



STÉPHANIE GHAJAR

Director | Dramaturge

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A Lebanese-born Australian director and dramaturge whose work delves into the human condition to explore the individual in deeply personal situations where the familiar motions of darken and veer towards the tragic.

TRAINING

- 2021. CORE DIRECTING SKILLS WITH KATIE MITCHELL, 6 INTENSIVE SESSIONS ORGANISED BY THE YOUNG VIC UK
- 2020. ASSOCIATE ARTISTS PROGRAM WITH THEATRE WORKS
- 2018. ARTISTIC DIRECTORIAL INTERNSHIP WITH ELEVATOR REPAIR SERVICE
- 2017. DIRECTORS LAB: MELBOURNE, 8-DAY INTENSIVE LAB ORGANISED BY THEATRE WORKS
- 2017. DIRECTORIAL SECONDMENT ON MTC'S MINNIE AND LIRAZ BY LALLY KATZ
- 2016. MASTER OF DRAMATURGY AT THE VICTORIAN COLLEGE OF THE ARTS, MELBOURNE
- 2013. THEATRE STUDIES WITH CHARLES DIK, UNIVERSITY OF BALAMAND, LEBANON

DIRECTORIAL & PERFORMANCE MAKING EXPERIENCE

2020 - PRESENT
Victoria, Australia

ZAFFÉ
*In development for a public season
summer 2022/23*

Creator & Director of a new immersive performance, currently being devised with theatre creatives and musicians. Our team of 10 are mainly from the Arabic-speaking diaspora, with two based abroad (NYC and Paris).

This work deals with notions of grief and nostalgia that young migrants experience living in a new country they now call home. Zaffé has already undergone two creative developments; the first was supported by Free Theatre at Siteworks and the second was part of the Testing Grounds residency program.

The third one coming up next year will be taking place as part of the Be Bold Residency program. Three weeks of development will culminate in two performances with selected test audiences to prepare for its public season. This residency is supported by Creative Victoria, Brimbank Council, and Creative Partnerships Australia through MATCH Lab.

2022 - PRESENT

THE CAVE OF SPLEEN

Director of new work by Laura Collins. After its reading with the Radical Acts Festival at Theatre Works, the play got accepted to take part in the Fresh Works stream in its 2023 season at the Explosives Factory in August.

2020 - 2023
Victoria, Australia

WHEN THE RAIN STOPS FALLING

Assistant Director to Briony Dunn on this play by Andrew Bovell. As part of the Associate Artist program at Theatre Works, I got to work alongside the director in the research and rehearsal phases of the production. I also attended meetings, taking notes for Briony and other communications creatives wanted the director to know.

Its season was supposed to premiere in July 2020 at Theatre Works but was pushed to July 2021 and is currently running at Theatre Works.

2022 Victoria, Australia	ARDNA Recipient of the 2021 Joan and Betty Rayner ACTF Commission	Director of a new work by Aseel Tayah and Jason Tamiru to tour via the 2022 Arts and Education Program. This work draws on both lead artists' relationships to Country, and invites us to interrogate and reflect on our connection to land and place through a series of dances, songs and other stories from both middle eastern and Indigenous Australia. The show toured regional schools in June 2022.
2021 - 2022 Victoria, Australia	THE CAVE OF SPLEEN AND SUSPENSION	Director for the staged readings of 2 new works by emerging female writers. The readings took part in the two-week Radical Acts Festival that Theatre Works organises for their <i>She Writes</i> collective.
2019 - 2020 Online	FLIGHT	Performance Maker with NY-based theatre company Anonymous Ensemble. After moving back to Australia, my collaboration with the group moved online to create stories with guest collaborators from around the globe. We worked on a total of 11 live performances together, broadcasting once a month. The making process was non-hierarchical as each creative brought their skillset to the project where we created from that pool of resources.
2019 Victoria, Australia	MAKE ME A HOUR	Director of a play by Emina Ashman, presented at La Mama Theatre for their Winter/Spring 2019 season. The season ran for two weeks. Make Me A Hour is a play about two women seeking to defy the external forces governing their bodies in the afterlife. It blends poetry, stylised physicality and unusual anecdotes to explore the relationship between sensuality and spirituality.
2019 Victoria, Australia	SPLASH	Director of a short 10-min play written overnight by 3 writers for 5 actors for the <i>24 Hr Play Project</i> . The short play was written, rehearsed, tech-ed, and performed in 24 hours. This project was presented by Union House Theatre at the University of Melbourne.
2018 - 2019 New York City, USA	THE FUTURE	Performance Maker with Anonymous Ensemble on their live immersive theatre event, The Future. With the audience in headsets and microphones, every performance unfolded as a multimedia, music-filled, interactive event that is unique to each audience member. The Future invited the audience to share and explore their own beliefs about self, society, the environment, and the future of humankind. The making process was non-hierarchical as each artist brought their skillset to the project where we created from that pool of resources.
2018 New York City, USA	SCOTCH AND HANDSOAP	Director of a staged reading of this play by Kat Kats. After having several showings in Melbourne, Kat took her work to New York City with the support of an Ian Potter Foundation grant. This work is based on a series of audio recordings of random conversations Kat had taken in Melbourne. It is a complex composition of voices, relationships, and interactions which seek to ask whether we are truly connecting when we communicate on a daily basis. With a cast of 6, we presented the work with Sybil Kemspon, John Collins, Sharon Fogarty, and other notable names in the NY downtown theatre scene among the audience.

2018 <i>New York City, USA</i>	EVERYONE'S FINE WITH VIRGINIA WOOLF	<p>Assistant Director to Elevator Repair Service's John Collins on Kate Scelsa's take on Edward Albee's <i>Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf</i>. I assisted John throughout rehearsals until opening night, taking notes and sourcing research material.</p> <p>The production was presented at the Abrons Arts Centre in New York, an off-broadway theatre. It was reviewed as a Critic's Pick in The New York Times.</p>
2017 <i>Victoria, Australia</i>	DISGUST	<p>Director of a play written by Kat Kats. This season was presented at the Abbotsford Convent for a one-week run.</p> <p>In a theatre in the round, we set out to literally trap a married couple, to have them face the deep secrets and long years of marriage, waiting to see who the first person out the door would be.</p>
2016 <i>Victoria, Australia</i>	(IN)TENT	<p>Director of an immersive play written by Kat Kats and presented as part of Melbourne Fringe Festival 2016.</p> <p>This work revolved around two people grappling to share a space with each other, a tent, and too many bloody oranges. One of them isn't aware that in the other's world, there is also people around, whom he interacts with, while they are immersed in this spiral of events unfolding in the space.</p> <p>This was the first show I was entrusted with as a director while still completing my dramaturgy studies at the VCA.</p>
2010 - 2015	VARIOUS ACTING ROLES	<p>Performer with the University of Balamand's theatre company under the direction of Charles Dik. We staged two plays, <i>The Bear</i> (2013-2014) by Anton Chekhov and <i>Al-Zenzalakht</i> (2014-2015) by Issam Mahfouz.</p>