

Dear media representatives,

This is to inform you that, upon consideration of coded (anonymised) scripts, the jury of the theatre project *Shadow Pandemic: Hidden Voices / Skriveni glasovi iz sjene pandemije* has awarded the following three new and unpublished plays:

Kristina Kegljen – POD SUKNJOM (UNDER THE SKIRT)

Katja Gorečan – AKTIVISTKE (THE ACTIVISTS)

Tijana Grumić – SVET ZASLUŽUJE KRAJ SVETA (THIS WORLD DESERVES TO END)

This expert jury consisted of the following members: **Vilma Štritof** (Maribor Theatre Festival), **Rok Andres** (Maribor Theatre Festival), **Biljana Srbljanović** (Belgrade Drama Theatre), **Tanja Šljivar** (Belgrade Drama Theatre), **Tomislav Zajec** (Zagreb Youth Theatre), **Selma Spahić** (Zagreb Youth Theatre), and **Ivana Vuković** (project dramaturge).

Award rationale:

The open call for three new plays received 69 scripts, one of which did not meet the requirements and was not considered. It is important to note that the open call was issued only to female authors. The number of applications this high shows that the topic of the call is quite important but also that open calls of this kind are rather scarce in the region.

Violence against women (regardless of the pandemic context in which it is set in our project) is a difficult subject to treat as it may easily invoke stereotypes and banal interpretations. It is quite a challenge to show the victim's position as someone other than passive and subjugated and an equal challenge to show the position of the bully without banalising it. It is even more challenging to move the text beyond the limiting qualification of being "female". With all this in mind, we wish to thank all the authors who took the challenge and, within our limited deadline, applied with their texts set in a variety of worlds, from hyperrealist or familiar depictions of everyday life to poetic or science fictions. Therefore, even though only three texts have been selected in this open call, we hope that other titles will find their way to the stage.

Kristina Kegljen – POD SUKNJOM (UNDER THE SKIRT)

In her story about a mother and a daughter living in a continental rural setting of Croatia, the author creates a poetic world that sees the two women seek their emancipation and, ironically, get isolated in the process, oppressed by a never-ending nightmarish atmosphere that can both facilitate their doom or deliverance. In a series of variations of the same scenes the author seeks to disorient the reader,

which becomes obvious as she completes the full circle by the end, as if to say that something else is more important than how the story begins or ends. This play with form and twisted perspective on the subject are exactly what sets this work by Kristina Kegljen apart.

Katja Gorečan – AKTIVISTKE (THE ACTIVISTS)

From up close women activists observe the violent environment and identify without fail the conditions and tribulations in which young women find themselves, questioning along the way their position in the society. This text does not follow the classic dramatic structure, as Katja Gorečan intertwines three stories about a Young Writer, Young Dramatist, and a Young Girl. In an unspecified setup, each tells her own yet common story rooted in a society ruled by the laws of precariat, patriarchy, abuse, and dishonesty. Each protagonist paints an intimate landscape in which young artists live, bringing them close to us, but with some cynical and wryly humorous distance. Set at the time of and little past the lockdown, the author speaks about a seemingly changing society, yet one that has revealed its deeply rooted preferences hidden under the surface. Using a rich palette of words, Katja Gorečan makes this short drama the classic of her own generation, or to be more accurate, a shining exemplar of all young female authors.

Tijana Grumić – SVET ZASLUŽUJE KRAJ SVETA (THIS WORLD DESERVES TO END)

In her text Tijana Grumić sets up the stage for a diegetic world that reflects and converses with our pre-apocalyptic, late capitalist reality. A world that – just like ours – comes to an end. In the context of environmental disasters, pandemic, and hoarding more profit, a piglet is born, inseminated, and put to death by humans. Up on the stage it speaks to the audience in human tongue about the circumstances in which three women lived, procreated (or declined to), and died: the mother, her daughter living in a rented flat, and the landlady. The last one raises the rent and forces the daughter to move out. The play does not resort to a simple criticism of bourgeois ethics or to an obvious moral of the story. None of the protagonists speaks from a high, "correct" ground. The landlady is a corona-profiteer, but her father was a bully who ended up eaten by pigs (according to the bedtime story our pig narrator listened to every night). The daughter is a vegan, but her mother earns her living in a slaughterhouse whose owner was also eaten by pigs.

Stage directions play a particular role as they bring author's comments and make the link with a reality outside the story. A reality which is not real. Writing itself is part and the topic of this story, as is the issue of (self)exploitation on the creative arts market that reflects the ongoing exploitation of resources and living beings on this planet. By the end, pigs serve their revenge cold, taking more time than the world to end, more time than it takes to write, by eating everything, including this play.

The results of the open call will also be announced at the Shadow Pandemic website

<https://shadowpandemic.eu/javni-pozivi/>

As per the call, each author of the awarded texts will receive **4.400,00 €** gross, that is, before taxes.

SHADOW PAND EMI C

Zagreb Youth Theatre
Maribor Theatre Festival
Belgrade Drama Theatre

Congratulations to the winners!

What's next? The awarded scripts will be translated into English, published online, and staged in the form of an omnibus to be directed by **Selma Spahić**. All three will be performed in Zagreb, Belgrade, and Maribor.

A little reminder:

This open call has been issued by the **Zagreb Youth Theatre**, Croatia, **Maribor Theatre Festival**, Slovenia, and **Belgrade Drama Theatre**, Serbia as partners and producers.

The Shadow Pandemic: Hidden Voices project broadly addresses neglect and violence against women during the Covid-19 pandemic and is being **funded by the European Commission's Creative Europe Programme (CREA)**. The call was issued to female authors with residence in the EU and countries included in the Creative Europe Programme (Iceland, Norway, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Georgia, Moldavia, Ukraine, Tunisia, Armenia, and Kosovo*).

*In accordance with the UN Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) and without prejudicing the status or the opinion of ICJ about Kosovo's declaration of independence.

Thank you for releasing this announcement!