

Connecting Stories

Connecting Stories is a network of selected theatre artists from the Netherlands, North America and Iran. The goal of the network is an intense meeting of a small group of theatre artists. Through the meetings the artists from the network get to know each other on a personal level and get to know each others theatrical and social backgrounds.

The idea behind this network came from one of its present members Linda Hartzell from Seattle, US. She remembered the fifties and sixties when American and Russian theatre artists had a strong connection despite of the so called Cold War . She expressed the wish to establish an artistic connection with Iran despite the negative political relations between these countries nowadays. She expressed her wish in March 2007 at an evaluation session of a long lasting cooperation between Dutch and US theatre companies, the US-Dutch theatre exchange project. The previous cooperation between these US and Dutch theatre artists seemed a fertile foundation for a future cooperation between North American, Dutch and Iranian theatre artists. Most of the North American and Dutch participants are artists who work mainly in the field of the theatre for children and young people. Unlike in some other countries the field of the theatre for children and young people in the Netherlands and North America is a mature field of the theatre and is more an artistic challenge than a program for education.

The US and Dutch participants of the network came together in December 2007 in Seattle to talk about the possibilities of the new project. During this meeting a few starting points were discussed: 1. the real content of the network can only be established when the Iranian participants are present 2. the first aim of the network is to really meet each other on a personal level and through content without prejudices and without moral ideas about each other cultures 3. the network should establish an equal exchange between all the participants 4. the members of the network should be carefully selected because it is a small and personal network 5. we are interested in Iranian theatre artists in general and not specifically theatre artists in the field of theatre for children and young people.

An important part of the meetings will be that the members work together on small theatrical etudes or performances. The outcome of these theatrical etudes will be shown during the meetings or even a small festival to an (professional) audience. Further cooperation s between members of the network will be encouraged. The meetings will be documented so Connecting Stories can work as a pilot project for international exchange between theatre artists from different cultures. In the future we will set up a website to inform audiences and people who are interested. The members are asked for a full commitment to the network, during at least one annual meeting.

The first full meeting with all Iranians, Dutch and North-American participants did take place in June 2008 in the Netherlands. After that we have had meetings in Seattle, Teheran and in Amsterdam.

THE MEMBERS:

From North America:

Linda Hartzell, Seattle Childrens Theatre

David Saar, Childsplay, Tampa, Arizona.

Daniel Brooks, Necessary Angel Theatre Company, Toronto Canada

From Iran:

Farin Zahedi, Teheran, professor, translator, writer, dramaturg

Azadeh Ganjeh, Teheran director

Hamid Pourazari, Teheran director

Reza Gouran, Teheran director

Yaser Khaseb, Teheran performer

From the Netherlands:

Liesbeth Coltof and Ad de Bont, Toneelmakerij, Amsterdam

Dennis Meijer, Het Lab, Utrecht

Saskia Janse and Onny Huisink, Speeltheater Holland, Edam

Moniek Merkx, TG MAX, Delft

Moniek Corvers, Theatre group Het Filaal, Utrecht