Rogue Artists Ensemble - mission statement:
Rogue Artists Ensemble is a collective of multi-disciplinary artists who create Hyper-theater, an innovative hybrid of theater traditions, puppetry, mask work, dance, music, and modern technology. Through a collaborative development process, with an emphasis on design and storytelling, the Rogues create original, thought-provoking performances. We cultivate unique audience experiences that appeal to multiple generations of theatergoers in order to expand the boundaries of contemporary American theater.

Welcome:
This guide is a synthesis of lessons learned over fourteen years of producing original work in Los Angeles. Art making is (maybe other than the government) about the least efficient and headache inducing thing around. This guide hopes to break down the steps we have learned through trial and error, in order to help streamline and clarify the steps in producing original work.

A note about this document:
This document is broken up into two sections. The first section contains a rough two year outline of the process of creating an original Rogue project from the selection of the project, creation of the Development Team (see below) all the way through closing night.

There are some handy fill in the blank sections that might be useful in compiling lists of team members and more. It also outlines readings, workshops and rehearsal and production guidelines. Even though this is broken up into two years you might find your schedule needs to be one year or maybe five years. We’ve compressed and stretched this schedule in many ways. This should be a living document and dates and guidelines for deadlines may shift… it always does for us.

The second section is a document pulled from a retreat from a few years back where we defined the process of the Development Team and the relationship that group has to other members of the company as well as the production team.

If you use this document or find it helpful let us know! Questions or suggestions for improvement can be emailed to scawelti@rogueartists.org
Organization: 

Title of Project: 

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**YEAR ONE**

First Quarter

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- A script or story is selected for production. Ensemble consents to give final approval for any project going into production.
- Secure rights to script, book, or design elements that will be used in the production including music.
- Determine who (if any) will be the major outside collaborators on the project and begin contract negotiations.
- Create project Development Team which is the group that is responsible for the early development of the project. This group normally contains the director, playwright, composer, visual artist / designer, dramaturg and a few other Rogue ensemble members. It is normal for the Development Team to be comprised of both Ensemble and Guest Artists.
- Begin Development Team meetings with the goal of meeting at least every other month to start conceptualizing the project. Start slow. Don’t force the process.

**Note about Funding:**
Where this document may fool you is in regard to funding. Within the company we have projects floating for a long while and often are applying for funding to support the development of the work. We are constantly looking for seed funding that can help plant the show and get it started. This could be a corporate sponsor, board member that is passionate about the project or perhaps we’ve been able to plan this funding into our budget from the previous year. To start the development of any show we have realized we need usually at least $10,000 allocated to commission the script, music and cover any costs in the early development phase. The catch 22 is that you need to have funds to make the art but it’s often hard to get the funds without the art being made. No easy answer there I’m sorry.
Development Team Members:

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<tr>
<th>Role / Focus</th>
<th>Name</th>
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Second Quarter

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- Ramp up Development team meetings to meeting monthly if schedules allow.
- Development team works on crafting a one paragraph project description and then boils that down to one sentence that can accurately define the project.

Project Mission useful for grants (no more than 3 sentences):

One sentence mission (simmered and distilled version from above):
● Dev Team identifies large technical challenges of the production and start to find ways to accomplish them.
● Development team compiles a production bible which may be in an electronic form such as a dropbox or a large binder. This contains the ideas, images, drawings and notes from early conversations and is what will inspire the writing process.
● Playwright begins to write a first draft of a script. The writer is free to take or leave ideas.
● Development team members come up with their individual ‘Sacred Lists’ which are the few things that are most important to them. It’s in this list that the project’s most potent notions often reside and these lists fuel the art making in a large way.
● Budget meeting - Set tentative more specific budget for project based on projected overall project/yearly budgets.
● Grant applications begin in earnest for project.
● Community partners or other support organizations are identified and brainstormed. These might eventually become partners to help in selling tickets or perhaps to host talkbacks or workshops with relating to the project. We’ve found it’s never too early to start to have these sorts of conversations and they often lead to exciting things like free rehearsal space and marketing help. #getthebuzzstarted

### Community Partners / Support Organizations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization Name</th>
<th>Contact Info</th>
<th>Idea for Support</th>
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### Third Quarter

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● By this time the development team has conceptualized the basic nature of the project and the ensemble has been kept in the loop through check ins at monthly ensemble meetings. The Board of Directors has also weighed in on any issues or been given the chance to answer questions.
● First draft of script is realized.
● Artistic Director works with Ensemble and Development Team members to begin selection of additional production team members needed.

Production Team Members:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role / Focus</th>
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<td>Dramaturge</td>
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<td>Sound Designer</td>
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<td>Prop Designer</td>
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● First reading is held for script with feedback session for writers/ collaborative team working on early development of project.
  ○ Reading includes invited board members, ensemble, design team and community partners
  ○ Talkback is held helmed by the dramaturge to ensure feedback is gathered and conversations are productive. We often use Liz Lerman’s Critical Response Approach, which you can learn more about here.

● Director of project is selected and brought into the creative process if not already present.

● Director is now fully active in project creation/ development.

● Website is launched and active blogging and information about the project trickles online.

● Send ‘Announcement” press release to local/ national publications/agencies

● Seeking out and selection of venues for both a workshop (4th quarter) and also the theater space for the premiere next year.
- Grant writing continues with an eye towards partnerships and community organizations who may align with the project.
- Begin to seek out venues for performance and rehearsal spaces.

**Fourth Quarter**

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- All known designers and director have first meeting to discuss how the project will work, and the first thoughts each are having. This can be an informal meeting.
- Director and designers work with writing team to address any issues in the text that need to be resolved before the design process begins.
- Designers work on research for their concepts.
- It’s at this step that we start to amass lots of images, drawings, sound bites and more. We may also begin to mock things up if we are using complex puppetry or mask elements. It’s never too early to start to play in the workshop and begin making the objects that will further bring the project to life.
- Director finalizes any conceptual ideas about the show along with design team.
- The design team defines a key image or two to help ensure the project feels unified. This image along with the sentence and paragraph about the project become the bedrock for the project in many cases.
- Designers and director hold independent meetings.
- Research any “special show elements” and how they will be built/realized.
- Get info together for press releases and audition notices.
- Venues and rehearsal space should be decided upon, agreements negotiated and ready to go.
- Hire a Production Manager and Stage Manager!

**Production Stage Management Team Members:**

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<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Production Manager</td>
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<td>Stage Manager</td>
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<td>Assistant Stage Manager</td>
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Let’s do a workshop! This is by far the most critical step of the process. By this point you’ve been working on this project for at least a year and now it’s time to put things to the test. For workshops we follow a few rules:
  ○ Limit time - usually no more than 2 weeks
  ○ Limit resources - Tape, rolls of paper, cardboard and markers make up most of the stuff we use. We often only use found costumes unless it’s something special while sets, puppets and masks are mocked up using the materials above.
  ○ Work Quickly - let the story drive the process and make the need for things. Think about how streamlined you can be and economical with everything.
  ○ Feedback - Don’t create in a vacuum! Invite others to rehearsals and of course bring in an audience for a final sharing and gather feedback at each step. It’s most important to bring in audience members that don’t know anything about the show as they will see it very differently than those working closely on it.

Checking In:

This is a great moment to check in with both your company members and also any guest artists.

Perhaps after hosting the first big workshop of the piece you have decided you have learned enough which is great! Or perhaps (which happens to Rogue often) you realize what you need is another workshop to try out all the things you’ve just learned and make the work the best it can be.

See how things are feeling because at this point it’s not too late (usually) to add more time and adjust the calendar.
YEAR TWO

First Quarter

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- Director and designers continue individual meetings.
- Script writing team gives their final version of the script to designers. (This script will be used for audition and design purposes however, there may be more alterations to it.)
- Production Meeting Number 1.
  - Each designer will present research and concept for show based on their conversations with the director and their own research. All designers should bring a research presentation and any rough sketches they have.
  - Schedule for remaining PM’s is set and decided upon
- Audition Notices sent out.
- Postcard designs finished and ready to go to print!
- Marketing info is ready including hashtags and taglines! We often select no more than two hashtags in addition to our company @rogue_artists which is used throughout social media land. A tagline is a quick and straightforward series of words about the show… We’ve used things like “I choose crazy,” “Kill the cricket” and others. Our one line show description is often a derivative of the same one sentence we’ve been referencing for the past year.

Marketing Info:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hashtag(s) - Twitter/ Etc.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tagline(s) - series of words that grab</td>
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<tr>
<td>One line show description - a proper sentence</td>
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- Press release deadlines are set and put in the calendar.
- Plan for postcard and poster distribution is brainstormed
- Check back in with community partners and make sure they have the info they need

Marketing Dates:

<table>
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<th>What</th>
<th>When Due</th>
<th>Who is doing this?</th>
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</table>
### Draft Press Release

### Proof Read Press Release

### Release Press Release

### Press invitation to opening

### Follow up invitations to opening

### Postcards Released

### Street Team distribution

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**Second Quarter**

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- Director and designer individual meetings based on the results of PM1.
- Designer work time.
- Update website with any newly created images or show information
- Send out Audition notices to papers and online casting resources
- Deadlines are set for production calendar including when things like mockups and rehearsal props are due.

**Production Deadlines:**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>What</th>
<th>Mockups Due</th>
<th>Final Versions Due</th>
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<td>Props</td>
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<td>Costumes</td>
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<td>Puppets/ Masks</td>
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First Half

- Production Meeting 2
  - All designers must present first designs, rough renderings, sketches, preliminary models, puppet mock ups, special effects element plans, etc.
- Production Report 1
  - The director and designers will present their concepts and designs to the Artistic Director and interested Ensemble members who will have the opportunity to provide feedback, comments and ask questions.
- Continue R+D process for any new “special” elements that the group has not previously attempted.
- Budget meeting. Set final budget for the show.
- Director and designers work to incorporate feedback and changes resulting from production meeting and production report.
- Auditions occur
- Callbacks

Second Half

- Production meeting 3.
  - Final designs due. Ground plan, renderings, music selections (if applicable) elevations, models, preliminary light plot.
- Directors and Designers will make a list of unchangeable elements of the show, that cannot be altered during the rehearsal process.
- Any R+D on special show elements completed and recommendations made.

Third Quarter

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- Scripts to all cast members if available
- Auditions may still be occurring if required
- Hold a reading of the latest draft of the script with actors in order to have one more chance to refine and tweak before rehearsals start. The artists you’ve cast will bring something new that you can’t expect to it’s important to be open to that.
  - Note about readings / paper - Rogue Artists Ensemble is a very green theater company when we can be and we often complete all our text work without printing a single script. We ask artists to bring in laptops or tablets or let them borrow extra ones we have so everything can be digital. If the writer tweaks some text it can be shared and tried out in the room without having to wait for copies get made.
○ When the script is ready for rehearsals it’s an exciting day moving from digital to paper.
  ● Cast any actor’s faces for masks or bodies for puppets that include tight fitting components.
  ● Continue design meetings with director and designers.
  ● Designers prepare for design presentation, finishing touches on models and renderings, concept boards and sound samples.
  ● Locate all rehearsal props

Fourth Quarter

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Rehearsal Week 1

  ● Warm up week. Focus on the cast acclimating to the concept and ideas of show.
  ● Cast participates in any needed activities: mask classes, general puppet workshop, mask making.
  ● Boot camp for actors - teaching puppetry and mask technique and coming up with a standard approach to stage the piece. This is where the rules of the performance are focused on.
  ● Read through of script and designer presentations.
  ● Production Report 2
    ○ Following the read through and the designer presentations. All ensemble members are invited to attend this rehearsal and give feedback.
  ● Start building scenic elements and props.

Rehearsal week 2

  ● Production Meeting 4
    ○ Designers and director discuss any changes to design based on rehearsal.
  ● Deadline for major design changes and designs signed off by show director and artistic director.
  ● All press releases finalized.
  ● Press packets started.
  ● Performance press releases sent out
  ● First stumble through of the show. Designers invited.

Rehearsal week 3

  ● Designers invited to another run through.
  ● Actors off book
- All show dependent audio finished and incorporated into rehearsals if possible.
- Deadline for major design changes and prop additions by the director.
- Costume fittings.

Rehearsal week 4
- All puppets and masks due, for actors to use in rehearsal all week.
- All actors off book.
- Run show several times this week and keep inviting new people to see it.
- Production Meeting 5. Directors and designers discuss plans and issues going into tech. Possible paper tech.

Rehearsal week 5
- Deadline for minor changes to scenic, prop and other elements by the director.
- Pre-load in press photo call
- Loading into space:
  - Light Hang
  - Audio Load In
  - Scenic Load In
- Final week of rehearsals. Full run throughs expected with no stopping and with using all production elements.
- Final designer run through followed by PR(3). Ensemble's last chance to give feedback before tech.
- Paper tech must happen this week if it hasn't already.
- Final Show sound cues due.
- Final Costume fittings.
- Press Packets finished.

Tech/Dress rehearsals
- Finish all load ins
- Tech rehearsals. At least two full 8 hour days.
- Special Tech for donors.
- Dress rehearsals. One with invited outside guests who give feedback.
- Additional press photos are taken
- Photos are posted on website
- Ready house for show. Ready concession items and tickets.

Preview Week
- Show is performed in preview mode.
- Time during the week to make any tech changes tweaks.
- Time during the week to rehearse if needed.
- 1st preview show will be invite only.

Show Opens
• Production runs typically between 5 - 8 weeks for a Rogue show.
• *Take a breath.*
• Photo call… don’t forget to document!
• Video production for archival / grant purposes

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<td>Photo call - during preview performance</td>
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<td>Photo call - proper staged images</td>
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<td>Video performance</td>
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**Reflections and Learning:**

• Post Mortem - We always hold a post mortem following each show broken up into the following steps
  ○ Invite everyone involved to an in person meeting (cast, production team, ensemble, board, spirit guides of company) and talk in person. We pick places to meet like burger joints that give a feeling of fun to help make sure things don’t get too intense.
  ○ After we send out an online survey which is usually just filled out by artists that didn’t make the in person post mortem.
  ○ Feedback is synthesized and discussed in person at either an upcoming ensemble meeting or retreat.
Rogue Artists Ensemble - Collaborative Development Guidelines
Revised May 14, 2013

1. Role of Development Team:
   a. Development Team is a small and focused group of both Ensemble members and guests artists approved by the Ensemble.
   b. In programs and on the web the Development Team will be credited as - Project Developed by:
   c. The Development Team is responsible for the development and creation of Rogue Artists Ensemble projects from inception through developing the script and may include the creation of key concept art, character designs, music or any other elements critical in developing the work.
   d. It is the Development Team’s responsibility to nurture the project and support it’s development.
   e. Development Team’s will be lead by a Development Team Lead that will work closely with the Artistic Director and Managing Director.
      i. This individual will assist at scheduling meetings, ensuring notes are taken and shared and a calendar and deadlines are maintained.
      ii. The Development Team Lead should be an ensemble member if possible.
      iii. The Development Team Lead will be the designated person to share a project’s progress during monthly Ensemble meetings and take questions back to the Development Team.
   f. The Development Team is responsible for the following deliverables:
      i. One sentence description of ‘WHY/ MISSION’ of the project
      ii. Selecting 1-3 key pieces of inspirational artwork that best help to encapsulate the look and feel of the production as conceived.
      iii. Paragraph (3-5 sentences) description of the project for purposes of marketing and promotion. (Note – This may be edited by Marketing Manager and major changes must be approved by Rogue Staff / Artistic Director)
      iv. A completed script or detailed outline of the project if the project does not have spoken dialogue.
      v. The Development Team may compile a list of themes or production elements that they feel are meaningful to the project. This guideline numbering no more than 5 components, will be given to the Production Team to help in inspiring the further development of the production.

2. Development Team Membership:
   a. Between 3-6 artists are optimal consisting of a writer, director, composer, visual artist, dramaturge and other individuals who are passionate about contributing to the development process of a project.
   b. The Development team will be selected by the Ensemble Membership Committee working with the Artistic and Managing Director.
   c. Guest artists must be consented to by the Ensemble.
   d. The Artistic Director and Managing Director may sit in on a Development Team meeting at any time.
   e. Any Ensemble member can attend a Development Team meeting at any time.
3. Development Team Requirements:
   a. Must have time to devote to meetings, approximately 2 a month during the development process.
   b. Ensemble Members must be in good standing with a proven track record of following through and completing tasks and work on projects.
   c. Guest Artists must be approved by the ensemble and have a proven track record of professionalism and adhere to the mission statement and bylaws of Rogue Artists Ensemble.

4. Graduating into Production Team:
   a. The Production Team will begin at a designated time determined by the Production Manager, Artistic Director and Managing Director based on the project’s production calendar. Typically this will occur between 6 - 8 months before the first preview performance of a workshop/production.
   b. In the best case scenario a Development Team will develop seamlessly into a Production Team through the addition of other critical members.
   c. The Development Team’s work culminates at the first Production Team meeting when the Development Team will present the work they have done including sharing key images, documents and anything else pertinent. After this time the Development Team will be dissolved formally although they are invited to remain involved in the production as it moves forward.
   d. Development Team members may transition to being members of the Production Team and maintain their titled roles (ie: Sound Designer, Scenic Designer etc.)
   e. All Development Team members will be added to the Production Team email distribution lists unless requested otherwise.
   f. Development Team members that are not transitioning to titled roles on Production Team may attend any Production Team meeting or post tech/rehearsal Production Meetings at any time and will be given time to share thoughts.

5. Spirit of Collaboration, Listening and the Rogue way:
   a. Rogue Artists Ensemble is an ensemble based theater company.
   b. Throughout the development process of a project the ensemble of artists assembled may shift and grow and are defined as the artists working on a given project.
   c. It is through the openeness and honesty of our process that we find strength within our work.
   d. We encourage all participants at any stage during the development process to approach the work with an openeness and honesty and encourage opinions and ideas be shared even if they are outside of your area of expertise or discipline.
   e. Rogue Artists Ensemble ensemble members may attend any rehearsal, production meeting or development meeting at any time and will be given the opportunity to share opinions about the project at an appropriate time with the project’s director or may speak with the Artistic Director at any time. Rogue Ensemble members are encouraged to attend rehearsals and meetings to help in
nurturing the creative direction of the work.

f. Throughout the development process the Director acts as the funnel, listening closely to the ideas of the ensemble, taking into account the voices in room and helping to make decisions as the leader of a team, crafting the direction of the piece.

g. The project’s director has the final say on all creative matters.

h. Rogue Artists Ensemble’s Artistic Director is ultimately responsible for the overall creative direction of the work of the company. The Artistic Director may provide critical feedback to the director and production team and if needed request changes and adjustments to the project working closely with the director.