

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

**22 August – 4 September 2022**

**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.

## 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

- **Jana Svobodová:** Textual sources and the Viewpoints technique in documentary theatre
- **Pavel Kotlík:** Light as a space for action
- **Ladislav Štěřba & Jan Sedláček:** Sound design for stage
- **Martin Krupa:** Moving image for stage

## Complementary atelier

- **Lise Grimelund-Kjelsen:** Finding your textual material

## Roundtable

- **Merve Mutafoğlu:** Socially engaged theatre in Turkey



# Exclusive presentations

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

- **Henk Keizer:** Creating site- and social-specific art
- **Pieter De Buysser:** Why the oak tree doesn't write
- **Ása Richardsdóttir:** IETM and its role in international collaboration
- **Ondřej Hrab:** Theatre and sociology, Historical roots of social-specific theatre

# Closing discussion:

Reflections on the process of the summer school and role of social-specific theatre practice, moderated by **Robert Palmer**

# Course structure

The summer school will start with the performance *Bark Beetle*, created by Amálie Poledníčková, one of the students of the previous summer school. In the first part of the school, students will have the chance to participate in one of the ateliers focusing on the Viewpoints/text/light, sound design, and video. After this period, participants will form independent creative groups. These groups will work on a short performance that they will present at the 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 the presentations given by the international experts, the complementary atelier, the roundtable. At the end of the school, Robert Palmer will moderate an open discussion involving Jana Svobodová, the professional team, the participants, and the audience, focusing on the role of the summer school and the experience of those were involved. After the summer school, participants will have access to an e-book which will serve as a supportive material based on creation of social-specific theatre.

# 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 must complete their application until **14 June 2022.**

**Tuition fee:** 600€

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 the Archa Theatre.

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

**Note:**

There is a limited capacity for participation. Selection of participants will be announced by **22 June 2022.**



# Here are some feedbacks from our participants



*“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

*“What I really liked about the summer school is the diversity of the materials we studied. I also really enjoyed being in contact with other artists during the talks. The amount we learned on very specific fields was very big and efficient.”*

Elisabeth Woronoff, Director and actress, Belgium

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

Cristina Negucioiu, Actress, Romania/Germany

*“In the summer school, I improved my argumentative, listening and teamwork skills while attending workshops and making the performance. I learned more about myself as an individual and as an artist. Also learning the technical stuff from the beginning helps me now to see the bigger picture of the whole creative process and to find more ways to express myself in the environment I am in.”*

Linda Šterna, student in Latvian Academy of Culture

*“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 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

*“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

*“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.”*

Magdalena Malinova, Theatre-maker,  
Czech Republic

# Main Ateliers

## Textual sources and the Viewpoints technique in 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 Textual sources and the Viewpoints technique in 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.

## Moving image for stage

This atelier will focus on experimental methods of using moving image in live performance. We will proceed from recording to processing and presentation of video on stage. We will study multiscreen projection, the materiality of analogue film, dia projection combined with the digital one; and try to find new ways to use these methods while working with space and movement. The workshop

will start with “found footage material” to discover working with analogue media. We will use aniline and oil colours, film, lenses, digital print, 16 mm projection, slide projectors, and so on. Then we will proceed to experimenting with the interactivity between light and video. The aim of this atelier is to broaden students’ multimedia knowledge focusing on what they consider useful for their creative work.

# 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.

# Roundtable

## Socially engaged theatre in Turkey

In this roundtable, Merve Mutafoğlu will briefly talk about how Turkish theatre has been shaped in the historical and political context. She will discuss the traditional and modern influences on socially engaged theatre, presenting major examples from Turkish theatre scene. This short presentation is aimed to serve as a kick starter for a dialogue about the situation of social-specific theatre in the countries of the participants. The presentation is co-created with Çiğdem Erdöl, M.A. student in Theatre Criticism and Dramaturgy in Istanbul University.

# Instructors of the Main Ateliers



**Jana Svobodová** is a theatre director and lecturer, the artistic director of the Akcent – International Festival of Documentary Theatre, and the founder of the International Summer School on Theatre in Social Context. 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.

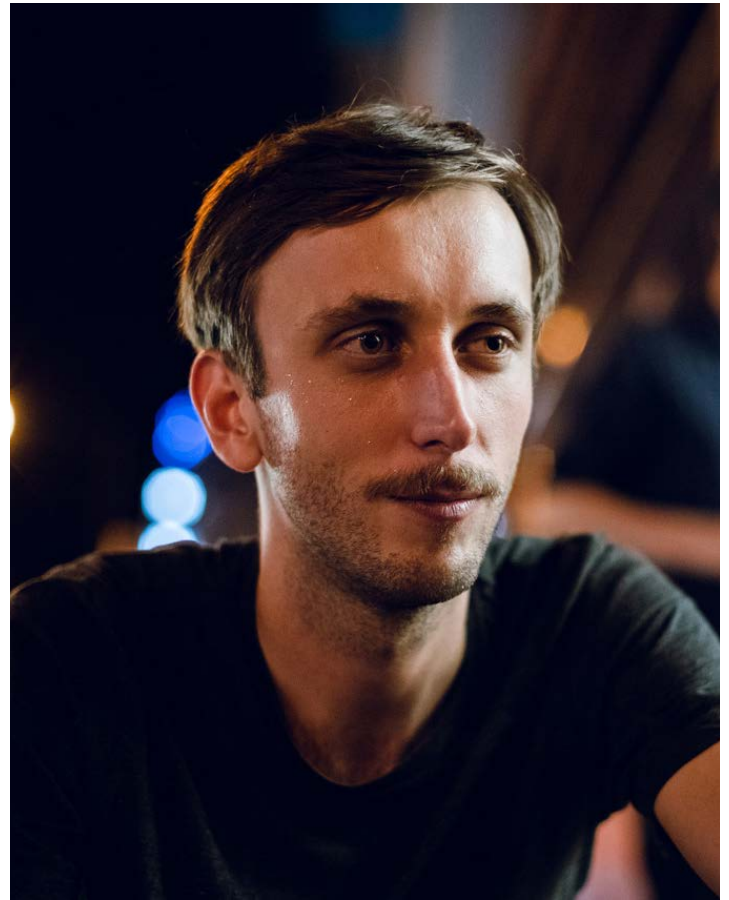


**Pavel Kotlík** is a light designer and light technician. He worked at Theatre Řeznická, Prague Chamber Ballet or Ponoc Theatre, and cooperated on projects of Min Tanaka, Jaro Viňarský, Farma v jeskyni, Teatr Novogo Fronta. Since 2011 he has collaborated with Archa Theatre on several projects directed 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 Main 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 Main Ateliers



**Martin Krupa** is a Prague-based video artist. In his work, he combines digital and 16 mm film moving images. He usually focuses on everyday situations in his videos and likes to play with perspective, speed, and loops. He likes to create an uncertainty of viewing and manipulates narratives in his work. He uses visual materials, besides 16 mm film and slide film. He loves the interactivity of video and light and experiments with electronics. Martin is interested in video installations and site-specific moving images. He has collaborated with light designer Michal Hör Horáček at several theatre, dance, and light projects. He is a Ph.D. candidate in visual communication.



# Instructors of the Complementary Atelier & Roundtable

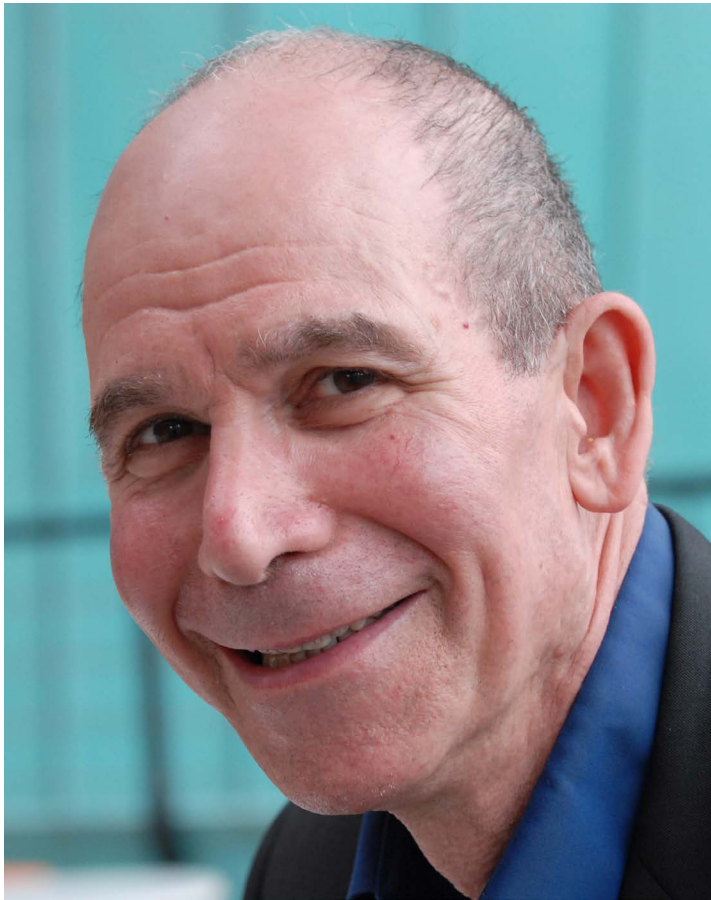


**Lise Grimelund-Kjelsen** is a performance artist and playwright based in Oslo, Norway. She is inspired by the dramaturgy of the space she is working with. She aims to create a poetic and playful theater that invites audience to join the experience. Since 2015 she has been working with her company Teater 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.



**Merve Mutafoğlu** is a psychologist and performing arts coordinator based in Istanbul, Turkey. She completed her B.A. in Psychology and M.A. in Psychological Sciences at Boğaziçi University, during which she specialized in autobiographical memory and its relation to culture, self, gender identity, language and sightedness. She is currently pursuing a second master's degree in Clinical Psychology at Yeditepe University. She is also involved in contemporary and social-specific theatre and has worked in various theatre companies, festivals and cultural institutes. She is the coordinator of the International Summer School on Theatre in Social Context and has been collaborating with the Archa Theatre since 2016 on various projects.

# Experts of the Exclusive Presentations



**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.



**Ása Richardsdóttir** is the secretary general of IETM – the largest international network in the performing arts and the chair the consortium of Perform Europe. Ása has led a versatile career in the performing arts, culture, academia, banking, politics, and media. She was a television reporter at RÚV Iceland, founder of theatre Kaffileikhusid, executive director of Iceland Dance Company, president of Performing Arts Iceland, project leader of ICE HOT Reykjavík Nordic Dance Platform and Wilderness dance, founder of keðja dance network, and producer and leader of various artistic projects and international collaboration initiatives for the last 25 years. Ása has been politically active, served as city councillor 2014–2018 for the Icelandic Social Democratic Party, and has been member and chair of several boards in politics, finance, and arts. She is the co-author of the guide for artists and producers *It Starts with a Conversation*.

# 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 on the island Terschelling, and Dogtroep theatre company. He produced various projects all around the world. Recently he initiated a new network called A.R.E.A.; Arts in Rural European Areas. Since 2021 he is the project leader of Kunstneren Tæt På (The Artist Close by), working with artists from all disciplines in 5 municipalities in Jutland/ Denmark. The project does what its name says: bringing artists to small rural communities in order to create new contemporary art with inhabitants based on their history, crafts, and skills to support resilient rural communities. Henk lives in Denmark.



**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 Skiproads*, *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.



## Archa Theatre, Prague, Czech Republic 22 August – 4 September 2022

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

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

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## See the video

<https://youtu.be/PVXnUdEecFg>

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