

THE  
**PUBLIC.**



ARTIST HEADSHOTS

**THE PUBLIC THEATER  
ANNOUNCES**

**THE INAUGURAL JUDITH CHAMPION NEW WORK SERIES**

**Free Readings of Full-Length New Plays Penned by Playwrights  
Shayok Misha Chowdhury, James Ijames, and Else Went**

September 18, 2024 – The Public Theater (Artistic Director, Oskar Eustis; Executive Director, Patrick Willingham) announced the inaugural **Judith Champion New Work Series**, a collection of readings in which select playwrights present full-length new plays currently in development at The Public. The readings will take place on select Mondays and Tuesdays between Monday, October 21 and Tuesday, October 29.

**Judith Champion**, an architect, violinist, and dedicated supporter of the theater, made major gifts to six New York nonprofit theater companies in the final year of her life to help foster the production of original plays. As Champion made these gifts, she said, “Support what is most important to you. One thing that is important to me is to nurture playwrighting so that theater flourishes for future generations.”

“The Judith Champion New Work Series is an exciting endeavor as we expand our programming and invite audiences to experience dynamic, thought-provoking new plays in the early stages of their development,” said **Director of New Work Development Amrita Ramanan**. “I am thrilled that our inaugural Series features James Ijames, Else Went, and Shayok Misha Chowdhury—playwrights whose artistry, curiosity, courage, and humanity give me hope for the future of the American Theater.”

The Judith Champion New Work Series will feature new works from three selected playwrights: Pulitzer Prize finalist **Shayok Misha Chowdhury**, Pulitzer Prize winner **James Ijames**, and Tow Foundation Playwright in Residence **Else Went**. Through the Series, playwrights are invited to develop a play early in its generative process with a team of professional collaborators and The Public Theater’s New Work Development staff. The inaugural Judith Champion New Work Series will take place on Monday, October 21, Monday, October 28, and Tuesday, October 29 in the LuEsther Hall, with matinee and evening readings each day.

“Judith loved the theater and loved the new; this reading series will highlight the exciting playwrights working on brave and brilliant new work. The series will be an integral part of our development process, bringing the audience into the collaboration as our artists experiment, take risks, and break boundaries,” said **Artistic Director Oskar Eustis**. “We are deeply grateful to Mel Litoff for his support, and to Judith Champion for her lifelong passion for the theater.”

All are welcome. Learn more at [publictheater.org](https://publictheater.org).

**2024 JUDITH CHAMPION NEW WORK SERIES:**

**PROXY**

Written by **James Ijames**

Directed by **Saheem Ali**

Dramaturgy by **Jack Phillips Moore**

**Monday, October 21 at 2:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.**

Janese, a psychotherapist welcomes a new client, Clint, who claims to have committed a grizzly crime. Janese's son Grover is visiting and has noted an uptick in police presence in their little Black enclave while the whole city searches for two small boys gone missing. With each session, Janese discovers the truth about her client and the missing boys, and things that seemed black and white become very grey.

### **DEGENERATES**

Written by **Else Went**

Directed by **Emma Went**

Dramaturgy by **Sarah Lunnie**

**Monday, October 28 at 1:00 p.m. and Tuesday, October 29 at 7:30 p.m.**

The boys are not doing so hot. In an obscure corner of the internet, they form a community on the bedrock of their shared and infinite miseries, offering each other proof that the game is rigged against men; it was over before it began, they will never be loved, better just to lay down and rot. When an unexpected relationship begins to unravel their dismal fraternity, the consequences of their fatalism are revealed—some may get out, and some may not. How much would it hurt to come alive again?

### **RONNIE AND KRIPA**

Written and Directed by **Shayok Misha Chowdhury**

Dramaturgy by **Sarah Lunnie**

**Monday, October 28 at 7:30 p.m. and Tuesday, October 29 at 2:30 p.m.**

Ronnie just turned 30, and his dad is dying. Kripa just turned 40, and she's getting a divorce. Ronnie's an eternally single gay man. Kripa's biological clock is ticking. When a mutual friend introduces them, they decide to try having a kid together. Follow them on their unlikely IVF journey. It's a new kind of rom-com about making music, making the best of things, and making a new kind of Indian American family.

### **ABOUT THE PUBLIC THEATER**

**THE PUBLIC** continues the work of its visionary founder Joe Papp as a civic institution engaging, both on-stage and off, with some of the most important ideas and social issues of today. Conceived over 60 years ago as one of the nation's first nonprofit theaters, The Public has long operated on the principles that theater is an essential cultural force and that art and culture belong to everyone. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Oskar Eustis and Executive Director Patrick Willingham, The Public's wide breadth of programming includes an annual season of new work at its landmark home at Astor Place, Free Shakespeare in the Park at The Delacorte Theater in Central Park, the Mobile Unit touring throughout New York City's five boroughs, Public Lab, Public Works, Public Shakespeare Initiative, and Joe's Pub. Since premiering *HAIR* in 1967, The Public continues to create the canon of American Theater and is currently represented on Broadway by the Tony Award-winning musicals *Hamilton* by Lin-Manuel Miranda, *Suffs* by Shaina Taub, and *Hell's Kitchen* by Alicia Keys and Kristoffer Diaz. Their programs and productions can also be seen regionally across the country and around the world. The Public has received 64 Tony Awards, 194 Obie Awards, 62 Drama Desk Awards, 61 Lortel Awards, 36 Outer Critic Circle Awards, 13 New York Drama Critics' Circle Awards, 65 AUDELCO Awards, 6 Antonyo Awards, and 6 Pulitzer Prizes.  
[publictheater.org](http://publictheater.org)

The Public Theater stands in honor of the first inhabitants and our ancestors. We acknowledge the land on which The Public and its theaters stand—the original homeland of the Lenape people. We acknowledge the painful history of genocide and forced removal from this territory. We honor the generations of stewards and we pay our respects to the many diverse indigenous peoples still connected to this land.

The Judith Champion New Work Series is made possible through generous support from the **Judith Champion New Work Development Fund** and **Mel Litoff**.

**The LuEsther T. Mertz Legacy Trust** provides leadership support for The Public Theater's year-round activities.

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