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Contact: Emma Jaster

Associate Director, The Lab

emma.jaster@georgetown.edu

(301) 646-8764

<https://globallab.georgetown.edu/>

**THE LABORATORY FOR GLOBAL PERFORMANCE AND POLITICS
ANNOUNCES FOURTH COHORT OF FELLOWS**

**AMIDST GLOBAL CRISES, CULTURAL LEADERS FROM TEN
COUNTRIES ON FIVE CONTINENTS JOIN A GROWING COMMUNITY
OF INNOVATIVE GLOBAL LEADERS**

Washington, D.C. — — [The Laboratory for Global Performance and Politics \(The Lab\)](#) is thrilled to announce the newest cohort of their Global Fellows program. Funded by The Mellon Foundation, this 18-month global residency is now in its fourth round, connecting and supporting exceptionally promising artists and change-makers from around the world who embody the Lab’s mission of “harnessing the power of performance to humanize global politics.” The Lab, founded in 2012, is an increasingly essential hub and resource center for building and supporting an international community of artists and activists working at the intersection of performance and politics. The organization provides innovative artistic and curricular strategies and techniques to a wide range of programs and initiatives in areas

including global health, racial justice, environment and climate crisis, migration and refugee studies, authoritarianism, and more.

The Global Fellows program is at the heart of The Lab's work and an essential part of its ongoing engagement with critical issues such as polarization, the legacy of slavery and systemic injustice, migration and immigration, colonial occupation, and climate crises. Since the start of the program in 2017, there have been several hundred high-quality applicants from across the globe- politically engaged artists isolated in their local communities and seeking artistic and professional allies around the world.

The ten new Fellows, selected from a diverse and expansive pool of applicants from 44 countries, 12 distinct regions, and 6 continents, use performance to address the most pressing issues of their lives and in the world. They are unearthing ancient traditions and buried histories, innovating on and imagining new ones, subverting oppressive tactics and defying censorship through creative means. Some have returned to their homelands after or amidst hardship, some are lifelong locals, while others are living as refugees. Their work is not only a means to address polarization, genocide, or corruption, it is a way forward- for themselves, their people, their audiences. They teach, write, dance, sing, and make community in their places of birth, refuge, and work in Armenia, China, Colombia, India, Japan, Kenya, Palestine, Russia, Switzerland, Tanzania, United States, Zimbabwe and beyond.

The ten new participants in The Lab's Global Fellows Program are: **Yide Cai (China/US), Yuta Hagiwara (Japan), Tanvi Hegade (India), Riham Isaac (Palestine/UK), Elina Kulikova (Russia/Switzerland), Teddy Mangawa (Zimbabwe), Wanjiku Mwawuganga (Kenya), Samwel Japhet (Tanzania), Yura Sapi (Nuquí, Chocó, Colombia) Sona Tatoyan (Armenia, Syria, US).** see full biographies below).

“We are deeply moved and inspired to welcome this courageous and visionary group of Fellows, all of whom have been making their work amidst intense challenges and upheaval.” says Lab co-Founding Artistic & Executive Director Derek Goldman. “Their work – as performers, writers, directors, producers, scholars, change-makers and leaders – serves as a hopeful antidote for so much that our world is facing. They are the visionary leaders and voices of our future, and increasingly of our present.”

Key to the program is its impact both globally and locally. Each Fellow continues to work within their own community, as they learn in conversation with each other and with mentors from The Lab's [Creative Core](#), through monthly virtual meetings and in-person convenings, including a residency this year in partnership with LaMaMa Umbria in Italy. By supporting the local work of each Fellow over a long period of time, the program supports not only the individual participants but, through them, their local networks of collaborators, students, and communities across the globe.

“The Global Fellows are the beating heart of The Lab. They challenge the status quo, and foster positive socio-political change through their performance work,” commented Lab Co-Founding Director, Ambassador Cynthia Schneider. “The newest cohort, hailing from East Asia to the east coast, will expand not only The Lab’s geographic reach, but also our understanding of the intersection of politics and performance.”

The newest cohort does indeed expand on the reach of the program, bringing transformative new connections into the thriving community of existing Global Fellows. Lab Associate Director Emma Jaster notes that “with Fellows from Russia working with Fellows from Palestine and Fellows from China or Armenia working with collaborators in the U.S., this fourth cohort is actively engaging geo-political tensions in creative, critical and profound new ways, using their artistic resources to transform entrenched conflicts.”

The Lab strives to foster a sense of continuity and relationship between Fellows, in order to more effectively expand their network of global peers, and members of the previous three cohorts continue to be active participants in The Lab’s community. Global Fellow Adam Ashraf ElSayigh from the 2nd cohort shares “Welcoming this new cohort is a testament to The Lab's ongoing commitment to fostering diverse voices and perspectives. I am enthusiastic about the rich, collaborative opportunities that lie ahead, the community we will foster and the work we will create together across cohorts.”

Taken together, the four cohorts of Fellows that the Mellon Foundation has supported represent a profoundly inspiring rising generation of global leaders in the field, each of them deeply committed to collaborating across borders and boundaries, and immeasurably strengthened by the collaborative relationships they build with one another. The Lab’s impressive track record of supporting long-lasting social, professional, and artistic bonds

among artists at the forefront of re-imagining theater, global politics, and how they intersect, is evidenced in this visionary and expanding ecosystem of Global Fellows.



GLOBAL LAB FELLOWS 2024-26 - 4TH COHORT



蔡逸得 | **Yide Cai** was born in Shenzhen, China, a young and adventurous city which he calls the America of China. His parents moved to Shenzhen and built a life from nothing, raising Cai as one of the first generation of people to grow up in this new city full of migrants from other parts of China. Cai has a little brother who is eight years his junior, and because of the single-child policy, his parents had to pay a fine to give birth to him. His family are Christians which is a minority group in China under the surveillance of the Chinese government. He saw live theater for the first time when he went to high school in Philadelphia; ironically, it was the opera Turandot. He later went to Emory University, becoming the first college student of his family. During college, he lived through the entirety of the pandemic and discovered his passion in theater, particularly playwriting. He graduated with a BA in Playwriting & German Studies, with his plays included in festivals such as KCACTF, WTP Table Series, Kanini fest, and NSYPF. After spending a year back in China, he is starting his MFA in Playwriting at Boston University in 2024.



萩原雄太 | **Yuta Hagiwara** was raised in Mito, a typical suburb in Japan which suffered “cultural poverty.” In his home, there was no culture- no books, records or arts. His family strove to be “normal” in any sense. When he entered university, his mother said “don’t be involved in the theater and politics because they will ruin your life.” Now what institution gives him a fellowship?

Hagiwara founded his theater company *Kamome Machine* in 2007. Some of his major works include *Waiting for Godot in Fukushima* (2011) which is staged on the road of Fukushima after the nuclear power plant accident, and *Oregayo* (2017) a solo performance which uses the Japanese constitution as a text. During the covid-19 pandemic, he started a series of works named 'Telephone Theater' which is one-on-one show of performer and audience on the telephone line. Throughout his career, he has focused on the idea of the public through the performance.

He is currently working on a new project, a theater piece about the Nanjing Massacre, caused by the Japanese Military during WW2. Through this project, he digs into the following questions: "What is the responsibility of the descendant?" and "How do descendants of the perpetrators and victims make new public spheres?"



Tanvi Hegade is contemporary dancer, dance movement therapist and German translator, who grew up across West India in Pune, Nashik and Baroda. Having spent a decade training in and performing contemporary dance and physical theatre, these experiences now serve as a foundation for her to explore the myriad possibilities of expression using the body.

The productions she has been part of have been performed at national and international festivals including in Nepal, Sri Lanka, Romania and Poland. She facilitates dance therapy sessions as part of a community project for persons with Parkinson's Disease. Poetry plays an immense part in the way she likes to make sense of the world. Tanvi is the Secretary of West Zone of the Creative Movement Therapy

Association of India and the Head of Dance in Education at the Centre of Contemporary Dance, Pune. She was part of the Indian delegation at the World Theatre Congress in Fujairah in 2023 and is the Indian representative in the ITI Dance Committee.

Tanvi has been awarded the Compassion & Resilience Fellowship by The Red Door India, and the Arts for Good Fellowship by the Singapore International Foundation. She finds herself in the process of incubating ideas about forming insightful and honest ways of dialogue at the intersections of language, movement and social impact. Language as a tool of erasure and enabler, the (in)visibility of non-normative bodies in performance, and the politics of gender and migration are some of the themes that are alive for her at present.



Riham Isaac is a performance artist from Palestine, weaving together a range of artistic practices – acting, singing, dancing, and video. She holds an MA in "Performance Making" from Goldsmiths. Through themes like gender, politics, resistance, societal dynamics, and collective imagination, Riham explores overlooked narratives, challenging perceptions and provoking meaningful dialogue and change.

Inspired by early experiences in her vibrant community in Beit-Sahour, her passion for performance was ignited by the rich cultural heritage and resilience of her people. In 2017, she co-directed 'The Alternativity' in Bethlehem alongside Danny Boyle and Banksy, a highly political yet playful show spotlighted in a BBC2 documentary. At the 2014 Qalandia International

Biennale, her performance 'Stone on Road' encapsulated the ongoing Palestinian struggle on the streets of Ramallah. Recently, her solo performance "Another Lover's Discourse," commissioned by the Belfast International Arts Festival, earned a nomination as the VAULT Festival 2023 show of the week. Riham has also collaborated with institutions like the A.M. Qattan Foundation in Ramallah and the British Council in East Jerusalem.

Currently, she is driven by the question of how we perform land in times of crisis and how to address concepts of land, resistance, and cultural activism. Her work is rooted in personal experiences and the collective memory of her community, continuously inspiring her to create impactful and thought-provoking art.



Samwel Japhet is a Tanzanian dance artist, choreographer and social entrepreneur who found his voice through dance after a rough childhood of homelessness and abuse. Today he uses dance as artistic expression for story-telling. He believes that art is an invitation to transcendence and critical reflection on the realities of our times, and the political world. His fascination with human relationships and their connection to the world is central to his work, combining dance with visual storytelling, text, and music to address societal issues and human experiences, inviting audiences to reflect on the complexities of the human condition and envision alternative futures. His work has been shown in various festivals and theaters in the Netherlands, South Korea, Israel, South Africa, Germany, and Ethiopia, among other countries.

Samwel is a recipient of the 2021 Seed Award from the Prince Claus Fund for Culture and Development. In 2021-2022, he co-managed UMOJA, a multidisciplinary artistic residency exchange program between East African and European artists in Tanzania. Graduated from the MUDA Africa Dance School in Tanzania. In 2015, he co-founded a Tanzanian based non-profit dance company (Nantea Dance Company), which provides multifaceted

performances and community-based projects. Through his work, Samwel strives to build a culture where art has a value and inspires new possibilities.



Elina Kulikova was born in St Petersburg. She is a theatre director, performance artist and writer in exile, currently based in Switzerland. She works mainly with auto-fiction and documentary performance, writing, directing and performing herself. Elina has participated in international theatre festivals and labs, been nominated for national theatre awards in her home country and directed more than 15 shows in Russia, USA, France, Estonia and Switzerland.

In 2019, she graduated from St Petersburg State University and Bard College (NY, USA) with a major in Arts and a minor in Human Rights. She is now a MA student at La Manufacture Lausanne, specializing in theatre directing.

Until 2022, her goal was to develop contemporary and politically charged theatre in her country, challenging the patriarchal and imperialist narrative that threatens freedom and human rights. But in February 2022, after Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Elina left Russia under propagandist attack to continue her artistic and human rights work abroad. She has already created several anti-war projects and continues working on often harrowing themes of war crimes, state repression and state gender violence.



Teddy Mangawa is a professional theatre actor, director and educator born and raised in the high-density suburb of Mabvuku, Harare, Zimbabwe. He comes from a large family of nine siblings. He loved watching the vibrant theatre scene in his community as a young boy, but never thought he could be a part of it himself. After being convinced to fill in for a sick actor in a production led by his friend, Teddy discovered his calling, and decided to pursue theater professionally.

He graduated from Dell'Arte International School of Physical Theatre in California and became a certified arts manager from the University of Zimbabwe. Teddy joined Savanna Trust as an actor and worked his way up to becoming the Creative Manager. He is an educator and administrator at Zimbabwe Theatre Academy and served as the Chairperson of the Zimbabwe Theatre Association from 2017 to 2021. He received two National Arts Merit Awards for Acting and two nominations for Directing. Teddy is Artistic Director of the Mitambo International Theatre Festival and Coordinator of the Accelerating Creative Capabilities and Entrepreneurship Theatre Festival.

He uses drama to raise awareness and engage communities on human rights, public health, politics and development issues. Teddy strongly believes that the arts play a crucial role in citizen engagement, particularly in addressing matters of inclusion.



Wanjiku Mwawuganga is a Kenyan performing artist based in Nairobi. She is the first born daughter of an accountant and business woman. She was drawn to performance through primary school drama clubs and national festivals. Wanjiku found safety and release in the characters she played, a way to deconstruct complex thoughts and ideas and finally found a way to connect with people despite her social anxiety; art. She later pursued Theatre Arts and Film Studies at Kenyatta University in Kenya. Wanjiku is an Alumni of the DAH Theatre International Summer School; class of 2019 and a scholarship holder of the Zürcher Theater Spektakel 2020 Watch and Talk.

Wanjiku is inspired by works that push boundaries and embrace vulnerability and self excavation.

Her solo performance **ROOTS**, was a finalist of the HEVA HII STAGE TOUR GRANT 2024. **ROOTS** investigates the relationships between mothers and daughters followed across five generations. As an artist in residency in The Festival LAB; Xchange; Wanjiku will be showcasing her new work in progress; *Where Did You See My Fear?* at the 2024 TheaterFestival Basel.



Yura Sapi (they/them) is a visionary leader and interdisciplinary artist dedicated to co-creating joyful and abundant futures in harmony with each other and Mother Earth. Yura is Indigenous Kichwa, with Ecuadorian and Colombian citizenship and a lifelong connection to their birthplace on Manahatta island. Embracing their Kichwa name, Yura embodies strong roots and a profound connection to trees, plants and the natural world. They have artistically trained in theatre arts, embracing an interdisciplinary approach to art-making for social change.

Yura has showcased their talents as a performer, speaker, and space curator at renowned venues such as Joe's Pub and the Whitney Center for the Performing Arts, and their writings have been published on platforms like HowlRound Theatre Commons and Community Centric Fundraising. Through their nonprofit organization, LiberArte Inc., Yura collaborates to advance racial, social, and climate justice globally. Projects like *Protectores de la Tierra*, an artist-led initiative promoting AfroIndigenous farming and food sovereignty, reflect their commitment to sustainable practices and cultural heritage.



Սօնա Թատոյան | Sona Tatoyan is a first generation Syrian-Armenian-American actor/writer/producer who spent childhood summers in Aleppo where she learned about the Armenian Genocide. The history book in her small Indiana town made no mention of it. From childhood she obsessed with who tells the story, seeing that narrative propagates "truth." At Wake Forest University, Maya Angelou mentored her, exemplifying story's power to address injustice. "When something is the truth, you must speak it. No matter what, you must speak it."

Realizing stories of the Syrian war did not reflect her family's reality in Aleppo, Sona started the non-profit Hakawati to amplify the voices of marginalized and frontline communities to inspire healing. Sona created Azad Storytelling, performing recently at Pergamon Museum in Berlin, and is developing the multimedia play Azad (the rabbit and the wolf) in 2023/24. Residencies include: Vineyard theater in NYC, University of Connecticut Global Affairs, Harvard Artlab, and Wake Forest University. Sona has performed at Yale Repertory Theatre, The Goodman Theatre, The American Conservatory Theatre, and others. Her feature film script, The First Full Moon, was a 2011 Sundance/RAWI Screenwriters Lab participant/2012 Dubai Film Connection/Festival Project.

Sona's work explores storytelling as healing by questioning and reframing what's unquestioned, silenced and inherited.

Founded in 2012 by co-Founding Artistic and Executive Director Derek Goldman and co-Founding Director Ambassador Cynthia Schneider as a joint initiative of Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service and Georgetown College, The Laboratory for Global Performance and Politics **humanizes global politics through performance**. With highly visible original productions, partnerships, and initiatives, The Lab **cultivates a distinctive global community** of collaborators that includes students, emerging and established artists, educators, policy leaders, and activists. Our work harnesses **narrative, memory, and acts of witnessing** with the aim of **sparking transformation and change**.

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