

International Summer School of Documentary Theatre Archa Theatre 2023



Between 25 August – 7 September 2023, the 6th annual International Summer School of Documentary Theatre (formerly known as *International Summer School on Theatre in Social Context*), organised by Archa Theatre in Prague, offered a platform for experimentation and research in the field of contemporary theatre for artists coming from all around the world. The summer school included ateliers, roundtables, and exclusive presentations by Czech and foreign theatre makers.

Theatre students and professionals from 15 countries around the world – from Iran, South Korea, France, England, Northern Ireland, Turkey, Greece, Italy, and so on – participated in the summer school.

Participants took part in three main ateliers during the initial part of the summer school. Jana Svobodová's atelier focused on the textual sources and the use of Viewpoints technique in documentary theatre. This atelier was complemented with 'Light as a space for action', in which Pavel Kotlík introduced the principles of light design in the context of working with space, text, and movement. Ladislav Štěrba and Jan Sedláček provided the participants with the skills to create sound design for stage. Martin Krupa's atelier focused on experimental methods of using moving image in live performance.

Apart from these ateliers, participants had the chance to attend exclusive presentations by Ondrej Hrab on the historical roots of social-specific theatre, and the relation between theatre and sociology. In addition, Lise Andrea Grimelund-Kjelsen led a complementary atelier on finding textual material for theatre and Merve Mutafoğlu led a roundtable focusing on socially engaged theatre in participants' countries, presenting Turkey as a case example. During the second part of the school, participants formed creative groups and prepared multimedia performances using the entire space of the Archa Theatre, with the support of the instructors.

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Here are some feedbacks from this year's participants



“During the workshops of the summer school, for the first time I felt like a theatre-maker in a broader sense. I feel inspired to take the knowledge and confidence I have gained during these two weeks and try to apply them to my work, especially the different methods of collecting textual material. And I made so many great friends from other countries, I would love to create something together with them!”

Elza Marta Ruža, theatre maker, Latvia

“I found it to be an incredibly inspiring process, the personal connections made have completely opened up the world to me in a way I hadn't previously thought possible. My work is largely based in documentary theatre and working with people who are from marginalised groups. This summer school has given me a new level of confidence in my skills and the desire to think more creatively about including larger elements of sound, moving image and light which I wouldn't have considered before.”

Holly Hannaway, theatre maker, Northern Ireland

“I believe that with my experience at Archa, I've had the opportunity to redefine the 'practice of art' and what art means to me. It has been an incredible and invaluable journey, witnessing the transformation in my perspective towards art.”

Jayong Hur, Fine Arts student, Korean National University of Arts

“The summer school has given me a much broader and deeper understanding of many cultures around the world and how important a role social-specific theatre and documentary theatre can play. It was amazing to be surrounded by theatre creators from all over the world and to be in such a warm and welcoming environment. I have always felt safe to explore and ask questions. I have been able to learn so much because you have been so kind and eager to share. I truly feel like Archa's way of thinking about, and creating social specific and documentary theatre are very much in line with how I am starting to view theatre making. Thank you!”

Mijn Sluijs, theatre maker, the Netherlands

“The summer school gave me a boost of new energy and inspiration to carry on with my creative practice. It was a valuable lesson and an opportunity to observe and reflect on myself as a performer. It gave me a new perspective on creating theatre, that I never had before and gave me skills that are going to influence my upcoming work. I also had a chance to meet people alike and make creative connections. I was in fact incredibly lucky and am still in touch with some of the participants.”

Lily Just, performer, Scotland

Stay tuned for the next edition of the summer school!



Sneak peek

2024 edition will provide the unique opportunity to experience countryside in the Czech Republic, providing tools to work with community in a specific region!

For more information please contact

summerschool@archatheatre.cz
www.archatheatre.cz

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