

PRESS RELEASE: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Octagon celebrates local artists and theatre-makers in new festival!

First Bites Festival to include new works and works in progress.

The **Octagon** have today announced a **brand-new week-long festival** that will showcase and celebrate local theatre-makers.

Their inaugural **First Bites Festival** will include 6 new works and works in progress from Bolton and Greater Manchester based artists, over 6-days from **Mon 18 – Sat 23 September**.

Supported by the Octagon's Artist Development scheme, the festival will provide an exciting opportunity for emerging theatre-makers to share their work with a live audience, and for Octagon audiences to be the first to experience these brand-new works.

Interactive family show **HIBERNATION** from puppet theatre company **Eye of Newt** opens the festival, with two performances on **Mon 18 & Tue 19 September**. Explore what happens to nature in the autumn featuring spikey hedgehogs, forgetful squirrels, and grumpy bears.

Hibernation will be part of a family double-bill on both the Monday and Tuesday evenings.

Mon 18 September, storyteller **Ilaria Passeri** will also present a brand-new storytelling show, **THE TIDY TROLLS**. Adventure awaits as Albert the monkey, Brian the chicken and Rita the mouse get ready for the tidy trolls to come and visit in this wonderfully entertaining show about friendship, perfect for ages 3+. Whilst **Tue 19 September**, will feature **A CHRISTMAS ADVENTURE** from award-winning theatre-maker **Rebecca Pythian**. Get in the festive spirit early and join elves Tinsel and Snowflake as they find out the true meaning of Christmas through the joy of music, friendship and epic dance moves. Great for all the family from ages 3+.

Enjoy a night of storytelling on **Wed 20 September** with **JUST STORIES**. Expect laughs, hilarious stories and nostalgia in this free event which is open to local storytellers to share new works, hosted by **Ilaria Passeri**. Anyone interested in applying for a 10-minute storytelling slot can contact juststoriesmcr@gmail.com.

Octagon Theatre, Howell Croft South
Bolton BL1 1SB
octagonbolton.co.uk
01204 520661



Manchester theatre company **Switch_MCR** will host a brilliant night of short plays and extracts created by up-and coming-theatre-makers, in the **OCTAGON SCRATCH NIGHT** on **Thu 21 September**. More information about line-up will be announced soon.

Bringing the festival to a close is **LONG STRONG HAIR**, a semi-autobiographical piece by **Monica Sagar** that follows Amrit, a neurodivergent, Queer, Non-Binary Sikh person, and explores how hair is an integral part of identity, gender, sexuality and spiritual growth. This two-hander uses movement, projection and poetry, and comes to the Octagon on **Fri 22 & Sat 23 September**.

Associate Director and Artist Development Co-ordinator at the Octagon, Georgia

Murphy said: *“Over the last 6 months we have been working with local theatre-makers, supporting development of some amazing new projects. The First Bites Festival is a culmination of all their hard work and a chance to share these incredible works-in-progress with audiences for the very first time. It promises to be a really exciting week as part of our autumn programme and is a wonderful showcase of the sensational local talent we have right on our doorstep.”*

The Octagon’s **First Bite Festival** takes place from **Mon 18 – Fri 23 September** and tickets for are on sale now.

Find out more and book tickets via the **Box Office** on 01204 520661 or at octagonbolton.co.uk

-ENDS-

For interview and other press requests please contact **Dan Hicklin** on dan.hicklin@octagonbolton.co.uk

Octagon Theatre Bolton

Octagon Theatre Bolton is a regional producing theatre that makes bold, adventurous and popular theatre of the highest quality that is seen locally and nationally. We believe theatre matters because everyone’s story matters. The Octagon inspires engages and entertains thousands every year through theatre and creative activities, contributing to a healthier and happier community. The Octagon reopened in May 2021, following a major redevelopment funded by Bolton Council and Arts Council England and many others. The Octagon receives public funding through Arts Council England, Bolton Council and Greater Manchester Combined Authority, and Principal Sponsorship from the University of Bolton. The Octagon was shortlisted for Theatre of the Year at the 2023 The Stage Awards.

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OCTAGON



FIRST BITE FESTIVAL EVENT LISTINGS

Double Bill: Eye of Newt present Hibernation and Ilaria Passeri presents Tidy Trolls

Mon 18 September

5:30pm

Tickets: £6 per child (1 adult free per child)

Double Bill: Eye of Newt present Hibernation and Rebecca Pythian presents A Christmas Adventure

Tue 19 September

5:30pm

Tickets: Tickets: £6 per child (1 adult free per child)

Ilaria Passeri presents Just Stories

Wed 20 September

7pm

Tickets: £6

Switch_MCR present Scratch Night

Thu 21 September

7pm

Tickets: £6

Monica Sagar presents Long Strong Hair

Fri 22 & Sat 23 September

7pm

Tickets: £6