

THE AUDITION EDUCATION PACK

BY CLAIRE WEARNE
WITH LISA GRIGG

IN COLLABORATION WITH OUTER URBAN PROJECTS



Milad Norouzi and Irine Vela | The Audition
PHOTO - Miguel Rios and Meredith O'Shea



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Outer Urban Projects acknowledges and thanks the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we work: the Wurundjeri, Woiwurrung people of the Kulin Nation. We pay our respects to ancient and contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art and culture, and to Elders past, present and emerging.

As allies, we applaud the mighty fight back of Australia's First Nations people during the frontier wars and the continued fight for sovereignty, self-determination, equality and cultural expression. We acknowledge the many hard-fought victories of First Nations people, including the 1967 Referendum, the Tent Embassy, the Land Rights Movement and the establishment of self-determined Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health, housing, cultural, legal, educational and artistic organisations.

Outer Urban Projects commits to continued reparation to, and alliance with, First Nations people through ongoing commitment to creative collaborations, employment and governance opportunities.




We acknowledge sovereignty was never ceded.

Always was, will be Aboriginal land.

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Please note: Activities are colour coded to indicate curriculum alignment:

-  Maroon borders indicate English / Literature & EAL activities
-  Yellow borders indicate Drama / Theatre Studies activities
-  Teal borders indicate both English / Literature & EAL activities and Drama/Theatre Studies

*Symbol: Term Defined in Vocabulary Section

ABOUT OUTER URBAN PROJECTS

'As a patron of Outer Urban Projects, it's been thrilling to see the voices, expressions and performances of young people from migrant, refugee and working class backgrounds finally get a space to do their art and express their culture. Outer Urban Projects opens up work and performance that for too long has been dominated by particular voices and geography. They give young people from the outer north an opportunity to show how fantastic they can be. It's galvanising and it's beautiful, and I'm thankful because I'm old enough to remember a time when there was nothing. We have waited decades for this.'

- *Christos Tsiolkas, Writer, The Audition, Scenes 1 & 2, OUP Patron*

Outer Urban Projects aims to platform the unheard voices, stories and art of our communities from the outer northern and immigrant suburbs of Melbourne. Since 2013, we have facilitated performances and storytelling with our community of artists, whose origins span five continents. OUP aims to instil a culture of respect for the enormous diversity of humanity—diversity of race, culture, class, religion, gender, sexuality, age and ability—in all that we do. Our works are a celebration of the collision of street art and high art, drawing from genres including dance, rap, spoken word, theatre and music. They are not only intertextual*, multi-disciplinary and multi-authored, but they are created and performed by emerging and established artists collaboratively. This exchange of practice makes us a unique Community Arts and Cultural Development company, a distinctive force of diverse, intergenerational artists.

'Outer Urban Projects is, and has been, an open and safe space for me as an immigrant emerging artist to freely present my ideas and be treated with care and respect.'

SAHRA DAVOUDI, PERFORMER / WRITER | SEVEN DAYS



Vessel | Demi Sorono, Victoria Canning, Tehyali Malone, Simone Etheve and Damian Seddon
PHOTO - Meredith O'Shea



Newsboys 125BPM | Milad Norouzi with OUP ensemble, Conductor Brett Kelly and Melbourne Youth Orchestra
PHOTO - Meredith O'Shea

PERFORMANCE DESCRIPTION AND SYNOPSIS

‘I liked the comparison between an actor auditioning and refugees preparing for their asylum interview. It was eye-opening. Especially the fact that if you are not emotional, you will not be extended sympathy. This is often the case with a woman. Lindy Chamberlain comes to mind...’ AUDIENCE MEMBER | 2019 SEASON OF THE AUDITION

The Audition presents a breadth of perspectives and viewpoints. According to Outer Urban Projects, this work ‘investigates the challenges of searching for respect, love and emotional security, through a vital and empowering performance’. Posing questions around Australian cultural and artistic identity and belonging, the montage is inspired by the lived experience of our diverse artists who hail from various migrant backgrounds, including Greek, Iranian, Albanian, Cypriot and Lebanese. Each writer brings a unique language and world view to their scenes. These have been carefully allocated a nonlinear assembly of action.

Through her metatheatrical melding in The Doll, Patricia Cornelius includes familiar moments of dialogue from the iconic Australian character, ‘Olive’, from The Summer Of The Seventeenth Doll. Marta’s performance of startling fresh poetic genius sensually unfurls from a performer at her creative peak. But her unreceptive auditioner, determinedly focused only upon the ‘limitations’ of her difference, seems to represent the racist voice of our nation itself.

Tes Lyssiotis presents slithers of life from inside a modern Australian detention centre in her work titled Woomera Detention Centre. These are the ‘busiest’ scenes in the work, as all the others are presented in either dialogue or monologue, but here we move from one performer to the next in a connected but fragmented gathering of voices from across the world and memories from across time. Imprisoned together, yet isolated within this harsh landscape, these detainees’ minds drift across moments of their harrowing journeys. All languish now in parallel stagnancy, awaiting...

In Beautiful Jail, Milad Norouzi reveals a series of intimate conversations between a yearning, poetic young man and the unfathomable, unresponsive universe he has found himself in. His series of plaintive questions remain echoing, unanswered; the silence seeming only to increase the distance between him and his ageing, ailing parents. His thoughts melt into prayers, his dreams simmer into visions, and his song is heard only by the stars above him.

The jubilant, hopeful woman clutching her bag at the airport in Davoudi’s piece, Seven Days, has all but vanished when we are confronted later with her appointment in a lawyer’s office. Here, Pariya foretells the seven inevitable days awaiting her, after her failed engagement results in impending deportation. Her lawyer’s brutal manipulation of her narrative leaves Pariya confronted with the unlikelihood that she will be granted permanent residency in Australia.

Also split into two smaller scenes, Tsiolkas’ The Audition, initially gives us a glimpse of two actors in discussion about how to best secure a role in an audition for an Australian interpretation of Women of Troy. The second moment exposes an Australian director centreing his own whitewashed vision, dismissing both the lived experience and professional expertise of the actor he is auditioning to play the lead role in his staging of The Trojan Women.

Poet Wahibe Moussa’s central protagonist breaks the fourth wall in her resigned but forceful scene, I Can Be Her. The frustration wrought by the constant stereotyping and diminishing of this actor’s identity creates an empowering juxtaposition; her voice is contrasting with the supplicant tone of the stereotyped immigrant.

Melissa Reeves depicts the dismissive process behind granting and refusing asylum. The unfiltered preoccupations of an emotionally wizened immigration official overshadow the intense vulnerabilities of an asylum seeker in You Made Us a Promise That What You Told Us Today Would Be True. This raw insight into the influence of both gender and power in the refugee determination process illuminates the glib prejudice underpinning the gatekeeping processes of our nation.

*Sensitive Content. The Audition explores the repercussions of war. It contains implicit reference to the violence and trauma experienced by individuals, including children, due to displacement and conflict. Suicide and murder are referenced, as are death of children, loss, isolation and racial discrimination.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

In the ecology that Outer Urban Projects creates and inhabits, excellence in art is redefined as a form of protest and resistance – it is where ghettoised and ignored voices and bodies can aspire, thrive and inspire change because they have powerful stories to tell and the hunger and means to do so.

The impetus behind making The Audition came from working and sharing stories with emerging artists who were also asylum seekers and immigrants. The Audition was inspired by two young Iranian artists, Milad Norouzi and Sahra Davoudi, both of whom were seeking asylum and permanent residency while developing this work. We then approached a diverse group of writers, emerging and established, who were excited to collaborate on a multi-authored theatre piece.

In developing the resulting work, explored both the experience of the audition process and the experience of seeking asylum, to gain insight into the protocols and power relationships that permit entry into our country and onto our stages. The struggle to gain acceptance and recognise merit where and when it is due is always an ongoing tension.

Theatre itself is political, by virtue of who is represented on the stage and where the content comes from. So theatre itself is inherently political.

The asylum seeker shares something in common with the actor in Australia. They are both outsiders of uncertain status. This is the basic premise of The Audition—that theatre is not only a metaphor for the world, but a microcosm of it; for the stage is like a country, with its own rules and regulations, or lack of them – are there are parallels between the actor and the asylum seeker?

In both cases, applicants and auditionees find themselves hoping and waiting while someone more powerful determines their future on the basis of a single encounter or after countless bureaucratic encounters. Those who are both actors and seeking asylum and permanent residency—as two of the original cast were—can find themselves doubly displaced in Australia, where stages are overwhelmingly white and migrant artists are often discriminated against.

- Irine Vela, Artistic Director, Outer Urban Projects



Milad Norouzi | The Audition
PHOTO - Darren Gill



Sahra Davoudi & Mary Sitarenos | The Audition
PHOTO - Darren Gill

KEY THEMES

HERE ARE SOME OF THE KEY THEMES IN THE AUDITION.
UNDERNEATH EACH HEADING IS A RELEVANT QUOTE FROM
EITHER THE SCRIPT ITSELF, OR A MEMBER OF THE CREATIVE TEAM.

NATIONAL IDENTITY

'All the craft in the world won't save you from the rigid view of what is thought to be typically Australian.' Patricia Cornelius, Writer, The Doll

"I want this fucked-up country to understand what it is to be a refugee, to be exiled, to lose everything. [...] To make Australians think: what would I do if this calamity happened to me?" The character Auditorer, The Audition

BELONGING & EXCLUSION

'Humour, in my opinion, plays a significant role in engaging audiences especially when dealing with heavy, sensitive topics such as politics, race, and other sensitive areas. It becomes even more important when the content is from a different culture or background, as it helps bridge the gap with the audience and invites them to feel more comfortable entering these dark places.' Sahra Davoudi, Performer/Writer, Seven Days

ISOLATION

"The overall effect is to convey the profound isolation produced by the detention system. It also suggests how individualised current solutions are, when what is really needed is structural reform." Introduction to The Audition

STORYTELLING

'As an Iranian who grew up with myth and poetry, I must say, I love the non-linear style of storytelling, writing and performing, as an audience member as well. I think it's because this style challenges my mind throughout the show and I'm constantly on the edge of my seat trying to figure out the relationships and uncover the mysteries.' Sahra Davoudi, Performer/Writer, Seven Days

DEFIANCE / PROTEST

'The Audition says, 'Look, this is what we're doing as a country. This is who we are. This is what we're turning a blind eye to. The work is a form of protest, of resistance. It tries to tell the truth. If theatre doesn't have any truth in it, it's pretty useless.' Irine Vela, Director

DEHUMANISATION / OTHERING* / RACISM

'Detaining refugees in isolated parts of the country and urban areas, and especially in offshore detention, reveals a lot of about our nation. Our humanity is diminished via this government policy; it is narrow, punitive, and selective. We have a reputation for excelling in offshore detention. The ultimate example is keeping children in detention.' Irine Vela, Director

RESILIENCE / COMPASSION

'The Audition is no doubt bleak, but as a work, it displays resilience and protest. And as an audience, we can see the injustice of each character's situation. The work elicits our insight, compassion and anger.' Irine Vela, Director



Milad Norouzi | The Audition
PHOTO - Darren Gill



Sahra Davoudi | The Audition
PHOTO - Darren Gill

THE AGE - CAMERON WOODHEAD



- *'Irine Vela seamlessly directs The Audition to create electrifying theatre.'*
- *'Sitarenos offers... a paean* to the art of acting, a sensitive piece of theatre criticism that imagines Olive from the inside out, and slivers of the riveting performance our stages will be denied by implicitly racist casting.'*
- *'Political theatre doesn't get much better than this.'*

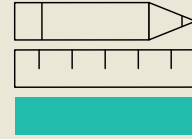
THEATRE PEOPLE - LYN ZELEN



- *'Seven eye-opening and breathtaking stories are the cultivation of an amazing collective of artists.'*
- *'The remarkable spartan* sandy set brings... three disturbing vignettes* of the desolate life in the Woomera Immigration Detention Centre to La Mama Theatre. The imagery is hauntingly honest.'*
- *'Outstanding newcomer Milad Norouzi's inspirational work Beautiful Jail is moving.'*
- *'Vahideh Eisaei's classical Iranian improvisations on the kanun, pair perfectly with Milad's poignant* phrases, as he imitates a bird soaring free.'*
- *'The Audition is unforgettable.'*

STAGE WHISPERS - MICHAEL BRINDLEY

- *'Moody, funny, bitterly ironic...'*
- *'A series of pieces that flow convincingly one into another...'*
- *'Ms Sitarenos, black haired, black eyed, is striking and of enormous presence: she is riveting.'*
- *'Ms Davoudi...proves herself a quite astonishing talent: her pointed comic timing combines with an ability to convey depths of pain.'*
- *'never has a mere basketball been more poignant* and suggested more of helpless sadness...'*
- *'Irine Vela is more than a great talent; she has a big heart. Her casting, direction and dramaturgy* (the last together with Maryanne Lynch) and this diverse, talented and maybe unjustly hidden cast make for a tight, coherent, integrated whole.'*
- *'The humour is double edged, the emotions piercing. This is political theatre that rises far above agit-prop*.'*



ACTIVITY

Identifying Evaluative Language

Using a highlighter, identify any specifically evaluative language in these lines from published reviews. Compile a list of these phrases for your own use.

MEET THE PERFORMERS

‘Woomera and Australia are full of outsiders. There are outsiders in our midst that we don’t even think about, whether they’re stuck in a hotel in detention or in Woomera, because they are deliberately hidden from us. In The Audition, Woomera operates as both a literal place as well as metaphor for the overall work: the loneliness of people in that situation, in that purgatory called ‘detention’. And yet our characters possess a strong life force.’ **IRINE VELA | DIRECTOR**



MARY SITARENOS (She / Her) ACTOR

These days, Mary spends most of her time running a live music venue and creating her own theatre work. But ask her about her history of performance making, and you’ll need a high speed internet connection and a link to Google Earth to map out her global performance trajectory. The classical version of Shakespeare’s Macbeth which she directed with a Chi master, involved cast members who spoke no English. In West Africa-Senegal, when directing and adapting the ancient Greek play The Bacchae, Mary worked with performers, praise singers and their Griots (cultural Keepers) focusing on the integration of Senegalese

cultural rituals. She studied performance, ritual and cosmology in Indonesia, toured work through Japan, and has also undertaken residencies with renowned leading artists in Hong Kong and Singapore. But don’t let this globe-trotting jetsetter fool you into thinking she may not have had time to develop work on home soil; she has performed across this country for over 40 years, collaborating with many of Australia’s theatrical icons, including Jenny Kemp, Jean-Pierre Mignon and Robert Draffin. As an Australian artist from a Cypriot Greek background, Mary engages in an ongoing discourse at the intersection of her inner and outer worlds about the duality of living and working in Australia. Her work on The Audition reminds her that genocide comes around, and exile, migration and fleeing, have all been going on for generations.



SAHRA DAVOUDI (She / Her) WRITER / ACTOR

Sahra has always adored studying Theatre and Literature, even back in secondary school. It makes sense that she went on to study Art and Architecture at university, and she graduated with a Bachelor of Theatre Art from the University of Tehran. During her uni years, Sahra took many opportunities to be involved in student productions as a writer, actor, costume and set designer. Since being granted permanent residency in Australia in 2019, Sahra has gone on to become a citizen. These days, Sahra spends most of her time studying and writing, as she is currently undertaking her Masters in Theatre Writing. Sahra’s first professional acting work in Australia was

performing in Outer Urban Projects’ dance theatre work, Vessel as part of Melbourne Fringe Festival, at the Arts Centre Melbourne. She followed this up with Conquest of the Garden, which was nominated for a prestigious Green Room Award. Sahra is now an Associate Artist with OUP, and her upcoming projects include the development of Vigil, also at Outer Urban Projects. As a child, she loved all kinds of movies, particularly the iconic romance, Gone with the Wind, and Sahra also really loved being involved with backstage activities for productions. If Sahra could sit with her childhood self and share some wise advice which would serve her well in the years to follow, Sahra would offer three powerful words: ‘believe in yourself.’



MILAD NOROUZI (He / Him) WRITER / ACTOR

Milad is a rapper, singer-songwriter and performer whose creative life began in the underground rap studios of Tehran. At just 17, he fled Iran after recording an anti-establishment song that found its way into the hands of the Iranian “morality police”, the Basij. ‘These police, they have all the good jobs, and people who go to university and have all the knowledge, they are driving taxis – this is what I wrote about in my rap,’ Milad explains. Milad had to flee persecution and made a long, perilous journey to Australia to seek asylum. He waited – first in Iraq, then Malaysia, Indonesia and finally Australia for a permanent home for more than two years. He describes this period as ‘a long journey, all on my own.’

Milad joined Outer Urban Projects in 2015 after attending its remount of Poetic License at Darebin Arts Centre. As a writer, performer and actor, he has written and performed in the company’s major works and has also recorded his moody underground EP, The Little Lionheart in the company’s Urban Studio. Milad Norouzi used rapping and poetry to help him learn English. His rap, which he performs in a mix of Persian and English, talks about censorship in Tehran, and his journey to Australia. Milad also created original music and song for The Audition; you can read more about this process later in this pack. Milad does love living here, but also finds it difficult at times.



EVANGELOS ARABATZIS (He / Him) ACTOR

Evangelos is an award-winning writer, director and performer, who is fluent in both Greek and English. This is his first performance with Outer Urban Projects, but he has been in love with performance making, in all its forms, for a long time. At school, he loved studying Psychology, English and Drama, and vividly remembers at age 17, watching a midnight screening at the Westgarth Theatre of a film that had been previously banned for 20 years. A Clockwork Orange instilled in him a love of the absurd and gave him a new understanding about the expansive possibilities of film, completely opening up a

world of film language for him. After training as an actor, Evangelos found himself in London, searching the West End entertainment guide, when he came across a name that sounded familiar: Harold Pinter. What he remembers most distinctly from sitting in the legendary Duke of York's Theatre, watching No Man's Land, was the silence. The crackling electricity between the words. That experience has stayed with him, and he takes the power of silence with him every time he performs. If Evangelos could have a quiet word with his younger self, he would suggest that he leave school at the end of Year 11 and join a theatre company, and just act and act and act. But he is not entirely convinced his younger self would've listened... however; that's another story!



VAHIDEH EISAEI (She / Her) KANUN* / MUSICIAN

The glorious kanun* playing that you experience when watching The Audition is created by Vahideh Eisaei. An Iranian-Australian artist, composer and storyteller, now based in Melbourne, Vahideh completed a Bachelor of Music at Tehran University and, after migrating to Australia in 2008, she completed her Masters of Music. But back in high school, Vahideh's favourite subjects were actually Literature and History. She has composed for the kanun*, cello, oud, clarinet and voice, and has played in Europe, the Middle East and Australia.

Working with Outer Urban Projects on The Audition, she learnt that being a migrant has many layers that are not always understood by the new land's people. Vahideh is particularly proud of having written, composed and performed a work called Love's Universe is Inside You at the Melbourne Recital Centre. This was Vahideh's first storytelling experience; she drew inspiration from her Persian heritage. If she could give her younger self any advice, Vahideh would be sure to encourage confidence in her own abilities, noting that she should 'embrace the essence of creativity, for in art lies the true expression of oneself.' Nowadays, she spends most of her time writing music, and exploring all concepts that come to mind, confident that she'll bring some of them to life someday.



PHOTO - Sarah Walker



Click this link to meet the rest of the Creative Team behind The Audition.

THEATRE ETIQUETTE

ENHANCE YOUR EXPERIENCE OF ATTENDING THE AUDITION

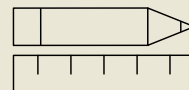
- The Audition runs for approximately 70 minutes, without an interval.
- Please use the bathroom prior to the show beginning, and avoid eating in the theatre as this can be distracting and messy.
- Outer Urban Projects asks you to avoid taking notes during the performance; focus on engaging with the show as it happens.
- We also ask you to keep your phone switched off, and in your bag.
- However, if you are participating in a post-show Q&A, feel free to take notes or audio record the session. Please do not film performers or facilitators without explicit consent.
- Our post-performance education Q&A sessions run for between 20-30 minutes, depending on the audience's questions. Please engage with our creative team in this forum; we love talking about our work with you.
- It's also a great idea to prepare for the performance by engaging with the pre-show contextual information, activities and ideas contained in this pack.



Sahra Davoudi | The Audition
PHOTO - Darren Gill



Mary Sitarenos, Marcus McKenzie
& Sahra Davoudi | The Audition Creative Development
PHOTO - Darren Gill



ACTIVITY

Here you will read Irine Vela, Director of The Audition, discussing the importance of navigating the rehearsal room conscientiously and respectfully as a director, in order to create a safe space for actors to do their best work:

‘As a director you have power in the room and you need to be conscious of this. The more experienced or senior actor might also have power in the room; indeed, everyone has some power. The rehearsal room can be stressful as well as exhilarating. In this context, power can be misused, just like in the work, The Audition. Nowadays, there is an expectation of safe and ethical practice. And that’s a good thing. There has to be respect and dignity. We should not misuse our power by blaming others for something that’s not working. When I think back to my early years, the sexism, racism, misogyny and sometimes the bullying that many of us endured was treated as part of life... you just got on with it. And of course all of this still happens, but this isn’t right. The movement for safe workplaces and codes of conduct have allowed me to reflect on those early years and even my own flaws as an arts worker. We are all human. We make mistakes and say things we shouldn’t at times. Codes of conduct are tools that guide and assist us to being better workers and humans in the workplace. I expect my rehearsal room to be respectful and kind.’

Considering the emphasis on Safe and Ethical work practices in VCE Theatre Studies, as you progress through this education pack, HIGHLIGHT any themes, events and ideas raised in The Audition which you feel may potentially warrant a sensitive content warning.



**Click on this link to preview
OUP's Workplace Behaviour Policy**

VOCABULARY

HERE ARE SOME TERMS WHICH ARE RELEVANT TO THE AUDITION. THEY APPEAR IN THIS PACK, OR IN THE SHOW ITSELF, AND WILL BE USEFUL TO COMPREHEND WHEN ANALYSING THIS PERFORMANCE.

457 VISA - Also known as the Temporary Work visa, this allowed skilled workers from overseas to work for an approved employer in Australia for up to 4 years. It was commonly used by employers to fill skilled labour shortages in various industries. Some employers were accused of taking advantage of 457 visa holders through poor working conditions and underpayment, and after calls for reform, the visa was scrapped.

ACTIVISM - Passionately advocating for social or political causes, whether through organising events, participating in protests, or using social media to raise awareness. It's about actively contributing to movements and working towards positive change to shape a better future.

ADVOCACY - Supporting a cause or issue by speaking up, sharing information, and championing what you believe in to influence people or policies for positive change.

AGIT-PROP THEATRE - Originating in the Soviet Union in the early 20th century, agit-prop theatre aims to advance socialist and revolutionary ideas. A combination of two words: 'agitation' referring to the promotion of political ideas, and 'propaganda' which involves disseminating information to influence public opinion. Often developed collaboratively by a group of artists or writers, rather than relying on a single playwright or director, agit-prop's collective approach reflects the socialist ideals of equality and collaboration. Agit-prop theatre aims to reach those who may not typically engage with traditional theatre; therefore, these performances are often held in non-traditional spaces, such as factories, streets, or community centres, bringing the message directly to the people.

AHISTORICAL - A perspective or approach that lacks consideration or awareness of historical context, events, or factors. It suggests a disregard for the significance of past events or the influence of history on present

circumstances. An ahistorical viewpoint may overlook the impact of historical events on shaping societies, cultures, and individuals' experiences, leading to a limited understanding of the complexities of human history and the world.

ALLEGORY - A symbolic story that can be interpreted to reveal a hidden or parallel meaning beyond the literal narrative.

DRAMATURGY - Study undertaken in support of theatrical productions, particularly into the historical and cultural contexts of scripts. It involves research for, and alongside, the director and/or writer/s during the planning and development stages of playmaking, to create a deeper understanding for the audience in the presentation stage. A Dramaturg is a dedicated member of a show's production team responsible for performing this role.

EUGENICS - Historically associated with discriminatory and coercive practices, including forced sterilisation, segregation, and even genocide, eugenics are a set of practices motivated by 'improving' the genetic quality of the human population through controlled breeding and selection. It involves the promotion of certain desirable traits and the discouragement or elimination of others, largely based on notions of superiority and inferiority. Eugenics has been widely condemned for its ethical implications and violations of human rights.

EUROCENTRIC - A worldview, perspective, or approach that is centred on or biased towards European culture, history, and values, often to the exclusion or marginalisation of other cultures and perspectives. It emphasises the importance and superiority of European ideas, achievements, and experiences while downplaying or disregarding the contributions and perspectives of non-Europeans. Eurocentrism perpetuates inequalities and distortions in the representation of global history and culture.

EVIN PRISON - A notorious detention centre located in Tehran, Iran, renowned for its harsh conditions and reports of human rights abuses. Evin is known for the interrogations, torture, and imprisonment of political prisoners, journalists, activists, and individuals critical of the Iranian government. The prison's role extends beyond just incarceration; it serves as a symbol of repression and control in Iran and is condemned by human rights organisations and advocacy groups worldwide.

EXPLICIT - Clearly and directly expressed, leaving no room for ambiguity or misunderstanding. It can involve detail, information or content that is openly stated and straightforward, without relying on implication or inference.

IDEOLOGY - A set of beliefs and ideas that shape how people see the world and guide their opinions about what's right or wrong. It's the lens through which individuals understand society, politics, and their own values.

IMPLICIT - Something that is suggested or understood but not directly expressed. It involves implied meanings or ideas that are conveyed indirectly through context, tone, or the nature of the situation rather than being explicitly* stated.

IMPROVISATION - The act of creating or performing spontaneously without prior preparation or planning. In theatre or music, improvisation involves generating content, responses, or actions on the spot, often in collaboration with others, relying on creativity, intuition, and immediate decision-making.

INTERTEXTUAL - The relationship between different texts, where one text is influenced by, refers to or incorporates elements from another. Intertextuality involves the conscious or unconscious use of existing texts, ideas, or cultural references to create new meanings or enrich the understanding of a particular work.

INTERSECTIONAL DISADVANTAGE - This concept explains how people may experience overlapping forms of discrimination or disadvantage, eg, prejudice based on a combination of ethnicity, gender identity, age, sexual identity etc.

KANUN - A type of string instrument that is similar to a zither or a horizontal harp, widely used in the Middle East, North Africa, and Central Asia. Typically trapezoidal in shape, it's played by plucking the strings with fingers or a plectrum. Known for its distinctive sound, its range is between three to four octaves and it adds a unique melodic and rhythmic element to the music it features in.

LITERARY CANON - A (now old-fashioned) term used by academics to describe texts that are considered to be of great value due to their artistic and intellectual quality. These have traditionally also been the texts that reinforce the world view of the dominant social group(s). ie: cis, heterosexual, middle- upper class, able-bodied, 'educated', white men.

MADAR BOZORG - Persian (Farsi) translates to 'grandmother' in English.

MAKAM - Also known as maqam, is a system of melodic modes used in traditional Middle Eastern, Turkish, and Central Asian music. Each makam is characterised by a unique set of melodic patterns, scales, ornamentations, and rules for improvisation*. Makams are similar to musical modes in Western music but often have more complex structures and can evoke specific moods or emotions. In performance, musicians improvise and compose melodies within the framework of a particular makam, adhering to its rules and conventions while also adding personal expression and creativity.

NESHOON KARDE - In The Audition this phrase in Persian/ Farsi translates as a marked person - a woman with a 'soiled reputation'.

OTHERING - To treat someone as different or alien as a means of exclusion, based on characteristics such as race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexuality, or socioeconomic status. Othering generally involves centreing one's own community or viewpoint, thereby marginalising, discriminating against, stereotyping, and dehumanising people not viewed as part of this group.

PAEAN - An enthusiastic expression of praise, tribute, or celebration. It is used to honour a person, an achievement, or a significant event, and can take the form of a song, poem, or another artistic expression.

PATHOS - Refers to the power of a person or piece of art to evoke deep sadness in an audience particularly through the use of empathy.

PEDAR BOZORG - Persian (Farsi) translates to 'grandfather' in English.

POIGNANT - Refers to moments, experiences, or expressions that evoke a keen sense of sadness or are profoundly moving or touching.

SCHEHERAZADE - A legendary character from the Middle Eastern collection of stories known as One Thousand and One Nights, also called Arabian Nights. Scheherazade tells the King a series of captivating tales every night, leaving each story unfinished at dawn, thus compelling the King to spare her life for another day so he can hear the ending. Through her wit, intelligence, and storytelling prowess, Scheherazade ultimately wins the King's heart and convinces him to abandon his cruel ways. She is celebrated as a symbol of courage, resilience, and the power of storytelling.

SPARTAN - Unembellished or simple. Often used to describe something that is simple or austere. For example, a spartan room might lack luxury or decoration.

STATUS QUO - A Latin phrase that literally refers to the 'current state of things'. People who have done well out of the 'current state of things' are often unwilling to see any need for societal change. It is often used as a mildly derogatory phrase with connotations of narrow-mindedness or conservative attitudes.

SUNNIS AND SHIAS - The two main branches of Islam. Sunnis make up the majority of the Muslim population worldwide, comprising around 85-90%. Sunnis believe that leadership should be chosen through consensus or election among qualified individuals, and regard the first four successors to Prophet Muhammad as legitimate leaders. Shias, also known as Shiites make up around 10-15% of the global Muslim population and believe that leadership should have remained within Prophet Muhammad's family, who are believed

to be divinely appointed leaders. Sunnis and Shias share many core beliefs and practices; however, core differences have sometimes led to tensions and conflicts throughout history, particularly in regions where both communities coexist.

VERNACULAR - The language spoken by ordinary people in a particular country or area. It is an informal language style used every day, often full of slang terms and abbreviations, g: 'g'day' instead of 'good-day'.

VIGNETTE - A short, evocative, and descriptive scene that captures a moment, character, or impression. It is often concise and focused, providing a brief snapshot or glimpse into a larger narrative or theme.

WHIRLING DERVISH - A practitioner of the Mevlevi Order, a Sufi Muslim order founded in Turkey. Known for their distinctive form of worship called the Sama ceremony, they engage in a meditative, spinning dance known as the 'Whirling Dance' or 'Sufi Whirling'. During this practice, the dervishes spin in repetitive circles, symbolising their spiritual journey and striving to achieve a state of connection with the divine. The whirling dance is often accompanied by music and chanting, creating a mesmerising and transcendent experience for both the participants and the audience.

THEATRICAL STYLES

ABSURDISM - Absurdist plays often feature characters who struggle to make sense of their existence. The style often explores themes of alienation, the search for meaning in an uncertain world, and the human condition in the face of an indifferent universe.

ECLECTIC THEATRE - A theatrical approach or style that draws on a diverse range of influences, techniques, and elements from various sources, rather than adhering strictly to a single tradition or genre. Here, creators combine elements from different theatrical movements to produce a unique and often innovative theatrical experience. The emphasis in eclectic theatre is often on the creative cohesion of these different elements rather than strictly adhering to a particular style.

METATHEATRE - Theatre that self-consciously comments on its own nature and conventions, highlighting the artificiality of the theatrical experience. A form of theatre that draws attention to the fact that the performance is a performance, rather than creating the illusion of 'real life', or attempting to seduce an audience into a make-believe artificial world.

MULTI-AUTHORED THEATRE - Collaboratively created productions that challenge traditional notions of authorship and storytelling in theatre, with creative ownership and responsibility distributed among the contributors. The inclusion of multiple authors allows for a diversity of voices, experiences, and perspectives.

POLITICAL THEATRE - A form of drama that explicitly* addresses and engages with political issues, ideologies, or events, seeking to use the stage as a platform for exploring, critiquing, and reflecting upon politics and society. Many political plays highlight the experiences of marginalised or disenfranchised groups, and are explicitly* aligned with activism and advocacy*, but can also be presented more subtly or allegorically. Intending to provoke thought and discussion about our political landscape, political theatre also aims to inspire social change by encouraging its audience to reflect on their own beliefs, values, and the political climate in which they live.

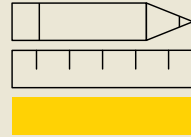




Vahideh Eisaei | The Audition
PHOTO - Darren Gill



Mary Sitarenos & Sahra Davoudi | The Audition
PHOTO - Darren Gill



ACTIVITY

READ the following moments from an interview with Irine Vela, Director, and drawing from the definitions above, FILL IN the four blanks below to indicate which theatrical styles Irine is referencing here:

'I remember being in a rehearsal where the director and set designer wanted to cover all the amps and keyboard with black fabric. They also requested that the musicians have their backs towards the audience. When I asked why – the response was that the audience would find it difficult to accept the musicians being on stage as it may confuse them – especially in a play or a text-based work. They were worried the audience might think, 'Ooh, why are musicians here?' This also applied to seeing musical equipment on stage. I have always been perplexed by this approach, which is also quite literal, although I do appreciate why directors are worried about distractions. I mean, we accept seeing the lights, footlights and speakers in a theatre space without blinking an eye.

'And some directors still have an issue with that. But I just thought, 'look, these are the mechanics, and we can actually see them, you're seeing the mechanics. _____ is about the contrived nature of what theatre is, and that can be implied through showing gear and lights or alluding to it. With The Audition, there's a little bit of _____ when we begin with a curtain call. That was me saying, 'let's do this because we're looking at theatre. We're looking at an audition. We're looking at asylum seekers pretending to be people that they're not... It may be a lie, it may not'.



'Although there is that _____ element, I wouldn't say it's an _____ play. Waiting for Godot was an early inspiration for making the work as Milad and Ezeldine, who took part in the first development of the work, reminded me of the characters Vladimir and Estragon.

'And I do think that the provocation we are asking here is: Is there an analogy between asylum seekers and actors auditioning? Is there a truth to it? Because they're not actually similar, they're two completely different things. It's almost insulting to say that the actor is like an asylum seeker, because they're two different experiences and, arguably, the stakes are very different. You have to be really careful, but I think it's true that they share one thing in common: Waiting and continuing to wait without totally losing hope. As a metaphor, it is both true and interesting.'

INTERTEXTUAL REFERENCES

SUMMER OF THE SEVENTEENTH DOLL

Synopsis:

Summer of the Seventeenth Doll is an Australian play written by Ray Lawler and first performed in Melbourne in 1955. The play is considered significant in Australian theatre history as a 'turning point' through its naturalistic and authentic portrayal of a distinctly Australian life, peopled with recognisably 'Aussie' characters. As Marta tells us in the first scene of The Audition, Summer of the Seventeenth Doll was also famous for being 'the first [play] to use the Australian vernacular*, its rhythms, its sayings'. The play is set in Carlton, Melbourne, in the summer of 1953 and revolves around the lives of 4 main characters. Two stereotypically masculine cane-cutters, Barney and Roo, work in the cane fields for 7 months of the year. They then come south to Melbourne... for 5 months of light-hearted living with 'their' women - Olive and Nancy. Every year Roo brings Olive a Kewpie (Cupid) doll, hence the title of the play.

Set in summer, the fun of the past has soured, and relationships begin to fray under new tensions and long-held (and long-suppressed) disappointments.

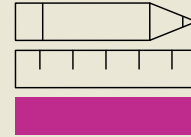
The play ends with the men leaving the women before the summer has finished, sparking bitterness toward each other which exposes irreparable rifts in all the relationships.



Kewpie Doll | Summer of the Seventeenth Doll
MTC | 1995

LINKS TO THE AUDITION:

The first scene of this play is called The Doll. Marta, a second-generation immigrant, holds the audience rapt in her captivating monologue. We see a series of fluid transformations between Marta's audition for the part of Olive and a more intimate exposé of her experiences with the racist gatekeeping of our Australian stages.



ACTIVITIES

1. As you read the synopsis, **HIGHLIGHT** what aspects of it encourage a reader to the conclusion that all of the characters in Lawler's play are white. In pairs, **DISCUSS** what conclusions you can draw about the world of Australian theatre, reviewers and audiences in the 1950s.
2. **RESEARCH** what the word 'vernacular'* means, then write your own definition. Go online and find a script of The Summer of the Seventeenth Doll then select from the script at least 10 examples of Aussie vernacular*. **REFLECT**, are they words you would use? **DISCUSS** as a class what this tells us about vernacular*.
3. **EXAMINE** the symbolism of the Kewpie doll. **WRITE** the word 'doll' on your page and **CREATE** a 60 second brainstorm/mind-map around it. Now do the same for the word 'Cupid'. **DISCUSS** briefly in pairs, and then as a class, what connections Lawler was inviting his 1950s audience to make. Extend your discussion to contrast how today's audience is likely to interpret those same symbols. **DEBATE** as a class what this tells us about whether the meanings of symbols are static or fluid.
4. Marta declares and then *demonstrates* to the audience her capacity to understand Olive and to 'be' her. **COMPOSE** at least 3 sentences **EXPLORING** the impact of the final line, voiced by an auditioner but through Marta, "*Olive's white*".
5. **CONSIDER** the complexity of the layers of performance within this scene: there is an actor playing Marta, who weaves back and forth between playing 'herself', 'Olive' and 'an auditioner'. The audience must use their own imaginations to recognise these different voices and process the *layers of meaning*. With a partner, **ANALYSE** and **ANNOTATE** the lines:
'What accent? I'm Australian, I have an Australian accent.'
'Olive's Australian. Dinky di Australian.'

THE TROJAN WOMEN

Synopsis:

The plays of the Ancient Greeks (written two and a half *thousand* years ago) are considered to be the foundation of Western literature. The Literary Canon* has long been dominated by these texts, seen by many as prime examples of the ongoing power of dead, white men. However many now argue that the ancient culture of the Hellenes was appropriated by the West. The fight to return the Parthenon Marbles from the British museum back to Greece is part of the movement to decolonise museums and their collections.

Euripides', a famous Athenian playwright, wrote The Trojan Women in 415 B.C.E. It is believed that he meant it as a criticism of the brutalities committed by the Athenian army in recent battles for more territory.

Euripides' play follows the fates of the women of Troy after their city has been sacked, their husbands killed, and all women and children taken away as slaves. This is a play that looks at how power is held, and fought over, by men. It exposes in detail the trauma, devastation and loss caused by these wars upon those who have little/no power at all - women and children.

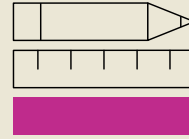
So whilst some might consider Euripides to be another dead, white, male artist, he did use his artform to criticise those in power for abusing the vulnerable.



Ulysses throws the infant Astynax from the walls in front of the powerless Andromache. IMAGE - Wikipedia

LINKS TO THE AUDITION:

It is through the character of Ava, a young, highly skilled and experienced Iranian actor, that readers/audiences of The Audition see Hecuba. Through Ava's eyes, this ancient tale is made shockingly modern as we realise that Hecuba's experience is still being repeated over and over throughout the war-torn countries of our world. Hecuba, Queen of Troy, is first seen lying face down in the dust in front of the ruins of her city. Over the course of the play, she sees her women-friends and family dealt out to the Greek victors as objects to be used, exploited or killed as punishment/sacrifice. Hecuba's treatment at the hands of the Greeks becomes metaphorical for asylum seekers' treatment by the bureaucracies and institutions and social attitudes of conservative Australians.

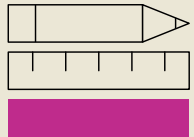


ACTIVITIES

1. Look up the term 'Literary Canon'. Read at least 3 definitions including the one in our Vocabulary section. WRITE down common features of authors and texts that make it into the Canon*. DISCUSS in small groups, or as a whole class, how The Literary Canon* might affect texts like The Audition.
2. Go to the Vocabulary section of this resource and re-read definitions of the following terms: *metaphor**, *allegory**, *intertextuality**. FIND and HIGHLIGHT quotes from Ava's audition scene that demonstrates each of these concepts. WRITE at least 3 full sentences explaining how each vocabulary term operates in this scene and including your chosen quote as evidence. (HINT: the LINKS section above has some examples.)
3. In the first of Ava's audition scenes, she is being given advice from her friend Vida. Re-read that exchange and IDENTIFY 5 specific things that she warns Ava about conservative, white Australian beliefs. In pairs, LOCATE at least 4 warnings and then DISCUSS how these might impact asylum seekers and immigrants in everyday life.

REFERENCES TO SHAKESPEARE - BOTH DIRECT AND INDIRECT

Ava says “everything I know about the English language I learnt from that production” referring to when she played Ariel in Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*. In this scene, she demonstrates extensive theatrical experience and impressive multilingual abilities as she compares the far older language of Farsi / Persian to its younger ‘trickster’ language, English. The auditioner dismisses her insights completely.



ACTIVITIES

- Using the lens of Exploration of Language, break into groups of 3.
- In your groups, allocate one of the following language forms to each member, then RESEARCH:
 - 1) Farsi (also known as Persian) - its history and origins;
 - 2) English Language - its history and origins;OR
 - 3) Shakespearean English- significant dates and his influence on Western theatre and literature.
- DISCUSS for 5 minutes your findings with your group of 3.
- CONSTRUCT a timeline with all of your findings on it.
- EXPLORE for 5 minutes different ways of INTERPRETING that timeline.
- DEBATE for 5 minutes the topic: ‘Immigrants and asylum seekers have their prior skills, knowledge and expertise dismissed because they don’t speak English as their mother-tongue and have “an accent”.’



Milad Norouzi | [The Audition](#)
PHOTO - Darren Gill

ALL THE WORLD'S A STAGE

AS A CHILD I SUSPECTED THAT EVERYONE ELSE WAS AN ACTOR IN A PLAY PUT ON AT MY EXPENSE.



AS A TEEN I FELT THE EYES OF AN UNSEEN AUDIENCE CRITIQUING MY EVERY MOVE.



AS AN ADULT I'VE JOINED A CRAZY IMPROVISED PERFORMANCE WHERE EACH OF US STAR IN A SHOW OF OUR CREATION.



GRANT SNIDER

2. EXAMINE the metaphor at the heart of the speech and INTERPRET it into your own words. EXPLAIN what is meant by 'exits' and 'entrances', and by 'player', 'part' and 'acts'.
3. The Introduction to The Audition points out that, whilst Shakespeare's metaphor is an old one, we must acknowledge that 'not every player has equal access to the stage'.

WRITE: In small groups, IDENTIFY as many ways as you can that this metaphor of 'life as theatre' / 'asylum-seeking as audition' plays out in The Audition.

TALK & LISTEN: SHARE each groups' thinking with the whole class.

TALK & LISTEN: As a class now DISCUSS how metaphor (or analogy) can help audiences to deepen their understanding of something they haven't directly experienced for themselves.

WRITE: In pairs, CREATE your own version of the "All the world's a stage" speech using the ideas that your class discussion generated.

4. CONSIDER this quote from Milad Norouzi's Beautiful Jail: 'Life passes quickly. Babies are born, babies are toddlers, toddlers are kids, kids are teenagers, teenagers are adults, adults are middle ages, middle ages are old people, they are dying.'

COMPARE the thematic links between this quote and the ideas and language within Shakespeare's As you Like It. Using reference to The Audition, CREATE your own cartoon of the stages of life. You may draw on the metaphor of 'life is a stage' or you may like to come up with your own metaphor.

EXPERIENCE THE MUSIC OF OUTER URBAN PROJECTS

Outer Urban Projects has a strong musical culture that finds expression across all platforms of the Company's work. In our major works, music and song feature profoundly and are usually performed live. This can be from 'gigging' and community and corporate events, to theatrical performances and film scores. Many of our artists have strong music practices and collectively cover multiple genres of music from many cultures. The musical spectrum is far-reaching and includes Hip Hop, Gospel, and classical and contemporary Global music.

ENJOY THESE LINKS TO SOME OF OUTER URBAN PROJECT'S MUSICAL EXPLORATIONS:



GRAND DIVISIONS - A MOVED URBAN CANTATA



VESSEL



LIONHEART



REVELATIONS



Vahideh Eisaei | [The Audition](#)
PHOTO - Darren Gill

EXPERIENCE THE MUSIC OF THE AUDITION

Goodbye

Music and Lyrics Milad Norouzi

Here the Director, Irine Vela, who is also a composer and musician, discusses the music of the play. 'The Audition uses a Near & Middle Eastern zither called the kanun*, alongside guitar and vocals to provide incidental and bridging music and song. This aims to create both tension and relief in the show. These musical components of The Audition are rendered live and acoustically – and the presence of the music becomes another voice, like another character in the space.

'When the scripts were first being workshopped, I considered using the West African kora – an instrument akin to the harp. I thought that a plucked instrument would be ideal because its dynamic range is narrower, so single notes and chords can provide support without getting in the way of the text. As the plays developed further, I thought about adding the kanun* with the kora, but in the end, we just went with kanun* as it felt the most appropriate for the work given the presence of Iran in the work and because I had recently become aware of a wonderful kanun* player, Vahideh Eisaei. The 1-4 ratio of musician to performers seemed right for a text based work and an intimate theatre such as La Mama Theatre. It was important for the sound / score to not be overproduced. It had to have human proportions.

'My approach was to suggest a makam* / mode, as well as keys and tempi that would ultimately complement the tonality of the end song by Milad. Vahideh crafted a musical response that worked effectively with the action; her playing and her improvised interludes were sublime... Milad has a beautiful touch on the guitar and a unique voice, and he also provided musical support by extending his extraordinary song Goodbye throughout the closing section of the show. His music, lyrics / poetry and vocals create true pathos* with his song becoming the centrepiece of the finale.'

Intro Em D C C D D Em
andante/free time, molto rubato

7 *rubato* Em D
by - e, To the su - n, To the

11 C Em
moo - n, Good - by - e, To the

15 D C
sky - y, To the sta - rs, Good

19 Em D (spoken)
by - e, To the oc - ean To the

23 C Em
sea - ea Good by - - - ye, Wipe your

27 D C **To Coda**
te - ea - rs, Off your Chee - k

31 C D D Em E
This is the last so -

CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

Historical Context of Outer Urban Projects

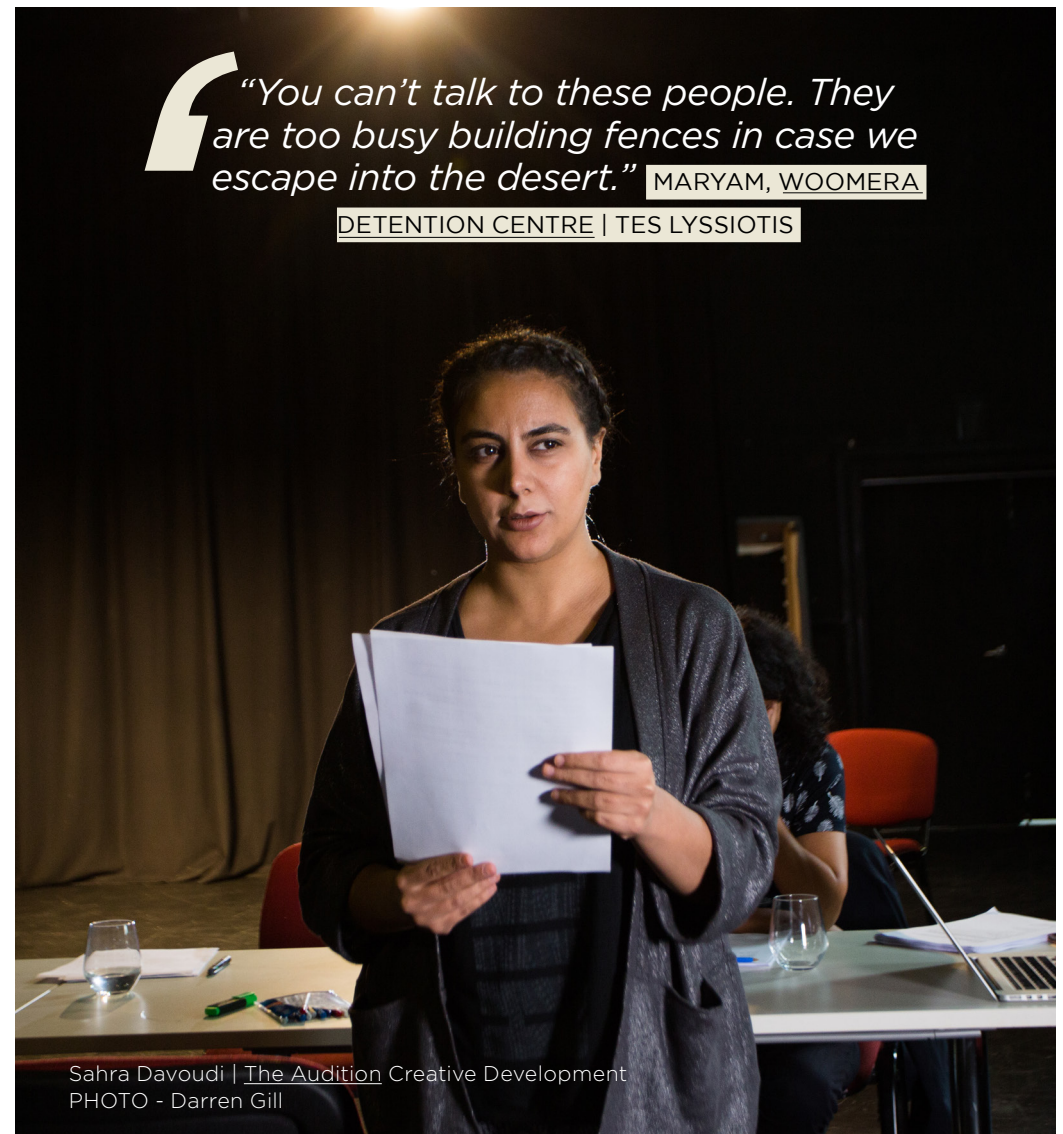
Artistic Director, co-CEO and co-founder of Outer Urban Projects, Irine Vela, began her life in the arts sector working with politically motivated artists. She recalls, 'Marxism was my training ground. Marxism provided a way of understanding the world of history and art. I was given books to read such as John Berger's seminal book Ways of Seeing, Cornelius Cardew's Stockhausen Serves Imperialism, and Simone de Beauvoir's The Second Sex. Making theatre and operating politically were combined practices. Working with radical artists and companies, such as Melbourne Workers Theatre (MWT), sharpened my intellect. I learned to scratch beneath the surface to explore what has motivated ideology and art historically, and to interrogate the role of class in society and its reflection in art.'

Irine was a founding, core ensemble member of Melbourne Workers Theatre. She recalls, 'That company gave me significant opportunities. I have no doubt that I got that gig because I had some talent, but also because they wanted to positively discriminate; to give me, a young woman from a non-English speaking, immigrant background, a chance to contribute to the arts in Australia. It was life changing.'

A year after she joined MWT, Irine's co-CEO and co-founder at Outer Urban Projects, Kate Gillick, joined MWT as an actor, so these two go back a long way. It's fair to say that their time together at Melbourne Workers Theatre certainly influenced the why, the how and the way they make work together at Outer Urban Projects, alongside the company's third co-founder and General Manager, David Ralph.

OUP evolved out of ten years of artistic and community work in the outer north, involving many current OUP artists. This was initially a response to the racism and discrimination experienced by Middle Eastern communities following the bombing of the Twin Towers in America, in 2001. (Read more about this historical context below.) It was a project called the 'Anti Racism Arab Band' (A.R.A.B.), begun by the Victorian Arabic Social Services. This work grew into a vibrant community and artistic movement. From here, David, Kate, and Irine founded and built Outer Urban Projects with the support of many artists, arts workers, partners and board members.

Irine says, 'In my role at Outer Urban Projects, a Community & Cultural Development Performing Arts Organisation, I am now in a position to continue the ethos I encountered in my time with Melbourne Workers Theatre. At OUP, we aim to nurture a community of artists from underrepresented and hidden communities, and to privilege their creativity. We do try to defy the



Sahra Davoudi | The Audition Creative Development
PHOTO - Darren Gill

"You can't talk to these people. They are too busy building fences in case we escape into the desert." MARYAM, WOOMERA

DETENTION CENTRE | TES LYSSIOTIS

ahistorical* view of the Australian performing arts that silos and ghettoises artists from our immigrant communities. By intentionally bridging this divide, such artists are now able to learn about or connect with their contemporaries and predecessors who've built Australian culture before them. Now they too can contribute to building our culture. Through creating this connection, we are broadening the scope and notion of identity, we are affirming that these artists are multidimensional, and Australian, and contemporary. We are reiterating that their power as creatives is paramount, and encouraging such artists to believe that they have every right to contribute to the artistic legacy of Australia.'

Serial N^o 142049
ME 1331


Issued at Athens, GREECE. 632

INTERNATIONAL REFUGEE ORGANIZATION

CERTIFICATE OF IDENTITY FOR THE PURPOSE OF IMMIGRATION TO AUSTRALIA

823

- The holder of this Certificate is the concern of International Refugee Organization.
- This Certificate is issued by the International Refugee Organization with the approval of the Allied authorities of Occupation in Germany and Austria to Refugees and Displaced Persons recommended for emigration to Australia. It is issued without prejudice to and in no way affects the holders' nationality.
- This certificate is valid for travel unless it bears the signature of the I.R.O. certifying officer AND a valid Visa and the appropriate military exit permit has been granted.



FAMILY NAME VELA CHRISTIAN NAMES Hairulla

MAIDEN NAME (where applicable) _____

DATE OF BIRTH 1.12.1928 SEX Male DP NO. 1.156.761

PLACE AND COUNTRY OF BIRTH Tetovo, Yugoslavia.

NATIONALITY Albanian

OCCUPATION Labourer

FATHER'S NAME Myleim

MOTHER'S MAIDEN NAME Hamdije Taco

(Signature of Applicant) *Christian Vela*

Description of holder

Height 168 cm Weight 67 kg Children up to 16 years accompanying holder. (Dependents over 16 years of age must have separate document).

Hair brown Eyes blue Nose straight Shape of Face round

Special Characteristics _____

Resettlement Officer (Signature and Position of I.R.O. Certifying Officer)

Date 13th December, 1949. Place Athens, GREECE.

NAME	SEX	PLACE AND DATE OF BIRTH
[Stamp]		[Stamp]

31 MAR 1950 at Australian Department Immigration Office, ATHENS, GREECE

VISTO IMMIGRARE

Exit Permit Visa No. _____

dated _____ issued _____

The holder will be admitted to Australia under the provisions of the Migration Act, 1901-1949, for a period of two years.

VALID for a period of _____ months from this date.

Good for SINGLE JOURNEY ONLY

Visa No. 1151. Date JAN 18 1950

Officer-in-Charge.

Social and Historical Context of The Audition

AUSTRALIA'S HISTORY OF IMMIGRATION

Australia's relationship with immigration has been complex and multifaceted, deeply rooted in its colonial history and evolving in response to changing social, economic, and political dynamics. The arrival of European settlers saw the displacement, dispossession, and multiple attempts at genocide of the First Nations people of Australia. This shameful and largely unaddressed national history lays the foundations for enduring tensions and inequalities in Australia's immigration policies.

Throughout much of its history, Australia's immigration policies have been shaped by a tension between openness and exclusion, reflecting competing interests and ideologies. While immigration has been touted as essential for nation-building and economic development, particular agendas motivated by eugenics* and cultural gatekeeping have been driven under the guise of concerns about national identity, and security. This underlying motivation is undeniably evident in policies such as the White Australia Policy, which sought to restrict non-European immigration and promote racial homogeneity, and the assimilationist approach towards Indigenous peoples, which aimed to erase cultural identity and demanded integration into a Eurocentric* way of life.

In recent decades, Australia's immigration policies have continued to be marked by controversy and debate, particularly in response to increasing globalisation, humanitarian crises, and changing patterns of migration. People seeking asylum, refugees, and border protection have all been highly politicised, in an attempt to fuel existing anxieties about national sovereignty, social cohesion, and cultural diversity.

The events of September 11, 2001, cast a shadow over Australia's immigration landscape, sparking heightened security measures and intensifying public scrutiny of migrants and refugees. The global 'War on Terror' led to increased surveillance and securitisation of borders, with disastrous policies such as mandatory detention and offshore processing being increasingly implemented.

SEPTEMBER 11, 2001 'WAR ON TERROR'

On this day, the United States experienced a series of coordinated terrorist attacks orchestrated by the extremist group al-Qaeda. Commercial airliners were hijacked and deliberately flown into the World Trade Centre's Twin Towers in New York City and the Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia, causing immense loss of life and catastrophic destruction. The attacks claimed the lives of nearly 3,000 innocent individuals from over 90 countries and left countless others injured or traumatised. This event fundamentally reshaped global politics, security policies, and societal norms.

An example of immigration papers issued by the UN agency IRO who organised the post-war settlement of displaced people and refugees.

Source: Vela family. Hajrulla Vela is the father of Irine Vela, the director of The Audition



THE 'WAR ON TERROR'

Following the terrorist attacks, the United States, in alliance with NATO forces, launched a military campaign known as 'Operation Enduring Freedom', with the primary objective of targeting al-Qaeda and ousting the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, which had harboured the terrorist group. The subsequent invasion and occupation led to widespread conflict, instability, and civilian casualties, worsening an already dire humanitarian situation in Afghanistan. The military intervention resulted in extensive destruction of infrastructure, displacement of populations, and loss of livelihoods, further deepening the country's poverty and socio-economic woes. The 'War on Terror' led to a surge in violence, including insurgent attacks, suicide bombings, and targeted killings, perpetuating a cycle of fear, trauma, and suffering for Afghan civilians. The presence of foreign troops and the ongoing conflict also fueled resentment, radicalisation, and anti-American sentiments among certain segments of the Afghan population, contributing to a prolonged period of insecurity and uncertainty.

PERSECUTION OF THE HAZARA PEOPLE

The persecution of Hazaras involves religious discrimination occurring predominantly in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Hazaras, primarily residing in these countries, have historically faced systematic discrimination and violence due to their ethnic and religious identity. As a predominantly Shia Muslim minority in predominantly Sunni Muslim societies, Hazaras have often been marginalised and excluded from mainstream society. This discrimination has presented in various forms, including limited access to education, employment, and political representation. Extremist groups like the Taliban and other militant factions have targeted Hazaras with deadly attacks, viewing them as heretics due to their Shia faith. These attacks, which have included bombings, shootings, and mass killings, have resulted in significant loss of life and perpetuating fear and insecurity within the Hazara community.

SIEV X SINKING

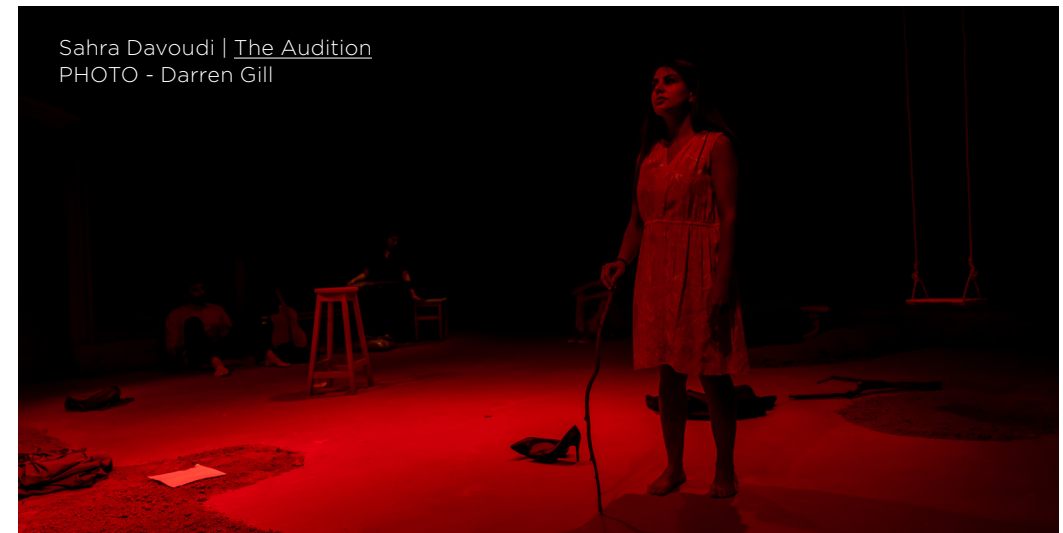
The sinking of SIEV X is the deadliest maritime disaster involving asylum seekers in Australia's history. On October 19, 2001, an overcrowded vessel, known as SIEV X (Suspected Illegal Entry Vessel X), sank en route to Australia's Christmas Island, resulting in the death of 353 people; 146 children, 142 women and 65 men. The communication within the Australian government regarding SIEV X (Suspected Illegal Entry Vessel X) was marred by inconsistencies, misinformation, and lack of transparency. In the aftermath of the tragedy, there were discrepancies and contradictions in the statements made by government officials regarding their knowledge of the vessel, its distress calls, and the response to the incident. Some government officials initially denied having knowledge of the boat's existence, while others suggested that it was not in distress or that its sinking occurred outside of Australian waters. These conflicting narratives fuelled public scepticism and raised questions about the government's handling of the situation, leading to calls for greater accountability and transparency in Australia's immigration policies and maritime operations.

The incident highlighted the reactionary political emphasis on border control, rather than a more compassionate humanitarian response. The sinking of SIEV X sparked widespread outrage and calls for greater accountability and compassion in Australia's immigration policies, serving as a stark reminder of the human cost of political indifference and bureaucratic failures.



TRIGGER WARNING: This excerpt from a documentary about the sinking of SIEV X contains distressing imagery and first person recounting of deaths of children.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wjVNLLtTNQY>



CHILDREN OVERBOARD DECEPTION

The 'Children Overboard' incident occurred in Australia in 2001 during the federal election campaign. It involved allegations made by the Australian government that asylum seekers aboard a boat had thrown children overboard in a bid to secure rescue and entry into Australia. These claims were later found to be unsubstantiated, with evidence proving that no children were thrown overboard. However, the government's use of misleading imagery and rhetoric to portray asylum seekers in a negative light, sparked controversy and criticism both domestically and internationally. The incident raised questions about the treatment of asylum seekers, the politicisation of immigration issues, and the use of fear tactics in political campaigning.

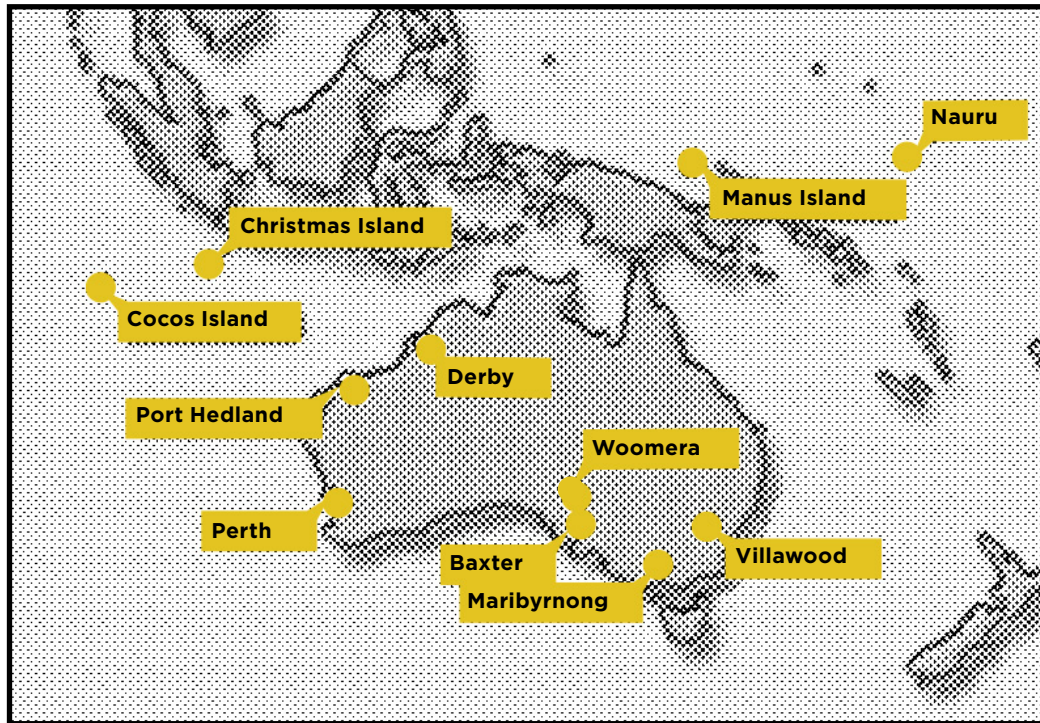


Click here to view the Liberal party's perpetuation of the 'Children Overboard' deception.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E3WJ10xGkas>

AUSTRALIA'S DETENTION POLICY

Australia's detention policy refers to the government's approach to locking up individuals who arrive in the country by boat without authorisation, particularly those seeking asylum. Under this policy, people intercepted while attempting to reach Australia by boat are subject to mandatory detention in offshore processing centres located in other countries, such as Papua New Guinea (Manus Island) and Nauru. Detainees undergo lengthy processing of their asylum claims, with the intention of either resettling them in third countries, returning them to their countries of origin if deemed safe, or granting them refugee status. This policy, commonly known as the 'Pacific Solution', has been criticised for its harsh treatment of asylum seekers, prolonged detention periods, and violations of international human rights standards.



THE PACIFIC SOLUTION

The Pacific Solution was an Australian government policy implemented in the early 2000s to dissuade asylum seekers from arriving by boat. Under this Liberal Government policy, spearheaded by John Howard, asylum seekers who arrived in Australian waters by boat were intercepted and transferred to offshore processing centres located on remote Pacific islands, such as Nauru and Manus Island in Papua New Guinea. These offshore centres were established to deter asylum seekers from attempting the dangerous

journey to Australia and to process their claims for refugee status outside of Australian territory. The policy was highly controversial and criticised for its harsh treatment of asylum seekers, prolonged detention periods, and violations of human rights. Despite being officially discontinued in 2008, elements of the Pacific Solution have been reintroduced and expanded in subsequent years, reflecting ongoing tension surrounding Australia's approach to asylum seekers and refugees.

MANUS ISLAND

Australia has established various highly controversial offshore facilities including the infamous detention centre on Manus Island. Our nation has drawn criticism for prolonged detention of asylum seekers in inadequate conditions, violations of human rights, and the lack of transparency and accountability in Australia's immigration policies. Despite ongoing scrutiny and various legal challenges, Australia continues to use Manus Island, and various other on and offshore detention centres, as a key component of its deterrence strategy, highlighting the complex and contentious nature of our approach to managing asylum seekers and refugees.



This news report covers Australians protesting the Australian government's use of such prison centres to detain asylum seekers:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zAtYGGL_iOM

WOOMERA

Situated in the remote South Australian desert, Woomera was utilised as a detention facility for asylum seekers arriving in Australia by boat. The centre, characterised by its isolated location and high-security measures, served as a key component of Australia's deterrence strategy, aiming to dissuade potential asylum seekers from attempting the dangerous journey by signalling that those who arrived without authorisation would face detention in remote and inhospitable conditions. Woomera's nominal capacity was 1200, but from March to July 2000 the population went well above that number. The maximum number of children detained there at any one time was 456 children out of a population of 1442 detainees, on 1 September 2001. The Liberal Government faced widespread criticism for harsh treatment of detainees at Woomera, including reports of overcrowding, inadequate access to medical care, and incidents of self-harm among detainees.



Here is a news report which shows the differences between the Australian and the Canadian governments' handling of a family applying for asylum:

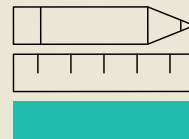
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ukYgvFCDj8o>

DETAINED CHILDREN

Despite international obligations and standards regarding the rights of children, Australia's policy of detaining asylum seeker children in immigration facilities has drawn widespread criticism from human rights organisations and advocacy* groups. The prolonged detention of children, often in cruel and overcrowded conditions, has been proven to have diabolical effects on their physical and mental well-being, leading to vastly increased rates of anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder. Reports of abuse, neglect, and inadequate access to education and healthcare further indicate the systemic violations of children's rights within these facilities. While Australia has made some efforts to improve conditions and reduce the number of children in detention in recent years, significant gaps remain unaddressed in ensuring that the human rights of all children, regardless of their immigration status, are fully protected and upheld.

AFGHANISTAN TODAY

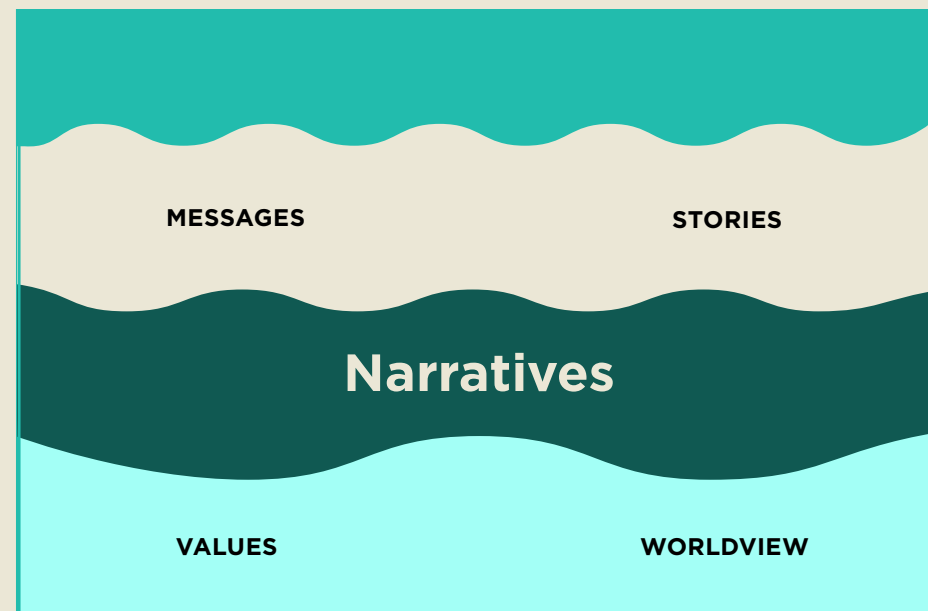
The United States did not formally complete its military withdrawal from Afghanistan until 2021, marking the end of a nearly 20-year-long military presence in the country. This withdrawal was part of an agreement between the U.S. government and the Taliban; however, the withdrawal process faced significant challenges, including logistical issues, concerns about security in Afghanistan, and the rapid advance of the Taliban across the country. Despite efforts to evacuate American citizens, Afghan allies, and vulnerable populations, the withdrawal culminated in the Taliban's swift takeover of Kabul, the capital city, in mid-August 2021, leading to scenes of chaos and desperation at Kabul's international airport as thousands sought to flee the country.



ACTIVITY

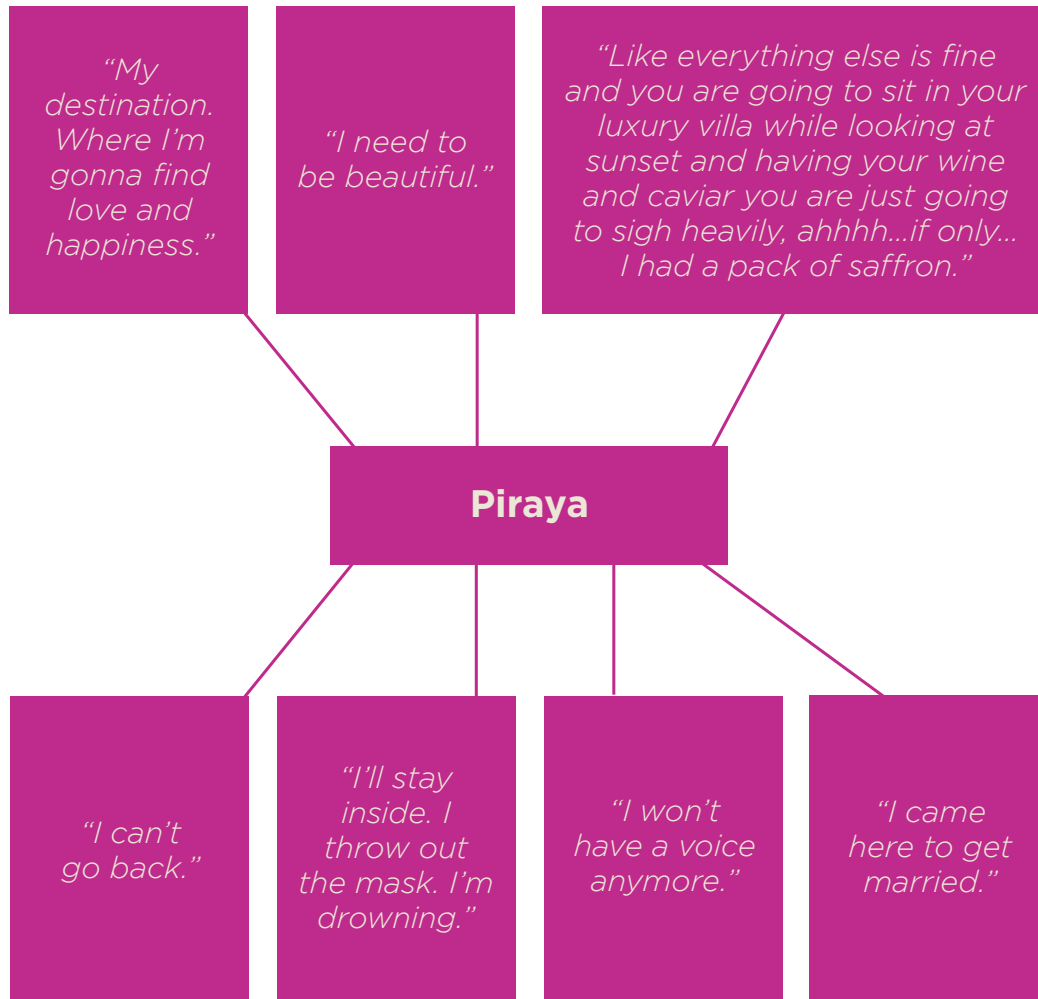


1. Carefully READ all of the 'Historical Context' information above.
2. Next, click on this link: <https://narrativeinitiative.org/blog/waves-a-model-for-deep-narrative-change/> and read about the 'Waves' Model which seeks to help us unpack the complex relationship between our values, our narratives and our stories.
3. DRAW your own narrative wave picture using information from the context section. Try to ILLUSTRATE with as few words as possible the values and worldview that underpinned the 'Children Overboard' lies.



CHARACTER BIOS & KEY QUOTES

IF YOU HAVE ACCESS TO THE FILMED RECORDING OF THE AUDITION, REFERENCE THE RELEVANT SCENES TO SUPPORT YOUR DISCUSSIONS AND ANALYSES.



Seven Days

Pariya - an Iranian woman in her early 20s. In the first scene, Pariya is joyful, hope-filled and light-hearted. Her expectations of her future are somewhat naive. In the second scene, much has changed.

"My destination. Where I'm gonna find love and happiness."

"I need to be beautiful."

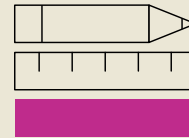
"Like everything else is fine and you are going to sit in your luxury villa while looking at sunset and having your wine and caviar you are just going to sigh heavily, ahhhh...if only...I had a pack of saffron."

"I came here to get married."

"I can't go back."

"I'll stay inside. I throw out the mask. I'm drowning."

"I won't have a voice anymore."



ACTIVITY

1. Re-read the scenes with Pariya. **HIGHLIGHT** at least 3 quotes that provide evidence of her attitude about moving to Australia. **ANNOTATE** them to indicate the emotion / attitude the quote reveals.
2. **ANALYSE** 2 ways that the actor's performance further enhances the language of the script.
3. **CONSIDER** how the actor uses humour by listening to the audience's reactions. In dotpoint, **LIST** the moments that prompt laughter.
4. **DISCUSS** for 2 minutes with a partner how this mood shift plays out within the performance as a whole.

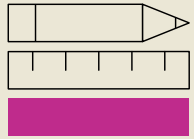
Lawyer - He is the government and institutional voice rolled into one. He tells Pariya if her story is “good” or “not enough”. He encourages her to embellish her story of potential persecution in Iran to bolster her case. The lawyer is motivated to secure asylum for Pariya; he wants to help her.

“You will die. Good. That language will help the case.”

“Your case is weak. It’s not enough. Won’t work.”

“Was your ex-fiance violent towards you?”

“Now, you are a social outcast. A fallen woman.”



ACTIVITY

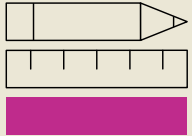
1. In pairs, take a few minutes to EXPLORE some possible reasons why the lawyer’s character is written as male.
2. Still in pairs, CONSIDER the intersectional disadvantage* that Pariya faces as an asylum-seeker and woman of colour.



Click here to EXPLORE further Character Bios and Quotes, and UNDERTAKE the activities which are relevant to your subject area.



Sahra Davoudi | [The Audition](#)
PHOTO - Darren Gill



FURTHER CHARACTER-BASED ACTIVITIES:

Having explored all of the character bios and quotes at the [hyperlink](#) in the previous section, **APPLY** your thinking to the following activities:

1. **CONSIDER** the doubling-up of roles within this play, where an actor may play as many as 5 different characters. Split the class into 4 groups and give each group either GROUP A, B, C or D from the list below. Focusing on your own group's characters, read through their profiles and quotes again. **DISCUSS** in your small groups for 20 minutes what links can be made between each actor's characters? eg, what do you see Marta, Maryam and Vida all have in common? **WRITE** up your ideas in dot points and then present them back to the class.

GROUP A -> Marta, Maryam, Vida

GROUP B -> Sahid, Lawyer, Auditioner, Member

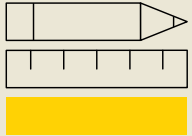
GROUP C -> Nasrin, Pariya, Ava, Applicant 1, Actor

GROUP D -> Applicant 2, Rehabilitated Inmate

2. Director, Irine Vela, says of Piraya's journey: "Even with Piraya and the immigration lawyer, you never find out if she's been granted a visa. It's really about looking at that waiting state. Nobody really knows what their status is. They're just suspended in anticipation." Look back through the characters' quotes above and **HIGHLIGHT** all of the moments that could be used as evidence of this isolation.
3. Using either digital software, like Canva or PowerPoint, or your exercise books, **CREATE** a mind map for a character of your choice using the quotes above, adding quotes you think are relevant. In this mind map:
 - **ANALYSE** your chosen character's dialogue to identify and explore what is being revealed about them.
 - In 4 further dotpoint, **IDENTIFY** what is being revealed about the wider narrative that white Australia tells itself about refugees.
 - Once you have finished, **SHARE** your mind-maps as a class and **DISCUSS** different groups' findings.

For an example of this mind-map activity, please refer to page 31





ACTIVITY

PERFORMANCE FOCUS

Create a solo or group short performance based on the concept of belonging. Include the following:

- Moments of connection and disconnection between performers
- Interaction between characters with conflicting motivations using pathos*
- Monologue and/or dialogue in first person

STIMULUS MATERIAL

- A piece of sporting or play equipment
- A suitcase
- Natural elements which can be used symbolically

PERFORMANCE STYLE

Eclectic* with aspects of Absurdism

CONVENTIONS

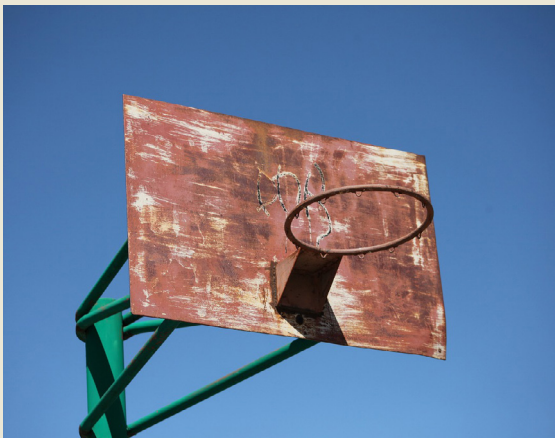
Students are required to select one convention from the following list and apply it throughout their performance:

- Pathos*
- Song
- Stillness and silence
- Use of fact

DRAMATIC ELEMENTS

Students are required to select one dramatic element from the following list and apply it throughout their performance:

- Mood
- Contrast
- Rhythm
- Tension



FRAMEWORKS OF IDEAS

This new area of the VCE English / EAL curriculum opens many doors for diverse voices and experiences to enter classrooms. Consider the variety of ways that The Audition could be applied to each of the four Frameworks:

WRITING ABOUT COUNTRY

“Exploration of place and belonging. Explorations of physical land and country, local and international, loss of country and dispossession, remembering country and nostalgia, migration, the power of connections with land, climate change and the changing landscape, and imagined countries.” VCAA English & EAL Study Design, 2023-2027

The Audition sits between countries. It is the hope of an imagined safe haven threaded through with the trauma of the loss of one’s country. It paints for audiences the brutality of the nowhere country when people are held in indefinite detention. It also exposes the power that government gatekeepers have to determine who gets to belong.

‘Detaining refugees in isolated parts of the country and urban areas, and especially in offshore detention, reveals a lot about our nation. Our humanity is diminished via this government policy; it is narrow, punitive, and selective. We have a reputation for excelling in offshore detention. The ultimate example is keeping children in detention. Australia’s history of detention is engrained in our culture: this nation was founded as a British offshore detention experiment. The White Australia Policy also symbolises our racist foundations. If you want to go right back, racism is inherent in Australia.

‘Australia is a country that operates on many layers of cultural cringe, especially among its artists. It started with the British empire which instilled a belief that things of value could only come from Britain rather than Australia, which was seen as a colonial backwater. When immigrants came to Australia to work, they experienced deep racism and their children internalised their oppression and shame. This generation also felt cultural cringe about themselves not only as Australians but as children of immigrants, uneducated peasants, of people who didn’t speak English as their first language. So, Australia is full of multiple, compounding cultural cringes.’ Irine Vela, Director

‘I think that The Audition says, ‘Look! This is what we’re doing as a country. This! This is who we are. This is what we’re doing. This is what we’re turning a blind eye to. [...] That is a form of protest. It’s resistance. It tries to tell the truth. If theatre doesn’t have any truth in it, it’s pretty useless.’ IRINE VELA | DIRECTOR

WRITING ABOUT PROTEST

“Explorations of conflict and contest, what it means to protest, the value of protest, the outcomes of protest, personal stories of protest, struggle and war.” VCAA English & EAL Study Design, 2023-2027

Art and storytelling are powerful tools of protest. The Audition is the bold vocalisation of those whose stories have been overlooked or told (often falsely) by others. It protests against that silencing through every line and every performance.

‘As much as the world and threshold dragons want to keep you out, and want to stereotype you, silo you, and confine you to their idea of who you are and what you should do, or what you do best – I resist. I will write an electronica-inspired score for a film, I will write an opera, a choral work, a musical, a libretto, a jazz-inspired instrumental, a poem, I will direct a film, I will direct a theatre show - even though you tell me I am only allowed to play the bouzouki - (which, by the way, I love) Don’t fence me in... don’t fence me in...and for that reason, I won’t fence in any creative soul, especially a young one. In my mind, OUP not only platforms the work and stories of emerging artists and their communities, but offers a process and methodology where each artist comes to discover the extent of their power.’ Irine Vela, Artistic Director

WRITING ABOUT PERSONAL JOURNEYS

“Explorations of ‘life’ or biographical explorations – telling our stories, telling others’ stories, the problem of telling stories, appropriation of stories, who tells the stories and our history, missing stories, marginalised and elevated stories. Students could explore personal milestones, the effects of key events on their lives, or explore these ideas through the eyes of others. Students who have migrated can explore their stories of movement and disruption. They can explore the expectations of change, and the language of a new place and culture.” VCAA English & EAL Study Design, 2023-2027

'Mary's experience as an actor started in a time where the ideology* and the politics around representation and identity were different to now. They were starting to evolve, for sure, but how we viewed identity and representation on stages 50 years ago is different to now. It's a journey. And I think somebody like Mary would have that knowledge and that experience of immigration. Mary's parents are Cypriot Greek immigrants...That was a tough time for immigrants in Australia as well because racism was legal then.

I think with immigration came a shift about what we wanted represented on stage.

'Many immigrants in Australia have experienced genocide, occupation and displacement. My father was a refugee. He came to Australia in 1950 as a displaced person, via the World Refugee Organisation. He was 19 years old when he became a refugee. I am a child of a refugee. This is part of my DNA as well, and it propels me to make works such as [The Audition](#).

'Vahideh Eisaei is also an immigrant. She came here to study, but she also left Iran because its government is oppressive. Of course, Milad and Sahra are immigrants as well. Milad was seeking asylum when we first met him. Our actors have a personal connection with immigration, or being refugees. It does connect them to the work. There's so much lived experience in the work: each actor knows what it is to be othered*, to be auditioned, to be excluded as an artist, an immigrant or an asylum seeker, or to be detained. So, of course, their life experiences equip them to connect with the work perhaps a little bit more intimately. And all actors know what it's like to audition.' Irine Vela, Director

WRITING ABOUT PLAY

"Explorations of experiences and traditions of play and playing in many cultures and through history. Students could explore play as it is applied to games, sport, acting and make-believe, music, language and images. They could also explore concepts of collaboration and connection, digital vs analogue, rules and rule-breaking. There is scope to consider the ways play and play acting can represent the 'real' world, and to explore issues associated with using play or play acting to minimise or mitigate against events or actions." VCAA English & EAL Study Design, 2023-2027

Studying theatre is studying humanity. The metaphor at the heart of [The Audition](#) deliberately plays on the idea that *'all the world's a stage'* and blurs the lines of where the 'real world' begins and ends. From its collaborative creation process to its inclusion of music, this text offers rich opportunities for exploring the concept of using play-making to challenge systems of power in our world. In [The Audition](#), the way the music of the kanun is used plays with audiences' expectations, plays with the familiar versus the unfamiliar, and plays with the ways that music supports or challenges dominant narratives.

'The kanun* is an instrument that produces sounds that give us the sense of being in another world, another place, such as the Middle East. This is especially true if we grew up in a country such as Australia where most people

are more familiar with rock, pop and various types of 'western' music; the sound of the kanun may well have another meaning in Iran. But it's not just the sound of the kanun* that sounds like the Middle East, it's also the modes that are played on it; there are ways of playing this instrument that involve the use of scales and modes called 'makams'. There are also quarter tones; these are the notes between the notes. The production and quality of sound signifies so much. When we hear a particular sound, it says something. When we hear vibrato on a violin we instantly think, 'this is classical'. When we hear bouzouki, we think, 'let's dance a Zorba the Greek', or if it's oud, 'let's belly dance'. You've got to be aware of these perceptions when playing with sound and music in performance. Each sound signifies something depending on our cultural upbringing and context. By being conscious of this and using sound expertly, we can extend our aural palette and bring so much richness to the sound world of a show.' Irine Vela, Director



Milad Norouzi - Vahideh Eisaei | [The Audition](#)
PHOTO - Darren Gill

‘The challenge of writing and directing: What do you make explicit*? What is implicit*? That’s the craft of direction, that’s the art. I really respect writers that get the balance here right, too.’ **IRINE VELA | DIRECTOR**

POST-SHOW SECTION

The next section of the pack is designed to be explored after having attended a live performance of The Audition.



CREATIVES RIFFING ON AUDITIONS

‘[Auditions are] a series of pivotal moments strung together like beads of hope.’ MARY SITARENOS | ACTOR

Auditions can often arouse a sense of vulnerability. The irony is that the outcome often has more to do with preconceptions of who will be deemed ‘right’ for a role than with the actor’s merit. Read through the writing below where creatives who contributed to The Audition reflect on their feelings and experiences about the audition process, both in the context of theatre, and its metaphorical application to the treatment of asylum-seekers and immigration in general.

MELISSA REEVES - Writer, You Made Us A Promise What You Told Us Today Would Be True

I was an actor before I became a writer. I loved acting, I loved rehearsing, I loved being half-dressed in dressing rooms with other half-dressed people before and after shows, but I hated auditioning. Having to show off your wares. Your body and face, and mind and ability are on display. Getting rejected. [...] Writing has its own challenges, but nothing as bad as the gut-wrenching, spirit draining, staring into the abyss of the audition.

PATRICIA CORNELIUS - Writer, The Doll

It’s a cattle call. Insulting. Stressful. Unkind. It’s about the look of someone. It’s about stereotypes. It’s about not having an accent. It’s about how attractive you are. About how you fit with others. How popular you are. [...] But all the craft in the world won’t save you from the rigid view of what is thought to be typically Australian. Auditions are shitful things. [...] This play ‘The Doll’ is about a woman who auditions for the quintessential Australian part of Olive in Summer of the Seventeenth Doll by Ray Lawler and despite being brilliant at her craft, she hasn’t a chance in hell.

TES LYSSIOTIS - Writer, Woomera Detention Centre

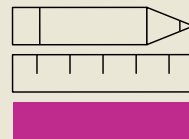
Because like my mother, I am a storyteller but some stories don’t end... Because my parents’ journey to Australia and their struggles in their new homeland in the ‘50s become the story of those now seeking refuge. Because the image of my young Greek father working in his café in the Wimmera district becomes the Afghan man waiting indefinitely in a detention centre or the Iranian woman who must jump through bureaucratic hoops in order to prove her worth. Because each successive government trades on its ability to engender fear of those seeking protection in Australia. Because something is deeply wrong and unjust with the heart of Australia. Because the story now has no moral... and it should.

CHRISTOS TSIOLKAS - Writer, The Audition (Scenes 1 & 2)

Many years ago, I was asked to sit in on an audition for a script I had written. One of the roles was for a doctor who was giving the main character in the script a HIV diagnosis. [...] The only script notation I had made about the role of the DOCTOR was that she was female. I watched actor after actor audition and I was struck that they were all Anglo. As one more blue-eyed blonde walked out I turned to the casting person and asked, “Were there no non-Anglo actors approached?” She looked surprised and said, quizzically, “But the script didn’t specify that they were not Australian?”(Her words). It really hit home at that moment that the default position in Australian film was Anglo. Things have changed, I know. [...] But what hasn’t changed is the brutality of the audition process. I hate it, the ruthlessness of having to judge a person in those short five minutes. I wanted to bring some of that brutality into the piece for The Audition, the brutality of theatre and the brutality of the process of proving you are a ‘good’ refugee, ‘worthy’ of asylum.

MARY SITARENOS - Actor

The context in which a person is viewed, colours and amplifies the idea of ‘other’. For, to be auditioned, one is scrutinised, measured by appearance, measured by their social and cultural background and their ability to fit the bill. [...] The displaced alien is intrinsically vulnerable by definition. [An audition is like] a ceremony where the outcome is not predetermined, which charges it with desperation. A series of pivotal moments strung together like beads of hope. My career has had my name in many Wog files in agencies, and in the branding of both classical and contemporary work.



ACTIVITY

1. Observe the differing styles of each artist’s writing in the paragraphs above. IDENTIFY and ANNOTATE all writer’s techniques evident in these descriptions of the audition process.
2. CREATE a short, imaginative written response in the first person around feelings of vulnerability, creativity, rejection, or external judgement. You might like to draw on a personal experience of a time when you had hoped to be automatically included, even welcomed, into something but then were made to feel like an outsider who had to prove themselves over and over again. (250 words)

IRINE'S TOP TIPS FOR ACTORS IN AUDITIONS

Outer Urban Projects is a company that privileges emerging artists from our communities to perform in our major works. As a practice, we do not audition these performers in the conventional sense. However, sometimes auditioning is necessary. Irine talks about the importance of actors who show preparedness, commitment and professionalism, and those who 'make offers', in auditions. If you are keen to stand out in an audition of your own, consider taking on some of Irine's excellent advice, developed over watching many auditions in her time as an artist.

- I love physicality. It's always a winner for me in an audition when an actor can use their bodies well.
- The ability to make text come alive, even on a dry read.
- I'm always impressed when people come to an audition with their scripts memorised, when possible.
- Actors who ask the right questions! This shows curiosity and that they have given the script consideration and thought before the audition.
- It's also great when an actor makes an offer about how to use the space while they are reading.
- I'm always looking for people that have charisma. Not necessarily a type. Or not necessarily training. Just charisma!



WRITING THE AUDITION

Here, you can read about the foundations of the creation of the script for The Audition. The concept of curating an anthology of plays into one performance with an overarching set of themes enables diversity of voices, experiences, and perspectives, as well as deep thematic exploration. Director Irine Vela describes the process behind the creation of the script for The Audition:

'The Audition was initially inspired by two young artists - one, a newly arrived asylum seeker from Iran, a teenager, Milad Norouzi. We met Milad at one of our shows, Poetic License in 2015. Inspired by the performance, he introduced himself as a rapper who was interested in joining our Community Access Program. Within six months, he was centre stage at the Fairfax Studio at Arts Centre Melbourne, performing in our major work, Grand DiVisions for the Melbourne Festival.

The other artist was a refugee from South Sudan via Egypt, Ezeldine Deng, who had been in Australia for several years, working in the west of Melbourne at the Cohealth Arts Generator. He was also engaged as a writer and performer on Grand DiVisions.

In that show, both these young men, Ezeldine and Milad, shared a camaraderie and chemistry as performers, and their writing and stories formed the narrative spine of the show. The company deemed it a priority to privilege their stories and their work as creators and artists in a new major work with the complexity they deserved.

The Audition was the new work.

Eventually, Ezeldine had to leave the development, but soon afterwards, an Iranian artist seeking asylum, Sahra Davoudi, who had studied performing arts in Tehran was introduced to the Company. We invited Sahra to join us as a writer and performer. We then had two Iranian artists who were seeking asylum and permanent residency while developing and creating this work. This duality drove the conceit of the work. As creators and performers, Sahra and Milad imbued the show with a tension and truth that was palpable, poetic and at times absurd. It was art imitating life.

We then approached a diverse group of writers, emerging and established, to consider collaborating on a multi-authored theatre piece and undertook a series of developments and workshops with actors and writing mentors over three years. In developing the work, we explored the audition process to understand the experience of seeking asylum and to gain insight into the

protocols and power relationships that permit entry into our country and onto our stages. We also explored other texts, including Lyssiotis' Hotel Bonegilla and Beckett's Waiting for Godot. The final team of established writers consisted of Tes Lyssiotis, Christos Tsiolkas, Patricia Cornelius and Wahibe Moussa. We were emboldened by their excitement around the concept of the work and their delight in taking part in an Outer Urban Projects production.

Within all the works, the struggle to gain acceptance and recognise merit where and when it is due is always an ongoing tension. Theatre itself is political by virtue of who is represented on the stage and where the content comes from. So theatre itself is inherently political. The asylum seeker shares something in common with the actor in Australia. They are both outsiders of uncertain status.

The engagement of refugees and asylum seekers writing and performing in the work was essential to its authenticity and authority, and provided a research resource for the writers as well.

Furthermore, the knowledge around the audition process in the performing arts was well known to all creatives, as most had direct experience of being auditioned, and also auditioning other actors. The knowledge and research required for addressing the writing brief was accessible and, in a sense, immediately available - as it was everyone's lived experience.

The running order of the plays was full stop directorial. Yes. Or dramaturgical*. It was something that was constructed while we were making it. I brought a specific running order into the space, and then we worked it. If it didn't work, I'd go back and then reorder it.

'My life is too short, as short as my blue pen's life.'

A REHABILITATED INMATE | BEAUTIFUL JAIL - MILAD NOROUZI

Because the work was multi-authored and intertextual*; with each play in a different time frame and location, I had some things to solve. When making the work, I wanted to avoid a cut-and-dry anthological approach, but this was a challenge as each play was in a different time frame and location with different characters.

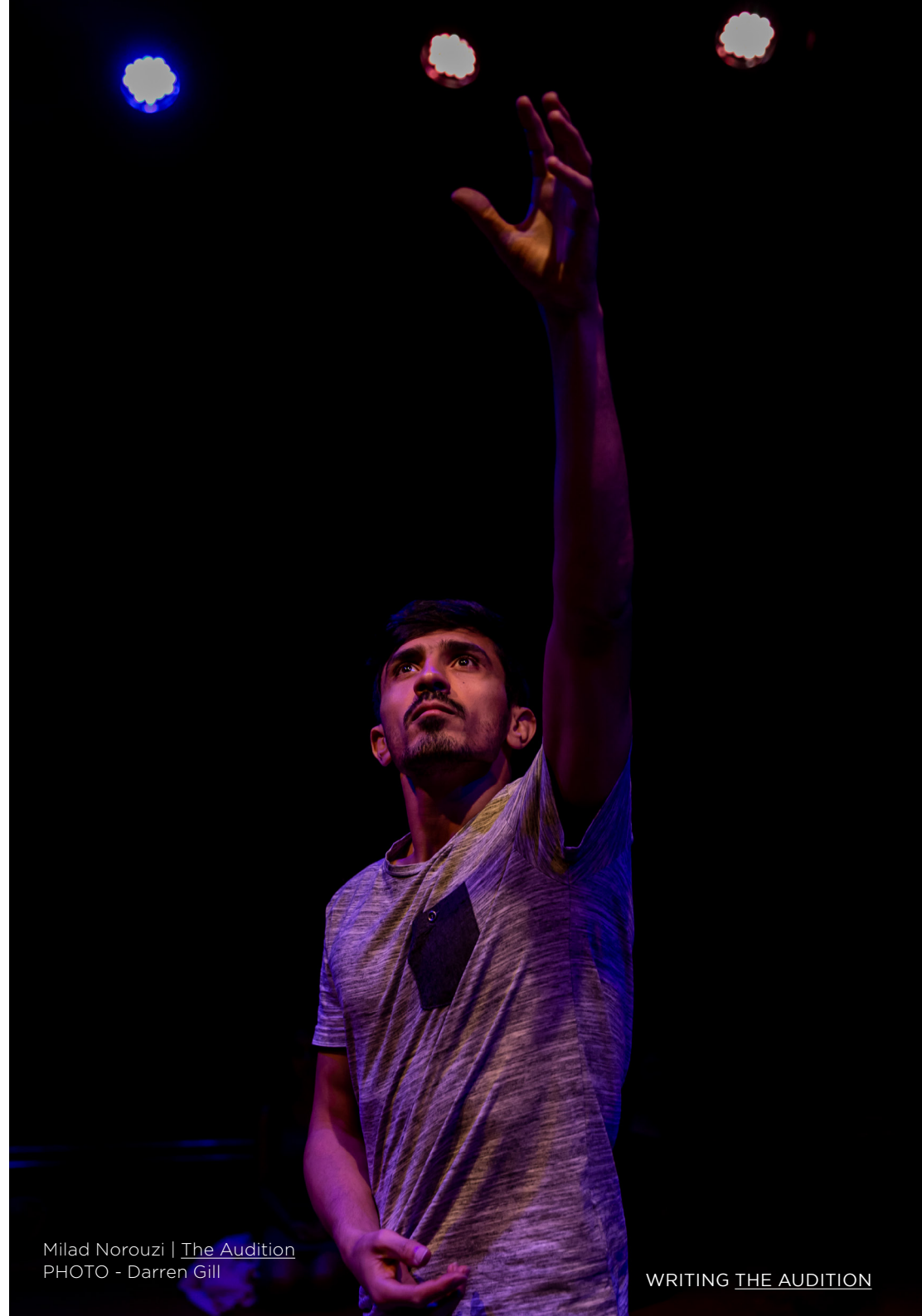
Could the work as a whole have an arc? Could Sahra be playing the one character crossing time and space in an understated way? This was the lens applied to the disparate works. Could Sahra be Nasrin, who became Pariya, and then Ava and even Applicant 1? Can we follow the actor who plays Sahra!? Writer Sahra Davoudi became central as an actor to ordering and structuring the overall piece.

We gathered a group of writers around Sahra and Milad to write for a small size cast - up to four, with Sahra and Milad amongst them. The writers were given the same provocation - was there a parallel, an analogy between the audition process and seeking asylum? We brought together the writers over a series of meetings to collectively interrogate this provocation and analogy. As content emerged, resonances between the works were amplified.

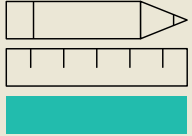
Given the amount of time we had to have the work ready in time for rehearsal, it was agreed that an anthology approach would be expedient in order to generate material sooner than later. The Audition was collaborative but not devised. From there, ordering the scenes, whilst adhering to the limit of four actors as ingeniously as possible over five short plays and a spoken word piece, became central to the process of creating a seamless, unified theatrical experience from these disparate works.' Irine Vela, Director

*'God turn me into a bird
then I could fly far far away
from this beautiful jail.'*

A REHABILITATED INMATE |
BEAUTIFUL JAIL - MILAD NOROUZI



CONVENTIONS

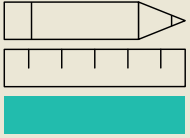


ACTIVITY

In the lines underneath these conventions, identify one or two moments in the performance where each one was evident.

Breaking the Fourth Wall - A theatrical technique where a character directly addresses or acknowledges the audience, thereby breaking the imaginary 'fourth wall' between the audience and the action taking place on the stage. The character turns to the audience and directly addresses them, which can add humour, irony, or a metatheatrical layer to the performance. It's used to engage an audience on a more personal level, as it invites them to become more active in the narrative, rather than simply watching as passive observers.

Intimate Actor-Audience Relationship - Refers to a close and direct connection between the performers and the audience in a theatrical or performance setting. A heightened sense of proximity, interaction, and emotional engagement can be facilitated by a smaller performance space or a deliberate effort to break down the traditional separation between the stage and the audience. This closeness allows for a more personal and immediate experience, with the audience feeling intimately connected to the characters and the unfolding narrative.



ACTIVITY

Pathos - The quality of a performance or a character that evokes a feeling of pity, sympathy, or compassion in the audience. It is an emotional appeal that aims to create a sense of connection between the audience and the characters or situations depicted on stage. It can be created through a variety of theatrical devices, such as the use of music, lighting, dialogue, or physical performance. Pathos can also be created through the portrayal of characters who are vulnerable, oppressed, or facing difficult challenges. By highlighting the struggles and hardships of these characters, the audience is able to connect with them on a deeper level and feel a sense of empathy or compassion.

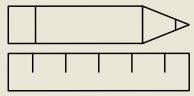
Stillness & Silence - Performance conventions whereby the deliberate use of pauses and periods of stillness during a performance to create tension, heighten the emotional impact of a scene, or draw attention to specific moments or details.

Symbolism - Objects, sounds, actions, or images that represent an idea, emotion, or concept beyond their literal or surface meaning. Symbolism can be used to explore complex themes and ideas, such as the nature of reality, the human condition, or the relationship between the individual and society. Symbolism in theatre may also involve the use of non-realistic or stylised elements, such as costumes, set design, lighting, and sound, to create a heightened sense of theatricality and to reinforce the meaning behind the performance.



Swing | [The Audition](#)
PHOTO - Darren Gill

ELEMENTS OF THEATRE COMPOSITION



ACTIVITY

Theatrical performance is created with key identifiable components. This language creates access to a common vocabulary which can be used by anyone watching or studying live performance. According to VCAA, the Elements of Theatre Composition for VCE Theatre Studies are as follows. Complete the activities under each one as you progress through the definitions.



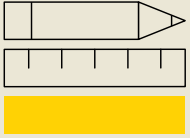
Mary Sitarenos | The Audition
PHOTO - Darren Gill

COHESION

'Cohesion is the unity and balance of various aspects of the interpretation.'
- VCAA Theatre Studies Study Design, 2019-2024

'As a director, cohesion is everything. And I think it's really a musical approach, because I'm a composer, that's my first and foremost practice. I look at the arc of something and think about how you play with different sounds and tonalities and textures and how to build them, how to pull back. All of this is really important in my work as a composer and I really do apply that when I'm making a work, a piece, it's just instinctive. I love cohesion. I love things to flow, but I also love sudden stops, sudden silences. All of those things are important. Direction is very similar to composing for me, it's a similar process.' Irine Vela, Director.

SELECT one scene from The Audition which you felt was particularly cohesive, in a paragraph in your workbook and IDENTIFY which production roles helped to create this cohesion. INTEGRATE some evaluative language from the notes you took during the activity on page 9. SHARE your opinion with a partner.



ACTIVITY

MOTION

'Motion is the movement or implied movement of actors and design features in the theatre space. This may include position, pattern, arrangement, proportion and spatial flow.' - VCAA Theatre Studies Study Design, 2019-2024

'I dreamed of migrating birds,

I was flying with them.

We were heading north.

No borders, no boundaries,

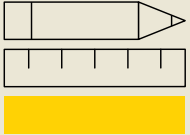
it was just us, flying freely.'

- A Rehabilitated Inmate, Beautiful Jail - Milad Norouzi



Evangelos Arabatzis | The Audition

DRAW a small series of symbols next to this dialogue, exploring the themes of freedom and the idea of motion inherent in the dialogue.



ACTIVITY

RHYTHM

'Rhythm is the pace, timing and tempo within the interpretation.'
- VCAA Theatre Studies Study Design, 2019-2024

During her delivery of Wahibe Moussa's beautiful poetic scene I Can Be Her, Sahra intentionally draws upon the element of Rhythm in her vocal delivery. READ the following dialogue from that same scene aloud; be sure to VARY the pace, timing and tempo of your delivery.

'What face do you want to see?

How soft do I need to be?

Whatever you want to see,

whoever you want me to be,

I'm ready.

I can be her.

Listen, I've played the victim

too many times before.'

Next, mark up the script above. Using the shape of an arrow, underline moments you liked to speed up, and put dashes between the words you preferred to slow down.

EMPHASIS

'Emphasis is how aspects of the interpretation are given a particular focus, importance or prominence.'- VCAA Theatre Studies Study Design, 2019-2024

When asked about which moment she uses emphasis to create meaning in the performance, writer of Seven Days and performer, Sahra Davoudi, was very clear. 'When Ava wears the hijab, stands on the sand and delivers her lines, she now is fully connected with the character. They become one.' This moment appears at the conclusion of The Audition, Scene 2. READ the following sentence out loud seven times, placing emphasis on a different word each time. Depending on which word you emphasise, the meaning of the sentence changes.

"I never said they stole my money."

Once you have done this, HIGHLIGHT the word which needs to be emphasised to convey the meaning in the brackets next to the sentence.

"I never said they stole my money." (Implying that they took something else, not my money.)

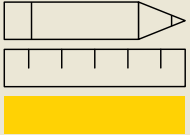
"I never said they stole my money." (Implying that someone else said it, not me.)

"I never said they stole my money." (Implying that stealing something else was mentioned, not my money.)

"I never said they stole my money." (Implying that they stole someone else's money, not mine.)

"I never said they stole my money." (Implying that they borrowed it and didn't steal it.)

"I never said they stole my money." (Implying that they borrowed it, not stole it.)



ACTIVITY

CONTRAST

'Contrast is the juxtaposition of seemingly different or opposing aspects or qualities within the interpretation.' - VCAA Theatre Studies Study Design, 2019-2024

Of all the performers in The Audition, Sahra depicts the widest array of character transformation. She explains that she enables this process by 'delving into the depths of each character and finding their voice during the rehearsal process. Valuing all the characters equally is important. The next step involves working on the shifts, where connecting and disconnecting with the characters needs to be in place on stage.' Sahra identified the following adjectives to describe each of her contrasting characters within The Audition.

Ava: confident, smart, determined

Vida: confident, smart, realistic

Maryam: anxious, afraid, caring.

Pariya: hopeful, naïve, worried

Applicant 1: afraid, uncertain

Working with a partner or in a small group, direct each other to deliver the following snippet of dialogue from the first scene from Seven Days. Use Sahra's adjectives list above as different possibilities for interpreting the tone of this dialogue:

PARIYA: *I knew Australia is a big country but I had no idea it's this big.*

It took us such a long time from Darwin to Melbourne.

I was looking at the map on plane's monitor and I was wondering, 'Why isn't this journey finishing?'

VARIATION

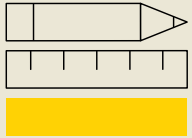
'Variation is the changes to the dynamics of the interpretation, as may be evident in the use of tension, conflict, intensity, energy and use of the space.' - VCAA Theatre Studies Study Design, 2019-2024

In pairs, DISCUSS with a partner Evangelos Arabatzis' use of vocal variation when he depicts Sahid in Tes Lyssiotis' scene Woomera Detention Centre. Look carefully at VCAA's definition above and be sure to reference at least three of the relevant nouns in your response, giving evidence for each one.



Sahra Davoudi | The Audition
PHOTO - Darren Gill

DRAMATIC ELEMENTS



ACTIVITY

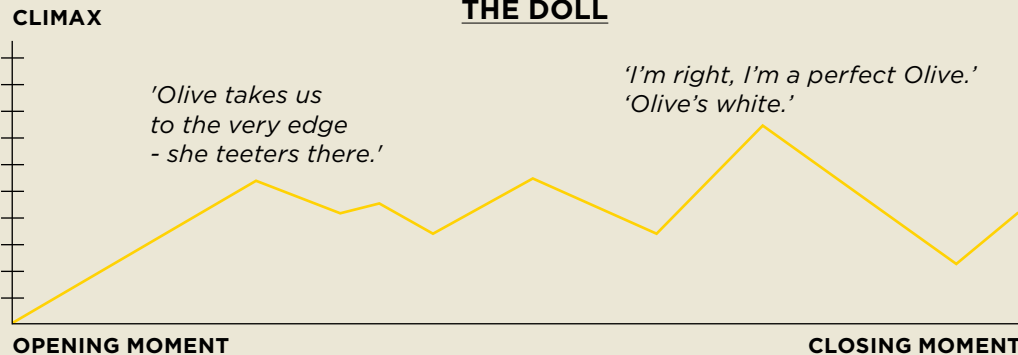
Dramatic elements are essential features of every performance. Actors manipulate dramatic elements to shape and enhance meaning. According to VCAA, the Dramatic Elements for VCE Drama are as follows. Please read through each of these definitions, completing the short activities either in the space below or in your workbooks as you go:

Climax - *'Climax is the most significant moment of tension or conflict in a drama and often occurs towards the end of the plot. Multiple climaxes and/or an anti-climax may also occur. The action of a drama usually unravels after the climax has transpired but the work might finish with a climactic moment.'*
- VCAA Drama Study Design, 2019-2024

'I think the climax is the end. But it's a kind of anti-climax, really, because nothing has shifted. We're really in a world of, almost death. It's a wasteland and that's it... a world where there's utter loneliness. It's really about looking at that waiting state. Nobody really knows what their status is. They're just suspended in anticipation.' Irine Vela, Director

Revisit the script, and CREATE your own line graph tracking the climax in each scene in The Audition. Refer to the line graph explaining the climax points for Patricia Cornelius' The Doll here below as a reference; you will note the two key moments in the dialogue which are the most climactic are positioned at the highest point in curve. You may choose to use Excel or another digital platform to design these charts, or if you'd prefer to, you can draw them freehand in your workbooks.

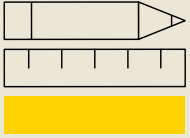
CLIMAX LINE GRAPH
THE DOLL



Conflict - *'Conflict generally occurs when a character cannot achieve an objective due to an obstacle. This obstacle may be internal or external and between characters or between characters and their environment. Conflict may be shown in a variety of ways, for example through physical, verbal or psychological means. Conflict may be embedded in the structure of the drama.'* - VCAA Drama Study Design, 2019-2024

'Conflict is in the work. They're in conflict with the world. [For example], Sahid knows he's being watched and he's a little bit mad, but his madness is born of anger. He's talking to the cameras, and he's in conflict with the authorities.' Irine Vela, Director

With a partner, IDENTIFY a moment when the conflict between two characters was implied through the actors' use of space. DESCRIBE this moment in the lines below



ACTIVITY

Contrast - *'Contrast presents the dissimilar, or opposite, in order to highlight or emphasise difference. Contrast may be explored in many ways and may include contrasting characters, settings, times, themes, elements, production areas and performance styles.'*- VCAA Drama Study Design, 2019-2024

'During his monologue, Milad speaks of joining a flock of birds to be free, and we witness him achieving [a moment of] spiritual freedom. Within this monologue, we incorporated mime and dance, a sufi style movement where the dancing is reminiscent of whirling dervish*, and we feel his freedom as he imagines himself soaring with the birds in the sky. The sweetness of the music that accompanies him is in direct contrast with his surroundings: the dry and desolate landscape of Woomera... a detention centre in the middle of the desert.' Irine Vela, Director

Can you IDENTIFY a moment where an actor was able to create contrast in their depiction of two different characters? Which acting skills did they draw on to create this opposing depiction?

Mood - *'Mood is the overall feeling or emotion that a performance may evoke. This may be achieved through manipulation of acting, conventions or production areas.'*- VCAA Drama Study Design, 2019-2024

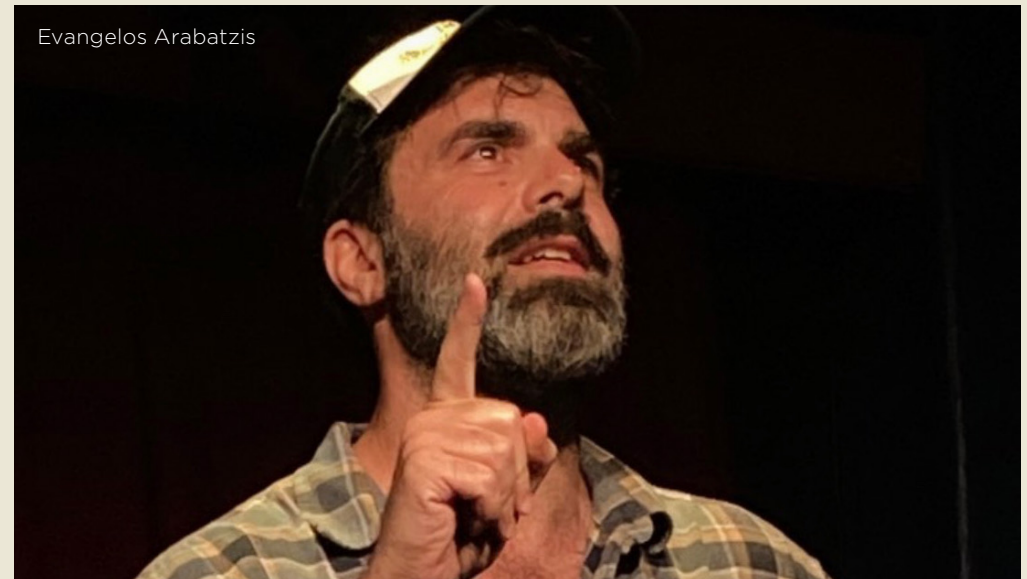
'I think music does really create the incredible pathos* at the end. It'd be too stark without the music. It's not that the music softens it, but it creates beauty in the pathos*. Music also really provides great bridging; it just defines moving elsewhere. But because it's one instrument, it creates a unity.' Irine Vela, Director

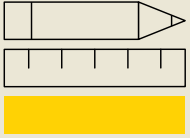
LIST three adjectives to DESCRIBE the mood of three separate scenes in the live performance of The Audition.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____





ACTIVITY

Rhythm - *'Rhythm is a regular pattern of words, sounds or actions. Performances have their own rhythm that may be influenced by the emotional nature of the plot, the pace of line delivery, the dialogue (long and/or short lines), the pace of scene transitions and the length of scenes.'*
 VCAA Drama Study Design, 2019-2024

'Life passes quickly. Babies are born, babies are toddlers, toddlers are kids, kids are teenagers, teenagers are adults, adults are middle ages, middle ages are old people, they are dying.' - A REHABILITATED INMATE - BEAUTIFUL JAIL, MILAD NOROUZI

Paying particular attention to Milad's delivery of his incredibly poignant* poem, Beautiful Jail, WRITE one descriptive sentence which conveys his use of rhythm in this scene. Imagine you are writing this for someone who hasn't actually seen the show, so your description needs to be detailed, clear and engaging.

Sound - *'Sound is created live, by the actor, in the performance. Voice, body percussion and objects can be used individually or in combination to create sonic effects in performance and to enhance meaning. Sound may include silence or the deliberate absence of sound.'* - VCAA Drama Study Design, 2019-2024

Once I placed Milad's song towards the end of the play, I wanted the tonality of his song to be reflected in the kanun* music. The text in the final section of the work needed to be supported and it just felt perfect to do it there with guitar and kanun. The kanun and the guitar is a great pairing for the ending. Also, the kanun can be played really softly,

It can play single notes as well as chords. I felt it was most appropriate for the work, and the one-to-four ratio of musician-to-performer seemed right for a text-based work in an intimate theatre. I wanted to get the proportions right.

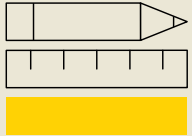
Milad, who has a beautiful touch on the guitar, also provided subtle musical support by extending his extraordinary song, Goodbye, throughout the closing sections of the show, his song becoming the centrepiece of the finale.' Irine Vela, Director

We hear Milad singing at the conclusion of the performance. SELECT three descriptive words to define how this moment made you feel as an audience member:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____



ACTIVITY

Space - 'Space involves the way the performance area is used to communicate meaning, to define settings, to represent status and to create actor-audience relationships. This may be achieved through the use of levels, proximity and depth. The use of space may be symbolic.' VCAA Drama Study Design, 2019-2024

'Having the actors remain in that space just created flow, rather than entering from the wings here and there. The actors just created a flow and a connectivity amongst themselves. Having that constant landscape of Woomera in the background helped me create cohesion. I thought, 'this situation is ongoing... we're not in different places at different times.' Irine Vela, Director

With a partner, IDENTIFY one scene change or transition which would have been very different for the audience if one or more actors had been directed to enter and or exit the stage.

Tension - 'Tension is the suspense that holds an audience's attention as a performance unfolds. The release of tension may have a comic or a dramatic effect.' VCAA Drama Study Design, 2019-2024

'The lighting creates so much tension. Pariya's in the chair and the immigration lawyer is hovering around her. We set up footlights and sidelights to create an atmosphere of interrogation. But it's also quite aesthetic; it brings out the beauty of their faces as well.' Irine Vela, Director

Using the blocking of the moment Irine is referencing above as inspiration, explore creating tension through your use of blocking when delivering the following snippet of dialogue from Christos Tsiolkas' scene titled The Audition, Scene 2. Try positioning one actor on a seat, and then block the second performer to read their dialogue from different levels and positions on the stage around them, and NOTICE how the tension shifts. Afterwards, SHARE your observations with the class:

AVA: *I know this woman. As an actor I know her.*

AUDITIONER: *I'd like you to do that scene again.*

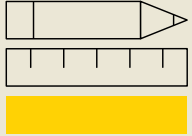
AVA: *Of course.*

AUDITIONER: *And don't worry about the accent. I was wrong. Use your accent, that's who we are. Before you start...let's...let's use this scarf as a hijab!*

AVA: *Why?*

AUDITIONER: *I'd like to try it.*

PRODUCTION AREAS



ACTIVITY

'I come to spill my guts, to reveal tender, raw, heart-rending stories...'

Marta, The Doll - PATRICIA CORNELIUS

On the lines under each of the following acting skills, IDENTIFY a moment from The Audition where you can recall an actor strongly demonstrating this particular skill. Be sure to reference the scene they were performing and the name of their character:

1. Facial Expression

'This character would not smile. I know her. She would not smile.'
Ava, The Audition, Scene 2 Christos Tsiolkas

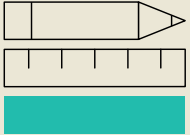
2. Movement

3. Gesture

4. Voice

5. Silence and Stillness

'It's the pauses or the silences that I may ask for. Or it could be "now let's just have space. Let's have silence." I do tell them "actually wait five beats", or "wait ten beats".' Irine Vela, Director



ACTIVITY

Under each Production Role, describe a moment where the work stands out for you. The various quotes below each header are included to provide a little more information about the specific production role and to show how it might be evident in this company's interpretation of the script.

Director

'Directing is leadership too. Like it's, it's leading people. It's leading everybody in the cast, you know, to go on this journey to reach this destination. And, that we're unified and happy about taking a journey on a particular play... It became an extra creative adventure for me as a director to solve the problem of trying to create something more seamless with really disparate works. That's the challenge and the opportunity.' Irine Vela, Director

Costume Designer

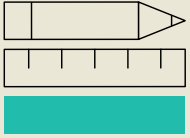
Vida - *'Elegant but sturdy shoes, that's what you should wear if you want them to think you are a feminist...'*

Ava - *'I am a feminist.'*

Vida - *'Their kind of feminist.'*

The Audition, Scene 1 Christos Tsiolkas

'Olive, she's been rejected... she has no status. In fact, the way Mary moves as an actor between The Doll to Woomera Detention Centre is really important. From her rejection as somebody that cannot play Olive, she moves into Woomera directly because, in my mind, this is the only role that she can get: a refugee woman in Woomera. She's got to 'don the burqa'. And is an example of somebody else determining her rejection. She has no status. In the end, she is just stereotyped as an actor. Historically, in Australia, the only roles migrant actors were cast in were 'the peasant woman', or 'the mafia criminal'. Irine Vela, Director



ACTIVITY

Makeup Designer

'It does not matter what she's suffered and what she's lost. She will make herself up.' Ava, The Audition, Scene 1, Christos Tsiolkas

Props Designer

Set Designer

'The landscape of the play was the outdoor area of Woomera Detention Centre, with sand forming a border between our performers and the audience/Australia. Sand was also used as a symbol of the harshness and perceived emptiness of Australia, and as quicksand – it was our metaphorical landscape... The red pile of sand at the back of the stage, it looked like a funeral mound. This mound represented the character of Mohsen, who never speaks because he's ailing. Then the focus is on Mary. I think it's amazing how Mary can enter into that text in an immediately heightened way...' Irine Vela, Director.

Lighting Designer

'I loved how the music and lighting drove the aesthetic of remoteness and longing and belonging and freedom.' Audience member, 2019 season of The Audition

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