

NEW NEIGHBOR ARTS ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROJECT -- LEAD ARTISTS

New Neighbor Arts Entrepreneurship (August 2019 to January 2020) is a pilot initiative in Chicago, IL USA designed to help new immigrants and refugees integrate successfully into American society and find a place for themselves in their new neighborhoods through arts careers and entrepreneurship. The following Lead Artists serve as peer mentors and facilitate workshops with partner community organizations. This six-month pilot project is sponsored by the U.S. Department of State – Alumni TIES.



Héctor Alvarez, MA, is an actor, director, teaching artist and theater critic from Spain. His Chicago theater credits include *Self-Accusation* by Peter Handke (co-director), *Malaga (Or the Inner Ear)* by Lukas Bärfuss (co-director), *Yerma* by Federico Garcia Lorca (translator, ensemble), *The Ghoul Exhibition* (one man show), *Macbeth (Malcolm)*, all at Theatre Y, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (assistant director) at Chicago Shakespeare Theater. He has studied non-Western theater traditions in China, Japan and Indonesia, and in 2008 received a Watson Fellowship to research community-based performance in Latin America. Héctor holds an MA in literature from University College London (UK), and a BA in theater and international studies from Macalester College (USA).



Silvia Diaz Brown is a Mexican/American choreographer, dancer, acroyogi and yoga instructor. Based in Chicago since 2008 she is the founder of Sildance/Acrodanza ensemble. Silvia holds a BFA in Dance from Universidad de las Américas Puebla (UDLAP), Mexico and an MFA in Theatre/Movement from York University, Canada. For the last 14 years, her interdisciplinary work has been presented at diverse venues and festivals in Spain, India, Mexico, Canada, and the USA. She was a recipient of the 2019 Links Hall COMMISSION artist Fellowship as well as a 2019 awardee of DCASE CityArtsProgram-City of Chicago to support the creation-presentation of her work *Leyendas y Realidades*, premiered this June. She has also been awarded-supported for previous works by Cliff Dwellers Arts Foundation, Links Hall, SeeChicagoDance; among other organizations-presenters. This fall her work *Leyedas* will be presented at Malcolm X college for Hispanic Heritage Month and in the spring she will tour *Leyendas y Realidades* to Mexico and Cuba. Silvia is also very excited to be part of the Lead Artists group for the New Neighbor Arts Entrepreneurship program lead by Shawn Lent to inspire newly-arrived refugees and immigrants in Chicago to pursue arts careers. Her goal as artist is to discover and articulate deep strengths and insights that inspire audiences to feel empowered in their identities and futures.



Maximiliano Illanes Campetella, tenor, is from Patagonia, Argentina. With the Mediterranean Opera Festival in Caltagirone, Sicily, Mr. Illanes Campetella has sung Don José (*Carmen*), Ruggero (*La Rondine*), Pinkerton (*Madama Butterfly*) and Don Curzio (*Le nozze di Figaro*). He has sung Judge Danforth (*The Crucible*) with Chicago Summer Opera, and Tamino (*Die Zauberflöte*) and Don Curzio (*Le nozze di Figaro*) with Manhattan Opera Studio Summer Festival. In Buenos Aires he has sung Tamino (*Die Zauberflöte*) and Ramiro (*La Cenerentola*). He is engaged by "Music on Site" in Wichita, Kansas to sing Rinuccio (*Gianni Schicchi*) in December, 2019. Since 2016 Mr. Illanes Campetella has been a voice student of W. Stephen Smith. His coaches have included Richard Boldrey, Kenneth Smith, Karina Kontorovich and Carol Smith. This summer he worked with Aprile Millo in a masterclass in Busseto, Italy. In his home country of Argentina, Mr. Illanes Campetella has been a member of the National Polyphonic Choir in collaboration with the National Symphony Orchestra. For several years he was a choir member in Juventus Lyrica Opera Company. His undergraduate studies were at the U.N.A., University of the Arts in Buenos Aires, with a Major in Voice and Choral Conducting.



Sami Ismat is a performance-maker, director and teaching artist whose work takes interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary forms. Conceiving credits include: *Sitting in Our Lap & Plucking Our Beard* (a street performance), *Picnic Summit* (Collaboraction's Encounter), *Ghosts of Freedom* (Greenhouse Theatre: Trellis Residency), and *Frivolous Future* (Art Institute of Chicago: Associates Night). Collaborations include: *In Progress: New Normal* a project by Jonas Becker (MCA Chicago), *Atlas Unlimited* a project by Karthik Pandian and Andros Zins-Browne (Logan Center Exhibitions), *On a Shore Rested a Body* with Armin Hayrapetian and Divyamaan Sahoo (New Blood at Links Hall). As a teaching artist Sami taught with Northlight Theatre, and at Stevenson High School, and is currently a teaching assistant at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago besides leading workshops & artists talks at Harvard University and Columbia College Chicago. Sami also previously worked as assistant director at the Goodman Theater and Trap Door Theatre. Sami is originally from Damascus, Syria and is proud to say that he made it to this very moment as a refugee, because of all those who supported when he knocked on the door.



Chih-Hsien Lin, a native Taiwanese, is a dancer, movement philosopher and creator, and clinical counselor specialized in dance/movement therapy and creative arts approaches, currently works at a group psychotherapy private practice in Andersonville. Over the arc of her career both artistically and clinically, she has worked extensively with a diverse population, including survivors of domestic violence, childhood abuse, and trauma; anxiety; depression; cultural adjustment; self-worth; children with various needs; artists of different cultural and discipline backgrounds; artistic engagement of a variety of scales, intentions, and development. As an immigrant artist, Chih-Hsien works passionately with an integrative and authentic sense of self and movement directions. She forges continuous collaborations into inclusive embodiment and emotional experiences in her own being and dance making; her movement language reflects a rich cultural bearing from traditional Asian ethnic dances and martial arts to a vast array of somatic modern integrations. She creates circular worlds of kinesthesia, juxtaposition, and reflection, elucidating the subtlety, complexity, and fluidity of living. As a therapist, Chih-Hsien believes that trauma heals in relationships, and by engaging in embodied realities it can bring wholeness and truthfulness in processing pain and struggles. She also values the differences and uniqueness in people.



Almanyia Narula is an Art Journalist, Fight Choreographer, Actor, and Writer. She recently received her M.A in NEW ARTS JOURNALISM from The Art Institute of Chicago. She is the founder/editor-in-chief of CHICAGO THEATRE NOW - a print publication featuring opinion articles from industry members discussion principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion in the rehearsal space. She is also the co-founder of SIZZLING SWASHBUCKLING SISTERS- a burlesque sword fighting act, created with the hopes of empowering women and countering the lack of fem representation within the combat world.



Mirza N. Shams, under his/their stage name NAXO. As a music producer, composer, pianist, keyboardist and singer, he/they uses multiple sounds to explore psychological narratives, subjectivities, and stream of consciousness. NAXO fuses his/their Egyptian heritage with contemporary schools of sound, creating a contemporary tapestry with MENA/Middle-Eastern North African folklore music and electronic sounds, featuring transparent voices calling to resist, embedded deep within a poly-rhythmic groove. As a healing practitioner, gender advocate and refugee activist, queerness, multiculturalism, and intersectionality are instrumental to his/their practice, fusing missions, engaging multiple platforms, and creating an experience and outreach pedagogical presence that would not only de-stigmatize, but also to educate, empower and enlighten the public, and offer alternatives, new ideas of self-expression and solutions to channel MENA LGBTQIA+ perspectives and narratives. Most recently, NAXO opened for "Hello Psychaleppo" at YallaPunk in Philadelphia, opened for "City Of Djinn" at The Empty Bottle in Chicago. At Flux Factory in NYC, NAXO was one of the headliners for Mark for Redaction. In Chicago, NAXO performed at ICUQTS, and Trans Art Is series of exhibitions and performances. NAXO was featured in Chicago Zine Festival 2019, and performed at Chicago Dyke March.