

WPIC 2012 - An opportunity to meet, to build networks, to create genuine, lasting contacts between women playwrights and theatre professionals. Our aim is to have a supporting impact on cooperations and to build bridges between people from different parts of the world.

More info, go to

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Homepage for WPI, **www.wpinternational.net**



9th Women Playwrights International Conference Stockholm - Sweden 15-21 august 2012 Theme: THE DEMOCRATIC STAGE Newsletter # 1-2011

WPI was founded in 1988 and held its first conference in Buffalo, New York, USA. Two hundred women from over 30 countries were in attendance. Since then, women playwrights have gathered in Canada, Ireland, Greece, Australia, the Philippines, Indonesia and India.

One and a half years from now it will again be time to gather as the ninth conference for women playwrights across the globe convenes, now in Stockholm Sweden in one of the city's oldest theatres! Some of you reading this bulletin have been with us before. This time a vibrant and energetic institution will be our host. Riksteatern is a popular movement for the theatre arts that owns a theatre. It was founded 77 years ago and has 42000 members who work voluntarily through 250 theatre associations spread across the whole of Sweden. This makes the theatre strong.

We wish to dedicate the conference to the theme The Democratic Stage and illuminate perspectives regarding gender, new forms of creative participation, advocacy and social change, new media and power shifting, the challenges and threats to artistic ownership / copyright and female leadership.

Our goal is to receive 400 delegates from the whole world. We are especially happy that the Norwe-

gian Playwrights' Association has initiated a fund that will support women who for economic reasons might not otherwise attend the conference. The fund is designed to help women from regions not well represented at the conference to attend. More information about the fund will be available in coming newsletters.

We also wish to widen the linguistic reach of the festival so that a greater number of voices may be heard. To this aim we have initiated collaboration with two Arabic language theatres: Al Madina in Beirut, Lebanon and Al Harah on the West Bank in Palestine.

An international committee of readers will be constituted to choose the manuscripts that will be presented at the conference. It is already possible to open the website and register your own play for consideration or to see what other plays have been registered. All entries will be public information.

A newsletter will be issued periodically and mailed to all interested parties until the conference in August 2012. We invite you to spread the newsletter among your colleagues!

Best wishes!

Lene Therese Teigen, WPI management committee
Mireille Bergenström, project manager

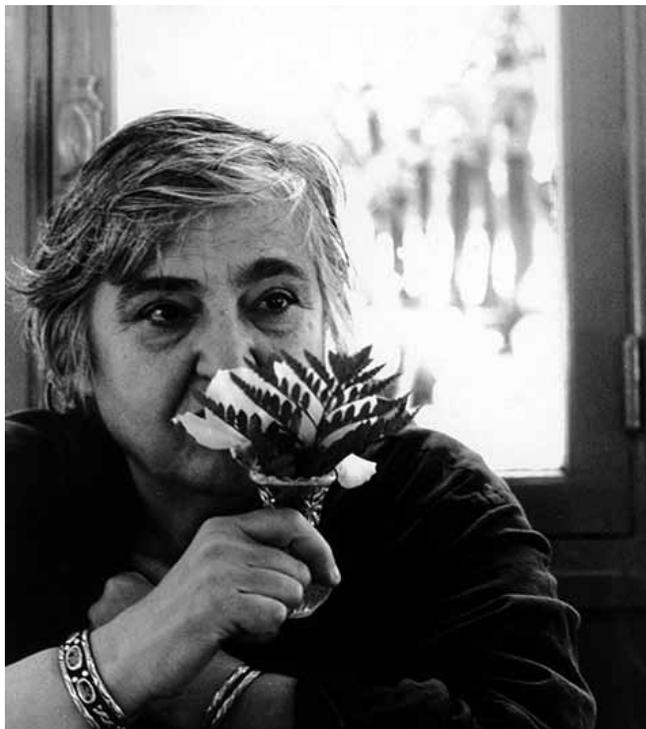
Etel Adnan Award

The Al-Madina Theatre of Beirut and Riksteatern, the Swedish National Touring Theatre, announce an open call for women playwrights for the Etel Adnan Award for Women Playwrights. This prize is a follow-up of the Alhild-priset, which Riksteatern awarded for three consecutive years to spotlight women writers working in the spirit of the 19th century playwright Alhild Agrell.

The Etel Adnan Award provides an opportunity for women writers residing in Arabic-speaking countries to have their plays acknowledged. Contestants are asked to submit their manuscripts to Al-Madina Theatre in Beirut. The jury, appointed by Al-Madina, will make an initial selection. The selected plays will then be sent to a Swedish jury. The final winner will be chosen by Al-Madina.

There will be three competitions: the 2010 winner will be announced in January 2011 at Al-Madina, Beirut. Two more winners will be announced, one in the autumn of 2011 and the last one at the 2012 Women Playwrights International Conference (WPIC) in Stockholm, Sweden.

The winners will each receive 5 000 USD. The three winning plays will be translated into English and presented as readings at WPIC. Finally, one of the plays will be chosen for production in collaboration between Riksteatern and Al-Madina. For more information go to www.riksteatern.se/wpic where all information on the Etel Adnan Award is posted.



Etel Adnan

Etel Adnan

is "arguably the most celebrated and accomplished Arab American author writing today". So it feels quite natural to name this award after her.

This Lebanese-American poet, essayist, and visual artist, was born 24 February 1925 in Beirut, Lebanon. Her life can be described as "a study in displacement and alienation". Daughter of a Christian Greek mother and a Muslim Syrian father, she grew up speaking Greek and Turkish in a primarily Arabic-speaking society. Yet she was educated at French convent schools, and French became the language in which her early work was first written. She has also studied English from her youth, and most of her later work has been first written in this language.

Caught between languages, in her youth Adnan first found her voice through painting rather than writing. In 1996 she recalled, "Abstract art was the equivalent of poetic expression; I didn't need to use words, but colors and lines. I didn't need to belong to a language-oriented culture but to an open form of expression". At twenty-four Adnan traveled to Paris where she received a degree in philosophy from the Sorbonne. She then traveled to America where she continued graduate studies at the University of California, Berkeley and at Harvard University. She taught philosophy of art at the Dominican University of California in San Rafael for many years, and has lectured at universities throughout the United States. She divides her time between California, France, and Lebanon.

Read more:

<http://www.culturebase.net/artist.php?3978>

THE DeSK-PROJECT - Forgotten Plays by Female Writers

The work with DeSK or "Dette Skrev Kvinder" (What Women Wrote) started in the early spring of 2010. Inspired by "Spetsprojektet" (The Lace Project) in Sweden, we wanted to spotlight Norwegian female playwrights and their dramatic works written in the late 1800s. Our feeling was that the Nordic classical theatre repertoire lacks perspective and we questioned why we only encounter stories written by a chosen group of men. The influence of Ibsen is strong in Norway. His works have had a huge impact and have been produced so frequently, that little space is left for other playwrights. After two weeks of research we uncovered sixteen forgotten female writers who together authored over 70 plays. The female writers' perspective comes also with a large number of female roles! These plays were written in a society very similar to our own and, in their time, staged at major theatres in Christiania (now Oslo), Stockholm and Copenhagen. And then they were forgotten.

On September 3rd we hosted an evening of readings of three of these forgotten plays accompanied by panel discussions on stage with academics and theatre people, Swedish and Norwegian. This event was part of The Ibsen Festival (Ibsenfestivalen), and was a collaboration between The National Theatre (Nationalteatret) and The House of Dramatic Writing (Dramatikkens Hus) in Oslo, Norway.

On December 8th we organized a reading of Hulda Garborgs Edderkoppen (The Spider) with ten actors. This marked the start of a series of monthly readings, which will be part of the program at The Actors Centre (Skuespiller Senteret) during 2011. We now want to spread information about these writers and their work while continuing to search for more. Our primary goal is that this will lead to several stage productions. In the spring of 2011 we will organize an international academic seminar on the subject of forgotten female playwrights in collaboration with the University of Oslo.

DeSK are:

Cecilie Lundsholt, actor/producer

Lene Therese Teigen, director/playwright

Nina Åkerlund, actor/choreographer

Read more www.deskprosjektet.no

Apply for funding!

You who wish to participate in WPIC in Stockholm are encouraged to already now begin to look for grant opportunities. Costs that may be funded by national or international grants and travel subsidies are translation costs for your play, travel and hotel costs and participation fees.

We will strive to keep the participation fee as low as possible but estimate now a price in the neighborhood of 2500 to 3000 Swedish Crowns. Please note, this sum does NOT include costs for room and board.

Affinity Groups and Webinars!

We are planning a number of activities leading up to the conference in 2012.

We would like to create three affinity groups who each will assume responsibility for a webinar.

We have agreed on these three themes:

- The Past - Women Playwrights in history / SPETS / DESK etc
- The Present - Community Theatre
- The Future - production in the future (form, web, interactive medias)

Affinity Groups represent a new and experimental model in facilitating debate. Affinity Groups work on different topics and are non-hierarchical, open, participatory and innovative. Each group organizes the dialogue concerning their particular topic according to their own design. Affinity Groups may publish the outcomes of their discussions in the form of a discussion paper, a video, a podcast or something entirely different.

The following link presents an example of how this may work:

<http://europeanfeministforum.org/spip.php?rubrique16&lang=en>

We are now looking for women who would like to coordinate one of these groups and assume responsibility for three tasks: **arranging, documenting and reporting**. This might also lead to opportunities to recruit new members for WPIC.

you like to work with us? Please send an e-mail to: mireille.bergenstrom@riksteatern.se