

TEESRI DUNIYA THEATRE

ANNUAL
REPORT
2021-22





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Still from the production of Psycho 6
Photo by Jeremy Cabrera

Cover image: Still from the production of Psycho 6
Photo by Jeremy Carbera

MISSION

Teesri Duniya Theatre is dedicated to producing politically relevant plays exploring life-affecting issues and creating theatrical styles based on the cultural experiences of diverse communities.

Our plays foster critical thinking, connect communities, and generate cross-cultural dialogue. Through our work we build bridges between indigenous and multicultural communities, allowing diversity and intercultural relations define us.

We give voice to underrepresented stories and tell them in ways that honour the sources they come from.



VALUES

REPRESENTATION

We are colour conscious, not colour blind. While colour-blind casting has its advantages, it ultimately promotes an assimilationist view. Presuming that the dominant culture is unified whole, visible minorities are denied their characteristics and social standing. We practice **multicultural casting** and respect the characters' cultural heritage and colour.

ENGAGEMENT

The community is at the heart of everything that we produce. We create and solicit works that deal with public forums, information sessions, and panel discussions prior to, during, and after the presentations. Our panels are comprised of experts with different viewpoints, setting the stage for a true debate.

QUALITY

Excellence in work is paramount, defined by our 6-E framework, the metrics for judging the success of a production: entertainment, education, enlightenment engagement, examination, and empowerment.

"Teesri Duniya Theatre's focus on nurturing relevant, meaningful work has given space for artists like [Oliver] Koomsatira to explore and create theatre based on their own stories."

- Rana Liu: communications officer CBC



YEAR AT A GLANCE

2021-2022 Season: Out of the Pandemic (?)

"Welcome back!"

A phrase uttered by Teesri Duniya staff again and again this June at the world premiere of Oliver Koomsatira's *Psycho 6*.

It has been a difficult two years for theatre. In March 2020 the world came to a stop. *Counter Offence* which was just kicking off its run at the Segal Centre had only two public performances before the theatres were shut down. COVID-19 hit the performance industry with a fury, but that didn't stop Rahul Varma and Teesri Duniya Theatre. While the world held its breath, we continued making art by way of publishing articles, gaining funding, hiring new staff, and organizing online events.

Zoom became the stage for our community outreach events such as our Fireworks Playwrights Development Program which was delivered online for the second consecutive year. Things began shifting back in person this May, however, with two staged readings Teesri produced as part of Acèss Asie's, Asian Heritage Month lineup.

Teesri Duniya Theatre remains committed to producing socially relevant plays and has done so yet again with the groundbreaking production of *Psycho 6*. This play explores the root cause of gangs and cycles of violence by examining how youth fall prey to criminal activity out of sheer necessity.

PERFORMANCE CALENDAR

***Never Swim Alone and Lady Sunrise* as part of Acèss Asie**

May 13 & 14, 2022

Directed by Olivia Woods and Alessandra Tom

Staged at Le Gesù

Fireworks Festival

May 24- June 3, 2022

Streamed online through Teesri's YouTube channel

Psycho 6

June 10-23, 2022

Directed by Liz Valdez

Staged at the MAI

Meet Me

September 29- October 8, 2022

Directed by Rosaruby Kagan

Staged at various points around the McGill Campus

PSYCHO 6

Psycho 6 has come a long way with Teesri Duniya Theatre. The show began its development in 2018 at Teesri's Fireworks Playwright Mentorship Showcase, and continued to grow from there with Oliver Koomsatira and Liz Valdez's commitment to the piece prompting them to secure grants in order to workshop the play with design elements. Both Koomsatira and Valdez have said that winning this grant was instrumental to the success of this June's production.

Creative Team:

Oliver Koomsatira (Playwright and Performer), Liz Valdez (Director), Alessandra Tom (Assistant Director), Masha Bashmakova (Production Manager), James Douglas (Technical Director), Elyse Quesnel (Stage Manager), Zoe Roux (Set and Lighting Designer), Nalo Soyini Bruce (Costume Designer), Christine Lee (Sound Design), Janis Kirshner (Publicity), Julie Phan (Communications).



A multidisciplinary theatrical production combining physical theatre, dance, and martial arts with rap, text, and strong visual elements. The play comprises of one actor, Oliver Koomsatira, a POC playwright/ actor/ performer, who took on all of the roles in the story, perhaps most significantly that of K, the protagonist and anti-hero. In this nuanced, tour-de-force performance, spectators must consider: lion or gazelle? how does hunter become prey? This resonant piece tells the life-affecting story of millions of youths across cultures and social classes.



Though we struggled to fill the house, this production was still a raving success. This success is highlighted in the quality of the conversations facilitated during the post show talk backs which contained in-depth and thoughtful comments from both the panelists and the audience members. The production has also gained five META award nominations.

OLIVER KOOMSATIRA

PLAYWRIGHT/PERFORMER

Though not new to the performance scene, actor and playwright Oliver Koomsatira made waves with his new original production of *Psycho 6!* Oliver has amassed over 180 film, theatre, and dance credits in both English and French, but really strode onto the Montreal theatre scene with his first play.

Oliver's storytelling lives in his body through the imagery and nuance of his movements. Naturally his training in martial arts and dance weave together a performer who truly brings his own to his craft.



LIZ VALDEZ

DIRECTOR



Director and producer Liz Valdez has been teaching and coaching theatre for over 20 years. During her tenure she has directed over 40 productions. In Teesri's recent history, Liz directed *Birthmark*, and consulted creatively on *Honour: Confessions of a Mumbai Courtesan*. This season Valdez was gracious enough to return to Teesri Duniya to direct *Psycho 6!*

In 2019 Valdez won the Montreal English Theatre Award for Outstanding Direction for her work on *Encore*, presented by Tableau D'Hôte Theatre.

Staged Readings

This year Teesri Duniya was asked to submit two staged readings as part of Acèss Asie's, Asian Heritage Month lineup. This annual festival focuses on highlighting artists of Asian heritage by providing a platform for the artists to deliver their stories authentically. The readings were a huge success, bringing Montreallers together and marking Teesri Duniya's return to in person programming.

Never Walk Alone

Written and performed by Julie Phan

Directed by Olivia Woods

Staged reading presented Friday, May 13th, 2022, 8:00pm

Never Walk Alone is a solo piece combining Julie's passions for writing and pole dancing. Exploring family dynamics, independence, legacy, isolation, burnout, and economics, the piece follows Honey and her trajectory from formerly-promising-child to bitter disappointment. This is an endurance pole dance piece that explores the relationship between physically holding oneself up on the pole and the necessity of holding truths and lies from our loved ones. (The staged reading was adapted to exclude the pole).

Lady Sunrise

Written by Marjorie Chan

Directed by Alessandra Tom

Staged reading presented Saturday, May 14th, 2022, 8:00pm

CAST:

Christine Lan, Summer Mahmud, Bonnie Mak, Sophie Gee, Li Li, Julie Tamiko Manning

"In the notes of this nuanced and timely text, Marjorie Chan states that 'the characters spend a lot of time alone in their lives. They talk. They talk a lot. They are perhaps not to be trusted, and are often not truthful. They perhaps need to just hear themselves.' This story asks audiences to listen deeply and in return, reminds us of the power of storytelling as a way of survival and asserting dignity. The Asian women in this piece are imperfect and funny and beautiful and desperate to survive in a capitalist society that's constantly trying to diminish them. It was an honour explore Marjorie Chan's writing, to be a part of a team that took a magnifying glass to the world of Lady Sunrise, and participate in a festival that celebrates Asian voices in all their forms."

- Alessandra Tom, Director

ALESSANDRA TOM

DIRECTOR



Alessandra Tom is a director, dramaturg and theatre artist based in TiohtiaG:ke/Montreal, Canada. Having trained at Concordia University, graduating with a BFA in Performance Creation and a minor in Human Rights, she is interested in exploring how theatre can be used for social change in both practice and product. Some of her recent directing credits include *Attempts in Flight* (Dai Bao Productions/Montreal Fringe), *Scout's Honour* (an audio play co-directed with Micheline Chevrier at Imago Theatre), and a reading of *Lady Sunrise* (Accès Asie Festival).

JULIE PHAN

PLAYWRIGHT/ PERFORMER

Julie Phan is a Hoklo- Vietnamese writer, actor and pole artist based in Toronto and Montreal and recent graduate from the National Theatre School of Canada in playwriting. She is best known for her work with fu-GEN asian theatre company (double bill, fearless).

Julie Phan was an integral part of Teesri Duniya Theatre through the pandemic, doing a full overhaul of the website and brand, and working to keep the company focused on its mandate through those troubling times.



FIREWORKS PLAYWRIGHTS' MENTORSHIP SHOWCASE



The Mentorship Program ran from August 8, 2021- April, 2022, with being performances presented on Zoom from May 24- June 3, 2022.

Developed by Teesri Duniya Theatre, the *Fireworks Playwrights' Development Program* is a unique intercultural theatre artist development program focused on playwriting and culturally sensitive dramaturgy. Now in its eighth year of operation, the scope of this program has grown in its ability to support the featured artists and showcase their talent to a broader audiences base.

Phase One featured a guided program where artists developed their skills as playwrights, broadened their ideas, and produced a workshop draft of a full play. They received group and one-to-one dramaturgy/ mentorship with established and celebrated dramaturgs Lib Spry and Lydie Dubuisson.

In the second phase of the program, artists with complete drafts worked with both emerging and professional practitioners (actors, directors, producers) to produce a publicly streamed reading.

These public readings were delivered online for the second consecutive year allowing the program to reach a record breaking number of community members. In all, this program employed two (2) seasoned dramaturges, eight (8) breakout playwrights, and over forty (40) actors of diverse backgrounds.

Watch the closing roundtable discussion here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NGMjKFL2Yg4>

FIREWORKS

PRODUCTIONS AND CASTS

And Then We Parted

Written by Caroline Lou

Directed by Sophie Gee

Cast:

Hilary Wheeler, Caroline
Mawhinney, Sarah Talbot,
Schubert Pierre-Louis, Julie
D'Entremont, Jeremy Cabrera

Tales of an Imaginary Search for the Workers

Written by Debdeep Chatterjee

Directed by Masha Bashmakova

Cast:

Julie Phan, Duy Nguyễn, Carolyn
Fe, Ambica Sharma, Jake Cohen,
Chimwemwe Miller, Zashaun
Saleem

Go Fish!

Written by Carolyn Fe

Directed by Lib Spry

Cast:

Jane Luj, Emilee Veluz, Nouella
Grimes, Linda Nourse, Alexandra
Valassis

Father

Written by Sangeeta Wylie

Directed by Summer Mahmud

Cast:

Sherry Duggal, Ivan Smith, Amitai
Marmorstein, Avery Marilyn

Death and Dolores

Written by Nathaniel Hanula-
James

Directed by Quinlan Green

Cast:

Chadia Kikondjo, Rochelle
Laplante, Sarah Nairne, Chole
Giddings, Kwaku Okyere

Essential Work

Written by Tiernan

Directed by Gabe Maharjan

Cast:

Riel Reddick-Stevens, Faïza
Boukaria, Vishmayaa Jey,
Jonathan Patterson, Johnny
Abilach, Gabrielle Banville

[N word] In Montréal

Written by Caren Hwitte-Phagget

Directed by Esi Callender

Cast:

Grégory Yves, Dakota Jamal
Wellman, Espoir Segbaya, Joy
Mwandemange, Charity Adzie,
Oprah Lemorin, Sarah Nairne

Heather White was one of 8
playwrights who developed and
workshopped a play over the
course of the Fireworks
Mentorship Program. Due to
unforeseen circumstances, her
play was not presented as a part
of the showcase.

Carolyn Fe

PLAYWRIGHT

Carolyn Fe is a theatre and music performer who has made waves recently in Teesri's *Fireworks Playwrights Mentorship Showcase*. Her play, *Go Fish*, was originally written as part of Tarragon Theatres educational program and was expanded upon under Teesri's dramaturgical mentorship.

Carolyn wrote this play to bring a realistic representation of older women of colour to the stage and in doing so, raises the voices of a demographic which has been continually pushed aside.



Nathaniel Hanula-James

PLAYWRIGHT



Nathaniel Hanula-James is a seasoned performer, new playwright, and long-time lover of musical theatre, drawing inspiration for his characters from the raw emotional power of the musical theatre genre. In his new original work *Death and Dolores*, Nathaniel questions many aspects of his own identity through the characters exposition.

He recalls having conversations on blackness and the nuances of bi-racial identities, as well as queerness and the roles that queer characters often take on in our media. This play expresses Nathaniel's desire to create stories in which queer characters can experience joy instead of being marked for suffering or tragic death, stories where queer characters can thrive and be their fullest selves without it having centre around them being queer.

Meet Me

The Live Action Theatre Project, in collaboration with Teesri Duniya Theatre, presented the world premiere of *Meet Me*, a branching narrative, audience-interactive theatre experience exploring dating, consent, and cancel culture in the post #metoo era.

Over the course of the show, audience members- equipped with a cellphone, follow one of three characters (Gemma, Qas, or Roslyn) through three distinct locations around the McGill campus.

Through the use of audio/ visual media components and audience interaction, *Meet Me* investigates a case of alleged sexual misconduct amongst faculty members, forcing the audience to ask: where do we draw the line?



Creative Team: Darragh Mondoux (Performer), Zeshaun Saleem (Performer), Leigh Ann Taylor (Performer), Rosaruby Kagan Glaberman (Director/Playwright), Julia Ainsworth (Playwright), Ahlam Gholami (Assistant Director), Meagan Schroder (Intimacy Director), Rahul Varma (Artistic Director), Chad Dembski (Production Manager), Adam Walters (Technical Director/ LX Design and Video), Elyse Quesnel (Stage Manager), Rachel-Anne Germinario (Set and Costume Designer), Leticia Chicoine (Assistant Set and Costume Designer), Rob Denton (Sound Designer), Claire Bourdin (Assistant Sound Designer), Nicole Goertzen (App Designer), Charlie Joubert (Graphic Designer), Nate Plong (Media Content Generator), Stephanie Merulla (Media/Digital Content Writer), Janis Kirshner (Publicist), Afreina Noor (Social Media Marketing), Mahin Sekendra (Office Administrator), Ellora Kothare (Psychology Intern), Cassandra James (Psychology Intern), Akinyi Olouch (Psychology Intern), Chalace Smoke (Psychology Intern), Marini Daniela Agop (Internship Coordinator).

JULIA AINSWORTH

PLAYWRIGHT/PRODUCER

Julia Ainsworth is a Montreal based theatre artist and arts educator whose focus lies on collaborative storytelling. She holds a BFA in theatre from York University and B. Ed from Queen's. She is the co-artistic director of the Live Action Theatre Project (2014-current).

Past projects include Wake up Sleeping Beauty! (LATP), My Corner (LATP), Unfit for Bears (Zeitgeist Theatre), P4W (Zeitgeist Theatre), Safer Ground (Teesri Duniya Theatre), Savage/Love (Zeitgeist Theatre), The Way (Summerworks Festival) and Vacancy (18 Hands).



ROSARUBY KAGAN

DIRECTOR/PLAYWRIGHT



Rosaruby Kagan Glaberman. M.A. RDT (she/her) is a Registered Drama Therapist, licensed Psychotherapist, Actor, Director, and Theatre Producer. She holds a BA in theatre from The New School University in New York City and a MA in Drama Therapy from Concordia University in Montreal.

She has been performing, writing, and producing independent theatre pieces internationally for over twenty years. Passionately invested in the therapeutic potential of embodied art forms, she has her own private practice and facilitates specialized therapeutic workshops. She is the co-creator of The Live Action Theatre Project a theatre collective focused on audience interaction and exploring approaches to co-constructing storytelling.

The New Office



Teesri Duniya has moved locations! As of September 15th, we are no longer at 460 St. Catherine. Our new offices (yes, plural!) are located at 251 av Des Pins in the Cité des Hospitalières building. The former nunnery, now partially owned and operated by la Ville de Montréal, is being rented out to non-profit companies as the city decides the future of this historic building. Teesri Duniya has been provided with the bureaux accordéon offices, a pair of inter-connected suites which allow AD Rahul Varma to have his own private office space, while the team works together right next door!

This location also provides Teesri with access to three distinct rehearsal spaces, available to book through the Cité's online booking system. We have already made use of the studios renting them out to AUTS to run auditions for their upcoming production of *Hair*, as well as hosting our *Artist Gathering for Mahsa Amini* where we facilitated conversations about the ongoing violence and oppression being carried out by the Iranian Regime with members of Montréal's Iranian community.



PRINCIPLE DONORS

Teesri Duniya Theatre would like to thank all of the people and organizations that make our important work possible.



TEAM MEMBERS



Rahul Varma
Artistic Director



Afreina Noor
Communications Consultant



Ambica Sharma
Artist in Residence



BROOKLYN MELNYK
General Manager



Prerna Nehta
Admin and Creative Support



Mahin Sekendra
Production Administrator



Sean Ryan
Admin and creative support

MEDIA REVIEWS 2022

PSYCHO 6

May 24- Astuces de Filles :

astucesdefilles.fr/2022/05/24/psycho-6-obtient-sa-premiere-mondiale-au-teesri-duniya-theatre-en-juin/

May 27- Qui Fait Quoi:

www.qfq.com/article&ID=112912

May 30- Global News events:

globalnews.ca/event/8893193/psycho-6-presented-by-teesri-duniya-theatre/

June 4- The Montrealer:

themontrealeronline.com/2022/06/psycho-6-june-10-23-2022/

June 6- Global News Morning events video with Oliver:

globalnews.ca/video/8899128/community-events-arts-interculturels-2

June 8- Westmount Magazine interview with Oliver by Irwin Rapoport:

www.westmountmag.ca/play-delves-into-what-drives-an-individual-to-crime/

June 8- CBC.ca interview with Rahul and Oliver by Rana Lui:

www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/community/teesri-duniya-theatre-1.6481644

June 8- CBC News interview with Oliver by Sudha Krishnan:

www.cbc.ca/player/play/2041525315946/ (minute 20:12 to 24:44)

June 11-13- CBC TV Our Montreal interview with Rahul and Ann Lambert by Sonali

Karnick: www.cbc.ca/player/play/2042402883879/ (minute 26:34)

June 21- Montreal Rampage review by Hannah Wan:

montrealrampage.com/psycho-6-the-sweet-lie-that-the-blame-is-always-on-the-others/

MEET ME

September 30- Jim Burke Funhouse Theatre:

twitter.com/FunhouseTheatre/status/1575881841965309959

September 30- Pat Donnelly @patstagepage:

twitter.com/patstagepage/status/1575964326350962704

October 4- The McGill Tribune review by Dana Prather:

www.mcgilltribune.com/a-e/meet-me-provokes-audience-reflection-through-interactive-theatre-10042022/

October 7- CJAD, Sarah's long weekend list Oct. 7-10 by Sarah Deshaies:

www.iheartradio.ca/virginradio/montreal/trending/sarah-s-long-weekend-list-october-7-10-1.18606698 (on air on the Andrew Carter Show)

IN THE NEWS

Essays and interviews by Rahul Varma

Aug 1, 2022 - **Trial! Not an Apology**

<https://montrealserai.com/news/>

July 22, 2021 - **Whitewashed: Canada is shackled by its history of denial**

<https://rabble.ca/education/whitewashed-canada-shackled-its-history-denial/>

July 7, 2021 - **“Islamophobia & Racism cannot be defeated without dismantling colonial White Supremacy”**

Rahul Varma, Summer Mahmud, Commentary Montreal Serai

May 25, 2021 - **Interview of Rahul Varma, by Anouck Carsignol, researcher, CERIAS (UQAM), Montreal**

SAMAJ, South Asian Multidisciplinary Academic Journal,

<https://journals.openedition.org/samaj/>

May 25, 2021 - **“Change the World One Play at a Time”: Playwright and Activist Rahul Varma on Socially-engaged, Diasporic Theatre in Canada**

<https://journals.openedition.org/samaj/7632>

April 7, 2021 - **“Miss Portrayal of Asians promotes Racism”**

Rahul Varma, Summer Mahmud, Opinion, Rabble.ca

Nov 25, 2020 - **“36th Anniversary of the Bhopal Disaster: the pandemic demands the dismantling of a system that produces disasters and inequalities**

Commentary, Alternatives International