistic ambition:** Does Candoco have the resources to remain faithful to the maker's artistic and choreographic vision?
- **Access:** Is accessibility for artists and for audiences embedded within the process from the outset?
- **Representation:** Are we reflecting a wide and inclusive spectrum of D/deaf, disabled and neurodivergent experiences?

Working principles

Artistic Assemblies will use this document when making curatorial decisions. They will have been invited to take part because of the perspectives they bring. Artistic Assembly members are not expected to follow a fixed formula; instead, members are encouraged to trust their judgment and share responsibility, supported by a decision-making prompt sheet. This list of prompts will help to guide discussion (and is not a tick list) and ensure alignment with the curatorial statement and its ethical commitments.