



Theatre
Communications
Group

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 27, 2018

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Theatre Communications Group Announces New Recipients of Global Connections Program

New York, NY – Theatre Communications Group (TCG), the national organization for theatre, is pleased to announce the recipients of the latest round of **Global Connections**. Supported by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Global Connections encourages reciprocity and cultural exchange through two programs: **ON the ROAD** grants to foster new relationships with international colleagues; and **IN the LAB** grants to further pre-existing international collaborations. Now in its sixth year, the Global Connections program awarded over \$95,000 to fourteen projects in this cycle, with over \$879,000 awarded to date. Over its first five rounds, the program has awarded 108 grants to artists and companies in 39 U.S. states to collaborate with their colleagues in 53 different countries on six out of seven continents.

“From garment workers in Bangladesh to communities in South Los Angeles, from pre-Columbian Mayan performance traditions to emerging scenographic strategies, these Global Connections recipients are forging new ways of working across aesthetic and political borders” said **Teresa Eyring**, executive director of TCG. “Thanks to enduring support from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, these projects will strengthen our shared commitment to fostering global citizenship in a time of discord and division.”

ON the ROAD

The following eight recipients were each awarded up to \$5,000 for unrestricted travel support to foster new relationships with international colleagues and inspire future collaborations:

Margarita Blush, Mansfield, CT

Margarita Blush will travel to Sofia, Bulgaria to work with renowned Bulgarian scenographer, Svila Velichkova, on the conceptual framework, aesthetic, and design of *The Rule of the World*, an original theatre production that examines the themes of injustice and disillusionment. The title is inspired by a quote from Kafka’s iconic book, *The Trial*: “Depressing view...The lie made into the rule of the world.” The show will feature live performance, puppetry, movement, and original script, scenography, and music.

Chinese Theatre Works, Long Island City, NY

Chinese Theatre Works (CTW) and Maleonn Studio (Shanghai, China) will embark on the first stage of a year-long collaboration to create and produce *Three Women - Many Plays*, an original production incorporating traditional and contemporary shadow theatre, digital animation, opera, dance, and film. The piece will tell the stories of three women who pioneered traditional Chinese shadow theatre in the U.S. CTW company members will travel to Shanghai for a three-week residency at Maleonn Studio, share skills, experiment with blending shadow puppets, digital animation, and sound, and develop the script, design, and music concepts.

GALA Hispanic Theatre, Washington, DC

GALA’s co-founder and producing artistic director, Hugo Medrano, will travel to Buenos Aires, Argentina to meet and work with leading theatre artists from different sectors of the field including Jorge Telerman, director of the Complejo Teatral, and Horacio Peña, one of the city’s leading independent actors. Hugo will learn about recent developments in Argentina and the Southern Cone (comprising Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, Argentina, and Chile), particularly in musical

theatre. Additionally, he will identify future collaborators, including independent artists and companies who could travel to DC for residencies, play development, and/or co-productions in future seasons.

Handan Ozbilgin, New York, NY

Handan Ozbilgin will travel to Greece to participate in a global exchange workshop with emerging Greek playwrights curated by Aktina Stathaki (Athens, Greece) and led by the playwright, Jeton Neziraj (Prishtina, Kosovo). This workshop includes a staged reading of Jeton's play, *Yue Madeleine Yue*, which Handan will direct, and a gathering with the playwrights to share Handan's experiences working with Greek playwright, Maria Efstathiadi, on her play *Privatopia*, an experience that encapsulates Handan's key artistic principles: process, time, collaboration, and participation.

Theater Grottesco, Santa Fe, NM

Theater Grottesco and Kamchatka Theatre will share street-theatre techniques based upon the theme of immigration. Kamchatka Theatre artistic director, Adrian Schvarzstein, will come to Santa Fe to lead Kamchatka's award-winning workshop *MIGRAR*, leading participants to see their homes as if for the first time. The workshop will open with cultural protocols led by Dancing Earth to acknowledge the land as Tewa territory, make a small medicine gift, and announce lineages and intentions. Then members of Theater Grottesco will join Kamchatka Theatre in Barcelona to further the discussion and explore new stylistic elements that could enrich the workshop.

Theatre of the Oppressed NYC, New York, NY

Theatre of the Oppressed NYC (TONYC) will send three artists to Muktheadhara, the bi-annual international festival of practice and performance hosted by Jana Sanskriti Centre for Theatre of the Oppressed in West Bengal, India. During the festival, three actor-facilitators ("Jokers") who are directly impacted by the issues in TONYC's plays will have the opportunity to learn from, teach, and create with Theatre of the Oppressed practitioners from around the world. After the festival, the TONYC artists will stay with Jana Sanskriti for two days of additional exchange, focusing on how each organization develops artistic leadership from the populations most directly affected by injustice.

Touchstone Theatre, Bethlehem, PA

Community-based theatre practitioners Touchstone Theatre will travel to Goleniów, Poland to meet and work in tandem with Teatr Brama as they plan for and execute their annual theatre festival, Bramat. While in residency, Touchstone personnel will observe practices used in the realization of Bramat, particularly practices wherein Brama's artists work alongside Goleniów community members in developing performances for the festival. In addition, this Bramat will host Caravan Next, a European Union-funded Social Community Theatre collaborative featuring some of Europe's top community-based practitioners, allowing for a broader cross-pollination of Touchstone methodologies with those of Caravan Next members.

Christina Watanabe, Long Island City, New York

Christina Watanabe will collaborate with Panic Button Theatre (Sofia, Bulgaria) to host a two-week seminar for Eastern European scenographers and directors on the craft and collaborative methodology of lighting design. She will learn how their technology and lighting instruments are used and demonstrate to scenographers and directors the important role of lighting design in collaborative story-telling.

IN the LAB

The following six recipients were each awarded \$10,000 to further pre-existing international collaborations by supporting residencies that advance the development of a piece and/or explore elements leading up to a full production:

CarlosAlexis Cruz, Charlotte, NC

CarlosAlexis Cruz will continue his collaboration with Alicia Martinez-Alvarez and Laboratorio de La Máscara by developing a new work inspired by the reality of Central American immigrants' difficult path through Mexico to the U.S. Inspired by the Spanish novella, *Lazarillo de tormes*, and the Picaresque genre, their new work, *Pícaro*, will tell the story of a 13-year old boy from Guatemala forced by circumstance to leave his family and travel through Mexico. Incorporating elements of contemporary circus arts, fast-paced comedy, masks, magic, and music, the audience will play the role of accomplices in the re-telling of this classic tale. Combining their specialties within the physical theatre realm, CarlosAlexis and his collaborators will embark in workshops to finish creating the show and bring *Pícaro* to its first main stage presentation.

Cornerstone Theater Company, Los Angeles, CA

Building upon their collaboration in March 2017, Cornerstone Theater Company will host six artists from the Stut Theater and Van der Hoeven Clinic, (both based in Utrecht, Netherlands) in Los Angeles, California. During Fall 2018, they will participate in an exchange of methodology, art making, experiential learning, and planning around a future collaboration. While in Los Angeles, the international artists will participate as both contributors and observers to Cornerstone's community-engaged theatre-making residency in Watts, a 2.12-square mile neighborhood in South Los Angeles. Their shared objective is to create a clear path for an 18 to 24-month international collaborative residency to make a new play. Their new community engaged theatrical work is planned to premier at the eighth International Community Arts Festival (ICAF) in Rotterdam, Netherlands in March of 2020.

Kevin Doyle, New York, NY

Playwright and director, Kevin Doyle will return to Dhaka, Bangladesh and resume work with six survivors of the 2012 Tazreen factory fire in Bangladesh who he first met in 2016 under a travel grant from the Asian Cultural Council. He and the survivors will collaborate with noted Bangladeshi theatre, performance art, and puppet theatre experts to develop a dramaturgical vocabulary to better frame their stories theatrically in an interdisciplinary theatre project titled *TRIANGLE / TAZREEN*. The piece will focus on the garment industry through the lens of the workers who survived the Tazreen fire and will then contrast their experiences with the perspectives of workers involved in the nearly identical 1911 Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire in New York.

La Peña Cultural Center, Berkeley, CA

Director Lakin Valdez and playwright Andrew Saito will continue to create *Man of Rabinal*, a two-person multidisciplinary play that explores the history, meaning, and present situation of the Rabinal Achí, an 800-year-old pre-Columbian Mayan dance-drama about a conflict between two rival kingdoms. Central to their process and the resulting play is their growing relationship with the members of Asociación Xajooj Tun, the Mayan Achí performance troupe in Rabinal, Guatemala, that is sworn to keep this dance-drama alive. *Man of Rabinal* will use docudrama to explore and share Valdez and Saito's evolving relationship with the ancient text, and the Mayan actors in Guatemala.

Roberta Levitow, Santa Monica, CA

Roberta Levitow will continue her collaboration with Eric Wainaina in Nairobi, Kenya through Rainmaker Ltd's NBO Musical Theatre Initiative, which aims to develop and produce new musical theatre written, composed, and performed by African artists in Africa and beyond. This four-year

initiative, based in Kenya, works through collaboration with a range of international mentors, including U.S. artists from the Sundance Institute Theatre Program and artist-teachers from the NYU Musical Theatre Writing Graduate Program. Roberta and Eric along with producer Angela Wachuka and their consultant, the vocalist and songwriter Somi, will take a crucial step in the project's process by engaging in a 10-day workshop to develop 16 in-progress musical theatre projects.

Theater Breaking Through Barriers, New York, NY

Theater Breaking Through Barriers (TBTB) will collaborate with the BIRD Theatre to host the First International Symposium for Disabled Theatre during the opening week of the 11th BIRD International Theatre Festival this September. Following TBTB's first appearance at The 7th BIRD International Theatre Festival in 2014, BIRD Artistic Director, Makoto Nakashima, became interested in developing theatrical programming with disabled artists. In 2015 he created The Freedom Theatre, an offshoot of the BIRD Company, integrating disabled and non-disabled artists. Like TBTB, The BIRD Theatre wishes to alter perceptions of disability in Japan. Their collaborative symposium will mark a significant first step in this process.

The Global Connections selection panel included **Simón Hanukai**, Theatre Director, Pantin, France; **Ouida Maedel**, Grants Manager, Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company, Washington, DC; and **MK Wegmann**, Independent Consultant, MK Arts Co, New Orleans, LA.

Building upon TCG's core value of Global Citizenship, Round Six of Global Connections aligns with other TCG international activities to maximize impact. Those activities include the Global Theater Initiative (GTI), a partnership that combines the unique reach of TCG's international programming with the Laboratory for Global Performance and Politics (the Lab) at Georgetown University's experience in humanizing global politics through the power of performance. GTI strengthens, nurtures, and promotes global citizenship and international collaboration in the U.S. professional and educational theatre field through programs like World Theatre Day, international-themed convenings, and delegations of U.S. theatre people to international festivals. TCG's global reach includes numerous programs and services for the field, such as advocacy efforts urging Congress to increase resources to support cultural exchange through the U.S. Department of State, and to enact the Arts Require Timely Service (ARTS) Act, S. 2510, which would require U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to ensure timely processing time for petitions filed by, or on behalf of, nonprofit arts-related organizations. Learn more about TCG and GTI's international activities [here](#).

Founded in 1969, **The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation** endeavors to strengthen, promote, and, where necessary, defend the contributions of the humanities and the arts to human flourishing and to the well-being of diverse and democratic societies by supporting exemplary institutions of higher education and culture as they renew and provide access to an invaluable heritage of ambitious, path-breaking work. www.mellon.org.

For over 55 years, **Theatre Communications Group** (TCG), the national organization for U.S. theatre, has existed to strengthen, nurture, and promote the professional not-for-profit theatre. TCG's constituency has grown from a handful of groundbreaking theatres to over 700 Member Theatres and affiliate organizations and more than 12,000 individuals nationwide. TCG offers its members networking and knowledge-building opportunities through conferences, events, research, and communications; awards grants, approximately \$2 million per year, to theatre companies and individual artists; advocates on the federal level; and through the Global Theater Initiative, TCG's partnership with the Laboratory for Global Performance and Politics, serves as the U.S. Center of the International Theatre Institute. TCG is North America's largest independent publisher of dramatic literature, with 16 Pulitzer Prizes for Best Play on the TCG booklist. It also publishes the award-winning *American Theatre* magazine and ARTSEARCH®, the essential source for a career in the arts. In all of its endeavors, TCG seeks to increase the organizational

efficiency of its Member Theatres, cultivate and celebrate the artistic talent and achievements of the field, and promote a larger public understanding of, and appreciation for, the theatre. www.tcg.org.

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