



Presentations from
THERE IS A PORTAL
A 2020 HB Rehearsal
Space Residency

December 20, 2020 | 12:00PM & 6:00PM

Held online via Zoom



HB Studio presents

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THERE IS A PORTAL:
A 2020 HB Studio Rehearsal
Space Residency

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Written and performed by Kayhan Irani

Directed by Rania Lee Khalil

Composed by Bahar Royae

Interactive digital story produced by Helios Design Labs

Video art by Gazelle Samizay

Edith Meeks, Executive & Artistic Director

Lauren Ritter, Production Manager

Lorraine de Silva, Zoom Tech



THERE IS A PORTAL is made possible (in part) by the Queens Council on the Arts with public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council and with additional support from: the Asian Women's Giving Circle, Mertz Gilmore Foundation, Gibney Dance, the Bay and Paul Foundations, and The Made in NY Women's Film, TV & Theatre Fund by the City of New York Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment in association with The New York Foundation for the Arts.



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This program is supported in part by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature, public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council, and many generous supporters.



Every journey has a map.
Story is a type of map.

Every narrative we hold is formed by a number of forces:
Innate Gifts
 Inheritance
 Experience.

Sometimes our experiences create ruptures which separate us from our innate gifts. The story we tell about our potential hardens into a fence that keeps possibilities out.

Sometimes, the legacies we carry have pushed our gifts underground, out of sight.

Yet, something lingers.
A hum of knowing and longing.

Our stories need healing and re-imagining.

Together, we will travel through space and time to uncover the stories we are carrying that need attention.

Moving back and forth – from my story to yours – will help you see what needs mending, where the fractures are. And it will help you think about how to evolve what aches into a deep source of power.

As you create a place for your life, for your experience,
you are preparing the shape of your desire
to imprint on this world.

An imprint
pointing towards healing.

A constellation is a collection of stars.
Points of light
that have guided travelers
for centuries.

You are shaping your constellation, your story to add to our universe.
So it may guide future travelers.

Welcome to There is a Portal.

-Kayhan Irani, THERE IS A PORTAL



Kayhan Irani

Kayhan Irani is an Emmy-award winning writer, a performer, and a cultural activist. She creates art to build community, spaces for healing, and to mobilize audiences to affect change. For the past 16 years she has been using theater and story-based strategies for community organizing, engagement, and education.

Kayhan was one of ten artists named by President Obama's White House as a 2016 White House Champion of Change for her storytelling work. Her one-woman show, WE'VE COME UNDONE toured nationally and internationally, telling stories of Arab, South Asian and Muslim-American women in the wake of 9/11. She has trained hundreds of groups in Theater of the Oppressed and participatory storytelling tools over the years, both nationally and overseas, in Afghanistan, India, and Iraq.

Her published work includes a volume of essays, "Telling Stories to Change the World: Global Voices on the Power of Narrative to Build Community and Make Social Justice Claims" (Routledge, 2008) and a chapter in "Culturally Relevant Arts Education for Social Justice: A Way Out of No Way" (Routledge, 2015).



Rania Lee Khalil

Rania Lee Khalil works in performance and live moving image. Her artworks reflect on the beauty and disappearance of indigenous plant, animal and human (culture)s. Interweaving reflections on ecology, third world feminism, post coloniality and healing, her performances take place on political and embodied registers. Her present project The Pan-African Asian Women's Organization, Cairo and Conakry, 1960- 1965, looks at the work of a women's rights organization co-founded by her maternal grandmother and a Guinean colleague, to revisit a unique moment of African socialism, early independence on the continent, third world feminist resistance and collaboration in the face of its historical erasure. Her performances have been seen in such places as The Judson Church, St. Marks Church, Utopia Station and The Ontological-Hysteric Theater in New York; SoMa Arts San Francisco; Aomori Art Museum Japan; Al Ma'mal Contemporary Art Foundation Palestine; Zawya Cinema Egypt; Kiasma Museum for Contemporary Art Finland and the 2015 Venice Biennale. Directing credits include THERE IS A PORTAL by Kayhan Irani, THE HEAD OF MAMLUK JABIR by Saadallah Wannus, and her own ensemble works, BETWEEN THE SHADOWS and THE RANIA KHALIL SHOW. She is the recipient of numerous European awards including Erasmus Mundus, CIMO and Kone Foundation grants. Born to Egyptian immigrants in the U.S., Khalil has recently returned to the States after nine years in Cairo and Europe. She is presently

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completing a practice based doctorate in Artistic Research at Theatre Academy/ University of Arts Helsinki, where her research focuses on embodied and post-colonial aspects of Memory. She lives and works in Brooklyn, where she is the mother of one daughter.

Bahar Royae

Bahar Royae is a composer of concert and incidental music, born and raised in Iran. Before learning and practicing the principles of music composition, Bahar practiced electronic engineering in Tehran, Iran. The Boston Arts Review praised her “haunting sound design” in her live theatre work. In 2017, Bahar won the Krourian Electroacoustic Competition in Iran and the Roger Sessions Memorial Composition Award - the top composition prize at Boston Conservatory. She is the first recipient of The Walter W. Harp Music and Society Award, and the John Bavicchi Memorial Prize, both from Berklee College of Music. Bahar’s compositions have been performed worldwide in Italy, Greece, Iran, and the U.S., by ensembles such as Mazumal, Off Borders, Alea III, Esterhazy String Quartet, and Boston Conservatory Contemporary Music Ensemble. Bahar holds degrees in composition from Berklee College of Music (B.M.) and Boston Conservatory (M.M.). Bahar is currently completing a Ph.D. in composition from the CUNY Graduate Center.





Gazelle Samizay

Gazelle Samizay was born in Kabul, Afghanistan and now resides in Los Angeles. Her photographs and videos have been exhibited across the U.S. and internationally.