



For Immediate Release
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Shahid Nadeem and Other Renowned International Theatre Artistic Directors/Founders Lead Workshops, in Spoleto, Italy, Summer 2023

At La MaMa Umbria's 24th Annual International Symposium for Directors, Master Artists include: **Shahid Nadeem** (Artistic Director, Ajoka Theatre – Lahore, Pakistan), **Iman Aoun** (Founder/Artistic Director Ashtar Theatre – Palestine), **Dmitry Krymov** (Founder, Krymov Lab – Russia), **Ong Keng Sen** (Founder/Artistic Director TheatreWorks – Singapore), **Thomas Ostermeier** (Artistic Director, Schaubühne Theatre – Berlin), **Hana Sharif** (Artistic Director, Repertory Theatre of St. Louis), **Viriana Tkacz** (Founder/Artistic Director, Yara Arts Group – New York) and **Torange Yeghiazarian** (Founder, Golden Thread Theatre – San Francisco).

La MaMa Umbria's International Playwright Retreat features award-winning, playwright **Chay Yew**, (Singapore/USA), former Artistic Director of Victory Gardens Theatre.

Participants in the Symposium and Retreat have the opportunity to learn and share with these remarkable artists whose processes of theatre-making are all very different. Participants are working professional directors and playwrights from many countries who come together for this unique experience. Applications are available [HERE](#).

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Participants will actively work with the artists on these projects:

Shahid Nadeem

Politically and Socially Engaged Theatre

Shahid Nadeem's workshop will be in three sections:

- (i) Facing challenges of censorship in times of despotic regimes and violent extremism,
- (ii) Socially meaningful theatre and Muslim cultural practices, and
- (iii) Promoting peace with hostile rival India through theatre.

Shahid Nadeem (Pakistan), Artistic Director of Ajoka Theatre in Lahore, Pakistan, he is a renowned theatre and television director and playwright. Shahid Nadeem's plays are well-regarded for their bold socially relevant, sometimes tabooed subjects such as religious extremism, violence against women, discrimination against minorities, freedom of expression, climate, peace and Sufism. In 2022, he gave the International Theatre Institute world message on International Theatre Day.

Iman Aoun

Dig Deep, Reach Wide - A Theatre of the Oppressed Workshop

An internationally recognized theatre trainer, Iman Aoun specializes in the Theatre of the Oppressed techniques. She will share her methodology with the directors.

Iman Aoun (Palestine), is a director, actor, and dramaturg, she has an extensive record on stage, on screen, and behind the scenes. Co-founder of ASHTAR for Theatre Productions and Training in Jerusalem, she has been instrumental in directing and devising several productions for the company.

Dmitry Krymov

How to Make Interesting the Theatre That You Want

We will discuss what an image is, what expressiveness is, and we will try to understand our own desires. Using scenes from Chekhov and Shakespeare, directors will use this understanding to stage the scenes and investigate the process.

Dmitry Krymov (Russia), Born in 1954, he has directed and designed various productions in Moscow which have established him as one of the most original directorial voices of his generation. Krymov and his 'laboratory' present visually stunning, symbolic productions where every moment is original, hugely inventive and surprising.

Ong Ken Sen

Unhappy Archives: Building Performance around Decoloniality

Ong Ken Sen's workshop focuses on the practice of creating "unhappy archives" as an artistic strategy, its intersection with the act of queering, and at the same time builds up the discourse around performance, agency, and decoloniality.

Ong Keng Sen (Singapore), ONG Keng Sen has been the Artistic Director of Singapore's T: Works (formerly known as TheatreWorks) since 1988. He was the founding director of the Singapore International Festival of Arts (SIFA) from 2014 to 2017. He founded the international Curator's Academy, hosted by the Maxim Gorki Theater in Berlin. His productions have been seen in major theatres around the world, the latest being *Trojan Women* which recently played at BAM Next Wave Festival in New York.

Thomas Ostermeier

Acting and reacting - entering the unknown

In his workshop, Thomas Ostermeier will work on exercises and methods that directors can use to help actors find greater freedom in their acting by reacting directly to their partner's actions. The aim should be to act in the moment of the concrete situation, without preconceiving one's own play.

Thomas Ostermeier (Germany) Since September 1999 Ostermeier is resident director and member of the Artistic Direction of the Schaubühne. In 2009 Thomas Ostermeier has been appointed »Officier des Arts et des Lettres« by the French ministry of culture, and promoted to the degree of »Commandeur« in 2015. From 2010 to 2018 Thomas Ostermeier was the German president of the Deutsch-Französischer Kulturrat (DKFR), German-

French Council of Culture. In 2011 Thomas Ostermeier received the Golden Lion of the Venice Biennale for the entirety of his work.

Hana Sharif

Engaging Community in Performance Creation

Hana Sharif's participatory process will focus on the questions: "How do we create art that allows us to look in some very challenging ways at ourselves and the world around us? How do we use art to allow our surrounding communities to use those tools to tell their own stories and amplify their own voices?"

Hana Sharif (USA), The Artistic Director of Repertory Theatre of St. Louis, has enjoyed a multi-faceted theatre career, including roles as an artistic leader, director, playwright and producer with a specialty in strategic and cross-functional leadership. She is the recipient of the 2009–10 Aetna New Voices Fellowship, EMC Arts Working Open Fellowship, Theatre Communications Group (TCG) New Generations Fellowship, and is a founding member of The Black Theatre Commons (BTC). She serves on the board of directors for the TCG, BTC, and the Sprout Foundation.

Virlana Tkacz

Ukraine: Art and Cultural history as Inspiration for Theatre Today.

Participants will experience how Virlana creates theatre pieces that explore masterful moments of overlooked an culture. The pieces fuse fragments of contemporary poetry and traditional songs, chants, legends and history to create experimental imagistic productions.

Virlana Tkacz (USA), theatre director, poet and translator, is the founding director of Yara Arts Group, a resident company at La MaMa. Virlana Tkacz collaborates closely with leading Ukrainian theatre artists,. With Yara, she has created 23 original theatre pieces since 1990. Since 1989, Virlana has worked with African–American poet Wanda Phipps on translations of contemporary Ukrainian poetry and traditional material. Together they have received the Agni Poetry Translation Prize, nine New York State Translation Grants, and The National Theatre Translation Fund Award.

Torange Yeghiazarian

Staging Poetry

In this workshop, participants will experiment with poetry as dramatic text. We will focus on Persian poetry, from the classics by Ferdowsi and Nizami, to contemporary poetry of Forough Farrokhzad and Simin Behbehani. We will dabble in traditional Iranian performance styles including Naghali and Ta'zieh, as foundational tools to incorporate into our process.

Torange Yeghiazarian (Iran/USA), is originally from Iran. She is the founding Artistic Director of Golden Thread Productions, one of the first Middle Eastern-focused theatre companies in the United States. She is known for nurturing generations of Middle Eastern American talent through visionary programs.

La MaMa Umbria International Playwright Retreat

Chay Yew

Master Artist **Chay Yew** (Singapore/USA) leads 10-day Retreat for professional playwrights developing new work.

From 2011 to 2020, Chay Yew was the Artistic Director of Victory Gardens Theater in Chicago. For his plays, he is the recipient of the London Fringe Award for Best Playwright and Best Play, George and Elisabeth Marton Playwriting Award, GLAAD Media Award, Asian Pacific Gays and Friends' Community Visibility Award, Made in America Award, AEA/SAG/AFTRA 2004 Diversity Honor, and Robert Chesley Award; he has also received grants from the McKnight Foundation, Rockefeller MAP Fund and the TCG/Pew National Residency Program.

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Over the past twenty-four years, **La MaMa Umbria** has hosted hundreds of mid-career artists who come to refresh their skills, learn new forms of making theatre and experience the restorative atmosphere of this historic

artist residence created by Ellen Stewart, founding artistic director of La MaMa ETC and La MaMa Umbria. Stewart used her MacArthur Foundation (“Genius”) Grant to establish a home of artists in the hills of Umbria, Italy. With her characteristic artistic flair, she converted a 700-year old dilapidated former convent into a beautiful retreat complete with a rehearsal studio (the former barn), gallery space, café, music room, large outdoor stage and accommodation for 25 artists.

For 24 years, La MaMa has presented the International Symposium for Directors. In Summer, 2023, La MaMa Umbria also hosts an International Playwright Retreat, Next Generation New Performance Incubator (for artists under 35 years old), The La MaMa Spoleto Open Festival and other developmental Residencies.

For more information: <https://www.lamama.org/programs/umbria-international> or contact David J Diamond at ddjdstar@gmail.com.

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