

Workshop I

THEATRE FOR EARLY YEARS

Session brief

Gillo Repertory Theatre works in Theatre for Young Audiences (TYA), creating performing arts experiences that engage children and young adults with theatre. Their work, that includes content development, performance and training, creates opportunities for children to develop deep and life-long connections with the arts.



Theatre and Performing Arts for children in India has mainly catered to children between 6 and 12 years, particularly since the 1970s when the Bal Bhavan movement began. For decades children below 6 years were left out of this cultural landscape, often receiving hand-me-downs from artists and storytellers.

A recent trend, especially since 2015, has been the creation of performances specifically for children between 0 and 6 years, called Theatre for Early Years, which includes Toddler Theatre and Theatre for Babies.

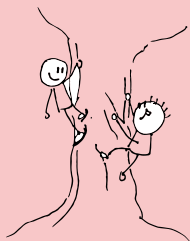
Performing Arts for Early Years has been a part of the early learning environments for over 4 decades in Europe, and more recently in Korea and Japan. But in India it is a relatively new phenomenon. This approach believes that all children have the right to be viewed as spectators of today and not only of tomorrow, even the ones below 6 years. Children are born with the right to culture, which is generally called Cultural Citizenship and the onus to fulfil these needs lies with artists, educators and parents.



This workshop shall inform teachers about the ideas behind theatre for early years and how educators in India can start including this in their curriculum. Participants shall be introduced to techniques of making performances and performance art for children between 0 to 6 years. The main focus of these performances being to stimulate a child's senses and hopefully open up ways of seeing and experiencing the world. A part of the workshop shall also include techniques that educators can use in their classrooms / learning spaces.

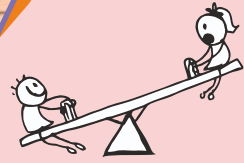


Gillo hopes to facilitate collaborations between educators and artists, so they can work together in research and play making, eventually leading to culturally diverse and rich learning environments for young children in India.



Facilitators Profile:

Shaili Sathyu works in education and the arts, with a specific focus on children. She is the co-founder and Artistic Director of Gillo Repertory Theatre, an organization that specializes in Theatre for Young Audiences.



Over the past nine years Shaili has established Gillo as a repertory of 15 artists, produced 19 plays for children of different age groups, conducted several workshops, run a round-the-year drama club for children and staged over 400 performances. As an artistic director, Shaili's focus has been on developing and showcasing original Indian content; developing value for performing arts; creating age-specific performances; training performers and making theatre more accessible for children.

As a writer-director her plays include, 'Kyun-KyunLadki' (2011), 'Mister Jeejeebhoy and the Birds' (2013), 'She-He-Shey' (2013) among others. 'Chidiya, Udd!' (2018) is one of her latest plays, especially created for toddlers. She has also trained repertory artists of Gillo to design and conduct theatre based workshops with children and teachers.

Her recent projects include Rage Productions' 'Class Act' collaboration with Traverse Theatre (Scotland), where she was the Indian mentor for a playwriting workshop for high school students, and Junoon's 'Theatre Inclusive Programme', where she was one of the facilitators.

She has served as the Honorary Secretary of ASSITEJ India chapter (The International Association of Theatre for Children and Young People) for two years.

She has worked with renowned directors like SatyadevDubey, Prasanna, M S Sathyu, Ramesh Talwar, Nadira Zaheer Babbar, Rajendra Gupta & SalimArif.

Nishna Mehta

Nishna Mehta is an English Literature graduate from the University of Mumbai. She has been a part of Gillo as a performer, administrator, technician and workshop facilitator since 2011. She has also been working with other theatre organisations in Mumbai, including Q Theatre Productions, Theatre Professionals Pvt. Ltd., The Drama School, Patchworks Ensemble and Prithvi Theatre. She is passionate about TYA and wishes to share the joy and magic of theatre with child. She is also a member of the ASSITEJ Next Generation Network. She likes experimenting in the kitchen and is deeply interested in observing and studying nature.

