

WELCOME TO A SPECIAL WORK-IN-PROCESS SHOWING OF

**IS  
THE  
OF**

**TRUMP  
JUST  
NAME  
HIS STORY**

WRITTEN & PERFORMED BY

Ayad Akhtar

DIRECTION

Annika Boras

**SPECIAL THANKS**

Lisa Timmel, John Burnham Schwartz and the Sun Valley  
Writers' Conference

*Trump is Just the Name of His Story* is performed without an  
intermission.

**NEW YORK  
THEATRE  
WORKSHOP**

## THE 2020/21 ARTISTIC INSTIGATORS

*As we contemplated making work in this time of social distancing, we knew that the artists in our midst would lead the way. In June of 2020, we reached out to 27 artists in our community—including Ayad Akhtar—with an open-ended provocation and invitation from Artistic Director James C. Nicola. What follows is part of the prompt that sparked the 2020/21 Artistic Instigator season.*

New York Theatre Workshop exists to provide its community a richer, deeper understanding of what it means to live and breathe on this earth right now, and to comprehend how each of our individual experiences interconnects with the others who occupy the world alongside us. We do this by gathering together in a room, at an appointed time, to observe and participate in the ritual re-enactment, by the artists we believe in, of narratives that resonate and illuminate.

COVID-19 has denied us access to the most fundamental parts of this equation: the gathering together for an artistic communion.

But this fact does not eliminate the need we all have for ritual, for revelation, for imagery, for insight. In fact, the isolation, anger and grief have made the need that much more imperative.

With this, the questions for NYTW become: how do we support the artists in continuing to create and articulate? And how do we bring the results to the larger community so desperately in need of inspiration, innovation and healing?

We don't have the answers to what these new forms may be. But we are confident that artists might know HOW to find the answers. To find NEW answers, for changing times and circumstances.

So.

This is an act of provocation on our part. Our intention is to unleash your imaginations and assist you in the conjuring of new ways of providing the sustenance and adventure that our world demands of us.

As we contemplate the time ahead, there are so many more unknowns than there are certainties. We're hoping that you can seize this moment of insecurity and turn it around—to repurpose the lack of structure to be a moment of unheard of freedom and opportunity. We challenge you to think wide, and deep, and to go way out on limbs.

## LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Our theater lives on the island of Manhattan.

Manhattan has always been a gathering and trading place for many Indigenous peoples, where Nations intersected from all four directions since time immemorial. It was a place to gather and sometimes to seek refuge during times of conflict and struggle. The staff and trustees of New York Theatre Workshop pay respect to all of their ancestors past, present, to their future generations.

We acknowledge that our theatre, and our work, is situated on the island of Manhattan (*Menohhannet* —On the Island), traditional lands of the Munsee Lenape, the Canarsie, Unkechaug, Matinecock, Shinnecock, Reckgawanc and the Haudenosaunee Confederacy.

We respect that many Indigenous people continue to live and work on this island and acknowledge their ongoing contributions to this area.

We encourage each of you to honor the Indigenous communities that first inhabited the land on which you're now standing.

We would like to thank [Safe Harbors NYC](#) for contributing to this statement.

## COLLABORATING ARTISTS

**AYAD AKHTAR** is a novelist and playwright. His work has been published and performed in over two dozen languages. He is the winner of the Pulitzer Prize for Drama, the Edith Wharton Citation of Merit for Fiction, and an Award in Literature from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. Akhtar is the author of *Homeland Elegies* (Little, Brown & Co.), which The Washington Post called “a tour de force” and The New York Times called “a beautiful novel...that had echoes of The Great Gatsby and that circles, with pointed intellect, the possibilities and limitations of American life.” His first novel, *American Dervish* (Little, Brown & Co.), was published in over 20 languages. As a playwright, he has written *Junk* (Lincoln Center, Broadway; Kennedy Prize for American Drama, Tony nomination); *Disgraced* (Lincoln Center, Broadway; Pulitzer Prize for Drama, Tony nomination); *The Who & The What* (Lincoln Center); and *The Invisible Hand* (NYTW; Obie Award, Outer Critics Circle John Gassner Award, Olivier, and Evening Standard nominations). Among other honors, Akhtar is the recipient of the Steinberg Playwrighting Award, the Nestroy Award, the Erwin Piscator Award, as well as fellowships from the American Academy in Rome, MacDowell, the Sundance Institute, and Yaddo, where he serves as a Board Director. Additionally, Ayad is a Board Trustee at New York Theatre Workshop, and PEN America, where he serves as President. In 2021, Akhtar was named the New York State Author, succeeding Colson Whitehead, by the New York State Writers Institute.

**ANNIKA BORAS** is a director and actress. Most recently: ‘*The Niceties*’ by Eleanor Burgess at Milwaukee Repertory Theater where she’ll be returning to in the spring to direct Ken Ludwig’s adaptation of ‘*Murder on the Orient Express*’. Other directing credits include: *Guys and Dolls*, NYU Steinhardt; Assistant director to Ed Sylvanus Iskandar *Nomad Motel* by Carla Ching, Atlantic Theater; Associate Director on Ayad Akhtar’s *Junk*, Milwaukee Rep; Assistant director *Jungle Book*, Arden Theater, Philadelphia; co-created and directed the touring solo-show *Queens Girl* (2008). As an actress, she was most recently on stage in Tracy Letts’ *Man from Nebraska* directed by David Cromer, 2nd Stage theater and on television as ‘Anna Newman’ in ‘*Succession*,’ HBO. Annika has been nominated for a Drama League and Lucille Lortel Award. Graduate of the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, London.