

KINDLING 2017

"I loved that production but I CAN'T program it at my theater!"

"I'm so inspired by that work but I CAN'T create anything like that in my company!"

Unpacking CAN'T.

Moving from the impossible to the potential. Addressing challenges and overcoming barriers.

"Impossible is just a big word thrown around by small [people] who find it easier to live in the world they've been given than to explore the power they have to change it.

Impossible is not a fact. It's an opinion.

Impossible is not a declaration. It's a dare.

Impossible is potential.

Impossible is temporary.

Impossible is nothing." – Muhammed Ali

In producing and programming work for young audiences, we are all confronted with practical realities—audiences, budgets, expectations, facilities, etc.—that impact our decisions and perhaps deter us from taking our work to the next level. Kindling 2017 invites delegates and community members to share their challenges and obstacles, with the goal of finding and embracing solutions for changing IMPOSSIBLE to POTENTIAL. Thought leaders from our field will share their perspectives, experiences, and resources, while Showcasing and Spotighting performances will be brought into the conversation as an additional spark for ideas and inspiration.

Kindling 2017 explores current conversations about creating and presenting performing arts from these perspectives:

- Performing Arts For the Very Young
- Autism-Friendly /Relaxed Performances
- Racial and Cultural Diversity
- Exploring Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity
- Considering Cultural Contexts in the Creative Process/Creative Collaboration

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 18

2:15 - 2:45 PM - Concourse Hotel – Grand Ballroom

KEYNOTE PRESENTATION: Unpacking CAN'T

Dasha Kelly, Founder, Still Waters Collective (United States)

"In this room, you have the privilege to use this network, your art, your gift, and your magic as artists to push the conversation." –Dasha Kelly

Dasha Kelly provides a starting context for Kindling conversations. She unpacks her ideas about why we think we "can't" and why she thinks it's our responsibility to make sure that we "do."

Milwaukee's 2016 Artist of the Year, Dasha founded the Still Waters Collective, an arts education and community-building initiative that uses creative writing and spoken word as tools for building leadership and shaping self-esteem. In addition to writing for several national, regional, and local magazines, she has published two collections of poems, essays, and short stories; four full-length spoken word recordings; a poetry chapbook; and two novels including her latest, *Almost Crimson* (Curbside Splendor).

2:45 - 3:45 PM - Concourse Hotel – Grand Ballroom

KINDLING Context & Overview on Unpacking CAN'T

Moderated by Boomer Stacey, Executive Director, IPAY

Thought Leaders: Rhona Matheson, Star Catchers (Scotland); Eilidh MacAskill, Gendersaurus Rex (Scotland); Alice McGrath, Red Bridge Arts (Scotland); Jonathan Shmidt Chapman, Lincoln Center Education (United States); David Brown, The PaperBoats (Australia); Dasha Kelly, Still Waters Collective (United States)

Panelists share their insights into the barriers and challenges we need to overcome in order to move past "impossible" towards potential, change, and leadership. Questions and ideas that arise during this session will serve as a springboard for discussions throughout the week; they are also intended to keep the conversation going in our community beyond Showcase and to move us to act on our ideas. Showcase delegates are encouraged to ask questions and share their own perspectives.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 19

10:15 - 11:45 AM - Concourse Hotel - University Room

EXPLORING CULTURAL CONTEXTS THROUGH COLLABORATIVE CREATIVE

PROCESS: Partners, Players and PaperBoats

Thought Leaders: David Brown, The PaperBoats (Australia); Dr. Brant Pope, University of Texas, Dept. of Theater and Dance (United States); Dr Megan Alritz, University of Texas, Dept. of Theater and Dance (United States); Sam Provenzano, theater-maker/MFA student, University of Texas (United States); Lina Chambers, theatre-maker/MFA Student, University of Texas (United States), Ally Tufenkjian, theater-maker/MFA student, University of Texas (United States); Naomi Edwards, Artistic Director, Patch Theatre Company (Australia)

The PaperBoats is an international partnership platform of performance-makers who are pioneering new ways of connecting and creating. The PaperBoats directors have designed The TuTwo Shows PROJECT as a 5-year, "proof-of-concept" venture between international communities, which will unravel the possibilities and potentials of the platform. The project will generate performances for children across a number of international communities, prompted by a common activating idea. The partnership communities will share their ideas, practices, and content with each other so that outcomes from one community can be adapted, reconfigured, re-mixed, or used to inspire new material in the other communities.

The project has been launched with communities of artists from Adelaide, South Australia; Austin, Texas; and Wellington, New Zealand. We are excited by what is emerging and see opportunities for new ways of working with producers, presenters, universities, agents, educators, parents, children, and communities to create a diverse array of partnerships, performances, and creative exchanges.

The questions that are opening up for us are:

- What explosion of possibility happens when performance-makers connect with one another across cultures and communities in a whole range of ways, around performance-making for children?
- How does The PaperBoats model support our desire for diversity, inclusion and equity?

Through the lens of these questions, The PaperBoats partners from Australia and the United States will describe the origins and aspirations of the platform, while analyzing the early outcomes and possibilities.

10:15 - 11:45 AM - Concourse Hotel - Assembly Room

UNPACKING CAN'T - PART ONE

Thought Leaders: Dasha Kelly and Kima Hamilton, Still Waters Collective (United States)

As artists and presenters, we broker imagination: a profound and prolific resource. But with so many rich programming and partnership opportunities, why do so many of us find ourselves trapped behind "CAN'T?" While the reasons may seem simple, their roots and resolutions can be prickly and complex. In this two-part session, we will discuss the common and confounding dynamics that can hold us back from creating and presenting robust, diverse, and culturally competent work. The conversation will also seek out CAN'T-shattering solutions.

Kima Hamilton and Dasha Kelly Hamilton are artists, performers, and creative change agents with nearly three decades of combined experience. Individually and as a team, they bring their knowledge and insights to advance conversations about equity, cultural competence, social justice, and creativity.

10:15 - 11:45 AM - Concourse Hotel - Room 638 - 6th Floor

INTRO TO PUSH - Exploring Gender Identity and Sexuality in Theater and Dance for Young Audiences

Thought Leaders: Eilidh MacAskill, Gendersaurus Rex / PUSH project leader on Gender Identity (Scotland)

How can we as artists and presenters push ourselves and the field to create and present relevant, respectful, engaging work for young people that explores gender and sexual identity? (Should we even be doing this?) How can we overcome barriers presenting work that might be seen as challenging, given the political climate, geographic location, religious or cultural beliefs, etc. in our communities?

In this session, Eilidh MacAskill will discuss her recent research project, Gendersaurus Rex, which has been supported by Imagine in Scotland. She has been working with theater makers and other creative artists to explore ideas about gender, sexuality, queerness and difference and how these intersect (or don't) with TYA practices. Eilidh will share some of the fears, difficulties, opportunities, and approaches that she and other artists have encountered in this area. While the main focus of this session is gender identity, it is meant to prompt a wider conversation about our purpose and responsibility in making work for young audiences.

Eilidh MacAskill is a Glasgow-based artist who creates and performs original works for both children and adults. Experimental and humorous, her work draws on a range of performance styles and media to explore our lives as human animals. She is Artistic Director of Fish And Game, and a Research Artist with Imagine's Gendersaurus Rex project.

10:15 - 11:45 AM - Concourse Hotel - Room 629 - 6th Floor

STANDING AT THE EDGE: Addressing Children's Mental Health through Performing Arts Experiences

Facilitated by Alice McGrath, Creative Director, Red Bridge Arts (Scotland)

The mental health of children and young people is increasingly becoming an area of concern and political debate. What role do the performing arts have in the debate? Is it taboo to address issues of mental health, of death, suicide and family breakdown in theater for children? Really good performances and stories for children can open up a door for children to reflect on their lives, to face their fears, and to engage in a dialogue. Alice McGrath, producer of *Titus* (2015 Victor Award winner), shares her experiences, passions, and wishes about how we talk with children and young people about mental health and the role that artists, producers and presenters can play.

Alice McGrath is an experienced arts producer, facilitator and collaborator who works with artists in the development, creation, and presentation of performing arts projects. In 2015 Alice set up her company, Red Bridge Arts, to provide a supportive structure to stimulate and sustain artists' development and practice. The company's mission is to nourish creativity and encourage curiosity.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 20

1:45 – 3:15 PM – Overture Center – Rotunda Studio
PERFORMANCES FOR THE VERY YOUNG - Babies, Toddlers and Young Children (ages 0 to 5)
Thought Leader: Rhona Matheson, Starcatchers (Scotland)

Performances for the Very Young is still a fledgling field. While there are companies who have been making theater for this audience for decades, for many of us this is a new area; we are still navigating the challenges and opportunities that come with making and presenting work for and with this age group.

Starcatchers has been pioneering approaches to engaging with and making work for the 0-5 age group since 2006. Their 10-year journey of exploration has been a catalyst for developing Performances for the Very Young; they now work with the arts, education, health, and social care communities, sharing performances and Early Years arts programs to support Scotland's youngest and often most vulnerable children.

This Kindling discussion will consider the broad range of challenges and questions we face as we work toward developing Performances for the Very Young in our own communities:

- Why should presenters be interested in this work? (especially considering the financial challenges!)
- As an artist, how do you approach making this work?
- How do you engage with this audience?
- How can we create a network of artists, companies, venues, and presenters who are interested in the development of this field in North America?

1:45 - 3:15 PM - Concourse Hotel - University Room
KITCHEN TABLE SESSION - How Do YOU Unpack CAN'T? Perspective, Success Stories and Things We Are Trying
Facilitated by Erwin Maas, Rye Fellows Director (The Netherlands/United States) with the Rye Fellows

Kitchen Table sessions are an opportunity to engage in open dialogue, share your ideas, and hear from your colleagues from around the world. The conversation will focus on concerns relevant to our Rye Fellows and their peers: what do those entering our field as professionals see as potential challenges or barriers in making, producing, presenting, and supporting performing arts for young people? Participants at this kitchen table are encouraged to ask questions and share their stories: both successes and best practices, as well as lessons learned from things you tried that may not have been completely successful.

1:45 - 3:15 PM - Concourse Hotel - Room 638 - 6th Floor
THE FULL SPECTRUM: Programming for Audiences with Autism and Other Special Needs
Thought Leader: Jonathan Shmidt Chapman, Producer of Family Programming, Lincoln Center (United States)

Across the globe, artists and companies are creating theater experiences specifically for audiences with special needs who may have felt unwelcome in a theater venue. What are the most innovative trends in theater for audiences with special needs? What impact do these performances have on audiences and their communities? What does it mean to be a truly inclusive performing arts venue? Videos and case studies will help guide group discussion and sharing of best practices.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 21

10:45 - 12:15 AM - Concourse Hotel - University Room
KITCHEN TABLE SESSION - From Impossible to Potential: Taking Action Beyond Showcase
Facilitated by the IPAY Programming Committee

Sharing resources and best practices and seeking inspiration from colleagues in our field is extremely valuable. But what happens when we all leave Showcase, return to work, and find ourselves confronting the same barriers and challenges that were there before we left? How do we collectively

create an action plan, set goals for ourselves and our field, and continue the conversation beyond Showcase? Share your ideas for establishing targets, and be part of the movement forward.

(Depending upon the number of participants interested in this topic, more than one Kitchen Table may be offered at this time so that everyone has an opportunity to fully participate.)

10:45 - 12:15 AM - Concourse Hotel – Rotunda Studio
CRITICAL RESPONSE SESSION - *Outside* by Roseneath Theatre
Facilitated by Shelley Quiala, VP of Arts Education and Community Engagement, Ordway Center of Performing Arts (USA), with Andrew Lamb, Artistic Director, Roseneath Theatre (Canada)

Originally created by Dance Exchange (United States) as a facilitation process for informing work-in-progress, Critical Response Process (CRP) encourages responders to pay close attention to a particular piece of art, text, or a performance. Guided by a facilitator, a group responds to five questions that create an environment in which judgment is deferred and participants reflect on their personal reactions to a work's intent.

Join trained CRP facilitator Shelley Quiala in unpacking the production *Outside* by Roseneath Theatre. Members of the company will be on hand to listen and respond to the conversation, offering insights into how and why the production was created; to share audience reactions from the show's recent tour; and to explain how the work is supported by educational material and community agencies.

10:45 - 12:15 AM - Concourse Hotel – Assembly Room
UNPACKING CAN'T - PART TWO
Thought Leaders: Dasha Kelly and Kima Hamilton – Still Waters Collective (United States)

A continuation of the UNPACKING CAN'T conversation with Dasha and Kima. You don't need to have attended PART A to join the discussion. (See Thursday, January 19 Kindling schedule for a description of the PART A session.)

5:00 - 6:00 PM - Concourse Hotel - Assembly Room
REFLECTION

IPAY aspires to evolve beyond Showcase: to continue conversations, to fuel discussion and development, and to further support the field throughout the year. IPAY also recognizes a need for professional development opportunities beyond the scope of the current Kindling framework. This session offers an opportunity to discuss what you value about Showcase, to share your thoughts on continuing the conversations, to identify your professional development needs, and to inform IPAY's efforts to evolve, develop, and grow.