

# **International Summer School: Theatre in Social Context**

**22 August–5 September 2021  
Archa Theatre, Prague,  
Czech Republic**



# Archa Theatre Summer School

There has been an increased focus on topical social and political issues in theatrical creation. Archa Theatre promotes artistic practices that have the courage to examine topical issues expressed in a specific theatrical language. Archa Theatre's International Summer School is a platform for experimentation and investigation in the field of contemporary theatre. The summer school promises students to get acquainted with theatre in social context with the help of Archa Theatre's artistic vision and theatrical tools.

Working language of the school is English/ Czech.

## Issues we will focus on

- How is reality transformed into an artistic image?
- Which artistic disciplines serve this purpose?
- How can artistic activities influence social reality?

## Who are welcome to apply

- Everyone who is older than 18, is professionally involved in theatre or who use theatrical methods in their professional work
- Everyone who is interested in the methods of the collective creation / devised theatre
- Everyone who sees theatre as an expression of individuality on stage
- Everyone who is interested in the principles of documentary and social-specific theatre
- Everyone who sees theatre as a combination of artistic and technical disciplines

## The principles of the education

- Instruction based on the principle of shared experience
- Respect for each participant as an independent creative personality

## Main ateliers

- The Viewpoints technique and textual sources of documentary theatre
- Light as a space for action
- Sound design for stage

## Complementary atelier

- Finding your textual material



# Exclusive presentations

Participants will also have the chance to attend exclusive presentations by internationally acclaimed artists and scholars.

- **Lola Arias:** Re-enacting life
- **Robert Palmer:** The impact of Covid on arts practice worldwide
- **Henk Keizer:** Processes of creating site- and social-specific art
- **Pieter De Buysser:** Why the oak tree doesn't write
- **Ondřej Hrab:** Theatre and sociology, Historical roots of social-specific theatre

# Course structure

The summer school will start with the performance *Those Who Speak for Themselves*, created with non-actor performers and directed by Jana Svobodová. Before the school starts, participants will have access to an e-book which will serve as a supportive material for the practical ateliers. In the first part of the school, each student will have the chance to participate in all of the ateliers focusing on the Viewpoints/text, sound design, and light by taking turns. After this period, participants will form independent creative groups. These groups will work on a short performance that they will present at Archa Theatre by using the theatrical skills they acquired from the ateliers they attended. During this creative process, the instructors of the ateliers will be available for artistic consultation. Besides this main program, all participants will be able to attend presentations given by the international experts which will take place mostly online this year.

# How to apply?

Please submit a motivation letter and a CV with a photo to the e-mail address stated below. You can also include visual materials showing your work to date.

**Applications should be submitted to:**  
[summerschool@archatheatre.cz](mailto:summerschool@archatheatre.cz)

Applicants are encouraged to state their interest in participation until **20 June 2021**.

Applicants must complete their application until **4 July 2021**.

**Tuition fee:** 400€

The fee includes daily practical exercises, ateliers, presentations, study materials (including the access to the e-book by Jana Svobodová), lunch, refreshments, and tickets to the accompanying program at Archa Theatre.

In exceptional cases, participants can request further discount on the tuition.

**Note:**

There is a limited capacity for participation. Selection of participants will be announced by **13 July 2021**.



Photo from the performance *Those Who Speak for Themselves* (Archa Theatre / akabihrab)

# Here are some feedbacks from our participants



Photo from the performance 'Those Who Speak for Themselves' (Archa Theatre / Odebi Hebi)

*"A brilliant opportunity for any artist! Challenging and inspiring • lots of ideas to further develop current projects and ideas for new ones, I've gone back and gone straight into projects with excitement and determination. Met incredible artists working in Archa and participants of the summer school. Loved it, thanks so much for an inspirational two weeks."*

Fionnuala Kennedy, Theatre-maker, Northern Ireland

*"I am so happy for having had this experience, for working with a team of amazing people."*

Cristina Negucioiu, Actress, Romania/Berlin

*"Coming here taught me an entirely different approach to devised theatre. It's a calm environment, with no pressure, and allows freedom of creativity."*

Millie Done, Theatre-maker, UK

*"I would recommend this summer school to everyone that is interested in documentary and also political theatre. I think that this place helps to understand many things about that. Actually, to everyone who wants to break free from the classical form of theatre. Even if you don't want to work with site-specific theatre on community projects, it still helps to get an inspiration to be more creative, see more, listen."*

Linda Rudene, MA student in Latvian Academy of Culture, Latvia

*"I learned, I enjoyed myself, and I met awesome artists. What else can you ask for?"*

Cristina Cordero, Theatre-maker, Spain

*"Those magical 2 weeks in Prague was such a life-changer; I got to do what I love the most in a fully-equipped, professional theatre, devise a beautiful performance with some of the loveliest people and had the chance to learn from and befriend some of the most inspirational people I have ever encountered. It taught me that theatre has the power to change the world in small but powerful moments, and a step at a time, in time; it reaffirmed my belief in social-specific theatre and all its wonders. It gave me back my purpose and drive, which I will forever be thankful for!"*

Rebecca Goh, Theatre-maker, Singapore/UK

*"Memories for a lifetime, colleagues for every imaginable project and all under the facilitation of Archa Theatre who provided a school of challenges, nurturing and freedom. It was a phenomenal experience!!!"*

Noel Andrew Harron, Theatre-maker, Northern Ireland

*"It was very intense, creative and important two weeks! Full of reflection, discussions about theatre, disputes, cooperation, realising what suits me, and what is too far from me. Thank you all!"*

Karolina Pluta, Theatre pedagogue, Poland

*"The summer school at Archa conveys a lot of interesting information that led me to break down my mental barriers about what theatre is and what it could be. I now look at theatre in a completely different way. Working in such a diverse international group is a liberating challenge. Archa has shown me a kind of theatre that has the power to be socially and politically involved, and which should constantly cross its boundaries to achieve the desired liveliness. I started to perceive theatre as a driving force leading to human contact and change. A kind of theatre that inspires spectators to step out of their passivity and act."*

Magdelana Malinova, Theatre-maker, Czech Republic

# Main Ateliers

## The Viewpoints technique and textual sources of documentary theatre

The atelier will focus on fundamental reasons for stage action. This topic will be examined from two perspectives:

1. Perspective of physical presence on stage based on the Viewpoints technique
2. Perspective of deriving and using a text for an action

Through spatial improvisation and interviews, students will cultivate the ability of “extreme listening” as the basic impetus of artistic creation. This work will steer students to see their presence on stage from the position of the performer, the author, the dramaturge, and the viewer.

## Light as a space for action

This atelier focusing on the specific use of light in theatre will complement the atelier of The Viewpoints technique and textual sources of documentary theatre.

Pavel Kotlík introduces the principles of light design in the context of working with space, text, movement, and object. Each student will have the opportunity to get acquainted with the technical principles of light design, after which they will create their own lighting plan.

## Sound design for stage

The atelier is designed for both beginners and advanced learners who want to explore the field of audio engineering and sound design. In this atelier we will cover the physics of sound; microphone types, applications, and techniques; operation of mixing desk; typical PA connections; and basics of sound recording and sound design in digital audio workstations. At the end of the atelier all students will be able to set up a mixing desk with microphones and PA system, record any sound to computer and manipulate the recorded or live sound for theatrical use. Some level of music and physics knowledge can be helpful, but it is not required.

# Complementary Atelier

## Finding your textual material

In this complementary atelier we will exercise expanding the idea of creating text for experimental theatre. We will use the space, each other, our own movements, and objects in combination with improvised text. By using the surroundings to get inspired, to seek for impulses to create your text, you will be able to devise material for later use. Through this workshop you will strengthen competence in creativity and Lise Grimelund-Kjelsen will guide the group through exercises that will help the participants to find ideas for textual material. This is a physical workshop, so the participants must be prepared to move.



# Instructors of the Ateliers



**Jana Svobodová** is a theatre director, lecturer, the founder of the Archa.lab, and artistic director of the Akcent International Festival of Documentary Theatre. In her work, she focuses on productions that interconnect professional artists and representatives of specific social groups. Among others, she has collaborated with residents of South African townships, the hip hop community, recent immigrants to the Czech Republic, the Roma community, various communities in the USA, and others. Her productions have been presented at festivals in the Czech Republic and internationally. The performance *Ordinary People* she codirected with Wen Hui was presented at the main program of Festival D'Avignon 2019 and festival D'Automne in Paris 2019.



**Pavel Kotlík** is a light designer and light technician. He worked at Theatre Řeznická, Prague Chamber Ballet or Ponoc Theatre, and cooperated on projects of Min Tanaka, Jaro Viňarský, *Farma v jeskyni*, Teatr Novogo Fronta. Since 2011 he has collaborated with Archa Theatre on several projects directed by VerTeDance and by Jana Svobodová. In 2012 he won the Award for Light Design for VerTeDance performance *Lost and Found*. He has been dedicated to lighting since his youth, he passed smoothly from school to theatre, first as a theatre technician, therefore he refers to himself as a theatre maker rather than a light designer. In the professional community, he is known as a tireless creator of visual compositions on stage • only few can paint surfaces and accentuate details as he does.

# Instructors of the Ateliers



**Ladislav Štěrba** has started working in sound engineering in 2015 when he became part of the Café Potrvá sound crew. Since then, he has cooperated with many theatres and concert halls while taking care of live sound production for concerts and performances. At Villa Štvanice, Prague's significant cultural scene, Ladislav has worked as the head sound engineer and technical producer for two years. He has been cooperating with Archa Theater as a sound engineer responsible for foreign concerts and theatre performances since 2018. His music festival experience includes, for example, several years of sound engineering of the Mighty Sounds Festival main stage and at the International Jazz Goes to Town Festival. In 2016, together with his colleagues, Ladislav has founded Mr. Wombat sound recording studio. Since then he has recorded and mixed dozens of full-length and short music albums.



**Jan Sedláček** is a sound designer, audio engineer and musician. After completing BA (Hons) Music Technology at the University of Bedfordshire, and MA in Audio Production at the University of Westminster in London in 2014, Jan has returned to Prague to pursue his career in audio engineering and sound design. Since then, Jan has been collaborating with numerous respectable Czech cultural institutions, including Archa Theatre, Czech National Theatre, Barrandov Film Studios, Forum Karlin, Jatka78, besides many independent theatres, as well as dance, audio-visual arts, and music groups. Since 2018, Jan is a co-owner of Studio Mr. Wombat, a recording studio located at the heart of Prague.

# Instructors of the Ateliers

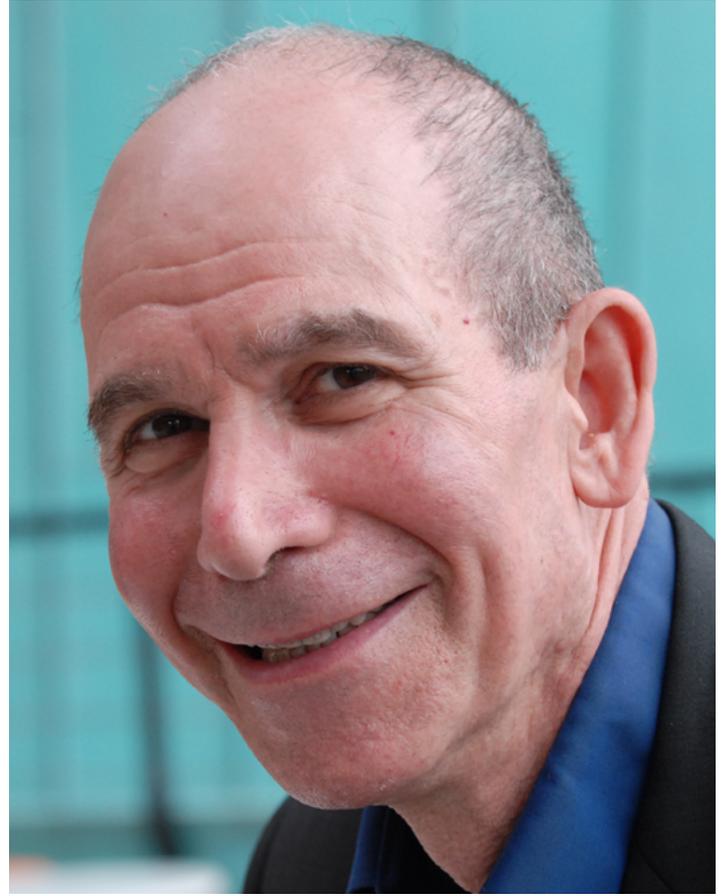


**Lise Grimelund-Kjelsen** is a performance artist and playwright based in Oslo, Norway. She is inspired by the dramaturgy of the space she is working with. She aims to create a poetic and playful theater that invites audience to join the experience. Since 2015 she has been working with her company Teater Leikhus. The company has produced ten performances touring mainly in Norway, but also in Prague. As a previous participant of the International Summer School on Theatre in Social Context, she had the chance to experience Jana Svobodova's working method first-hand, which she has frequently applied in her later practice.

# Experts of the Exclusive Presentations



**Lola Arias** is a writer, theatre and film director, and performer. She collaborates with people from different backgrounds (war veterans, former communists, Bulgarian children, etc.) in theatre, literature, music, film and art projects. Her productions play with the overlapping zones between reality and fiction. Since 2007, she develops her theatrical work in the field of documentary theatre. She also created the exhibition *Stunt Double* [2016], the durational performance *Audition for a Demonstration* [2014], and the site-specific project *Ways of walking with a book in the hand* [2017]. Her feature film *Theatre of War* [2018], starring the same protagonists as her theatre project *Minefield*, was selected for the 68th Forum of the Berlinale Film Festival. Together with Ulises Conti, she composes and plays music; and together with Stefan Kaegi, she developed the projects *Chácara Paraíso* [2007], *Airport Kids* [2008] and *Ciudades Paralelas* [2010], a festival of urban interventions. She published poetry, fiction and plays. Lola Arias' works for theatre have been performed at many festivals and venues all over the world.



**Robert Palmer** is an expert international consultant on cultural policy and strategy, and festivals/events. He started his career as a theatre director. He was Director of Culture and Cultural and National Heritage for the Council of Europe. Prior to this, Robert was Cultural Director for the City of Glasgow and Theatre and Dance Director of the Scottish Arts Council. He advises UNESCO, European Commission, United Cities and Local Governments (Agenda 21 for Culture), Eurocities, and different European cultural Institutes and networks. He was the Director of two European Capitals of Culture (Glasgow and Brussels) and has advised 15 other cities who have been awarded this prestigious cultural title. He recently worked on cultural projects in countries of the Middle East (Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Jordan, Palestine), and was commissioned to evaluate the role of culture in city resilience (part of the Rockefeller Foundation's 100 Resilient Cities initiative). He is a member of various artistic boards, including the Board of Archa Theatre, Prague.

# Experts of the Exclusive Presentations



**Henk Keizer** is a Dutch expert on site- and social-specific arts and a promoter of participative and collaborative art practices, especially in rural areas. Henk was the first director of Leeuwarden / Friesland 2018 (European Capital of Culture), managing director of the Treaty of Utrecht, the Oerol Festival and Dogtroep theatre company. As the director of the famous Dogtroep, he produced various projects all around the world. During his period, the Dogtroep focused on working in “living locations where social friction can be felt”. Such projects were created and performed for example in a prison in Bruges or the inland border crossing in the Passengers Terminal Amsterdam. Recently he initiated a new network called A.R.E.A.; Arts in Rural European Areas. The starting point for this project is the unacceptable fact that many people in our society -especially on the countryside- are unheard and unseen, a vision he shares with Archa Theatre. In 2021 he works with various artists to create new artistic work in the countryside.



**Pieter De Buysser** is a Dutch-speaking writer-director, who lives and works in Brussels. His novel *The Stonecutters* was published in Czech by Argo in June 2016, and he has written over 25 texts for theatre and performance. His work has been described as “a tribute to critical thought, humour, and the art of narration” (Cobra, Belgium). Besides writing for performance, theatre and film, he directs internationally acclaimed theatre productions like *Book Burning*, *Landscape with Skyproads*, *The Tip of the Tongue*, or *The Decoy*. His short films have received awards in numerous film festivals. Being highly aware of current social, political and human issues, he constantly reflects and questions our day-to-day presence. A coproduction with Archa Theatre, *The After Party* explores the legacy of Vaclav Havel on the backdrop of today's Europe. He has received the Emile Zola Prize, the “DwarseDenker” Trophy, and the “Kleine Marie Hartman-pen”. His shows are regularly invited to the most influential festivals throughout Europe. Currently he works on film projects.

# Experts of the Exclusive Presentations



**Ondřej Hrab** is the director of Archa Theatre. He graduated from the University of Economics in Prague, and in the following years he worked as a sociologist. Under the communist regime he was active in non-conformist cultural activities. He initiated and organised clandestine performances by foreign artists, including The Living Theatre and the Japanese dancer Min Tanaka. In 1991, he became the director of the E. F. Burian Theatre in Prague, transforming this traditional repertory theatre into a contemporary cultural centre under the name “Archa Theatre”. Since Archa Theatre’s opening in 1994, he has continued to introduce contemporary performing arts to the Czech Republic, bringing renowned international artists to the country, and also developing Archa’s own cross-genre artistic projects. He has also been an active member of various national and European councils and groups that work on the topic of cultural exchange and networks.



Photo from the International Summer School 2018 (Archa Theatre / Oskub Hrad)

# Archa Theatre, Prague, Czech Republic 22 August–5 September 2021

[www.archatheatre.cz](http://www.archatheatre.cz)

Please contact [summerschool@archatheatre.cz](mailto:summerschool@archatheatre.cz)  
for more information.

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