

Writing Residency on Short Theatrical Forms – Lebanon

on the theme
Ruins and Resilience

April 28 – May 14, 2024
USEK Campus

PRESENTATION

The Writing Residency on Short Theatrical Forms will bring together, for its first edition in Lebanon at the Holy Spirit University of Kaslik (USEK), writers of Middle Eastern culture or with an interest in the Middle East, under the theme “**Ruins and Resilience**”, within the scope of coexistence in diversity and secularism.

The Writing Residency on Short Theatrical Forms aims to be a laboratory for authors who wish to write for the stage and collaborate with actors, directors, and various entertainment professionals with the aim of gaining in experience and sharing knowledge to enrich their personal and professional artistic approaches.

The Writing Residency on Short Theatrical Forms is addressed to artists with a demonstrated desire and need to write for the stage. Contributions may be in Arabic, French, or English. Simultaneous interpretation will be provided during the plenary sessions.

The objective of this **residency** is to allow authors/playwrights of Middle Eastern culture or with an interest in the Middle East to compare their works, their vision of writing, and their creation perspectives with their peers on the one hand, and with those of performing arts professionals, on the other hand. The **residency** strives to examine the issues raised by artistic practice and the ongoing changes in the field of dramatic composition. It is designed as a place of intergenerational and international exchange, free from any academic or cultural hierarchy.

The short dramatic forms suggested as part of this residency may vary between single-act stage scripts, stage composition, wordless dramatic forms, radio dramas, podcasts, or any other creative form written for the stage on which participants wish to work, provided that its duration does not exceed fifty minutes.

PROFILE OF CANDIDATES AND PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS

Applicants who wish to participate in the residency must meet the following requirements:

- Be over 20 years old.
- Master one of the three abovementioned languages in writing and be able to interact with participants and speakers.
- Submit their CV to the following email address: lenasaade@usek.edu.lb, along with a motivation letter, the title of their contribution, and an abstract. Twenty participants will then be selected according to their proposal and their profile.
- Applicants must be able to pay for their plane tickets and obtain travel insurance, which covers medical emergencies, illnesses, repatriation in case of an emergency, as well as hospitalization in case of COVID-19 serious complications.
- The residency fees amount to 1500 euros per participant for the entire duration of the stay.
- A full or partial scholarship will be awarded to the holders of the best dramatic hypotheses.

USEK will be in charge of the accommodation and daily meals, providing participants with a cold meal during the day and a *table d'hôte* dinner at 8:00 p.m.

The **Writing Residency on Short Theatrical Forms** will provide a psychologist and a legal expert to advise participants during their writing process on specific psychological or legal concepts.

PLANNED SCHEDULE

January 30 to March 10, 2024: Official registration of selected applicants and online settlement of the first installment (500 euros) of participation fees.

February 7, 2024 | 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.: First online meeting of participants and explanation of the program. Suggested readings and a bibliography of contemporary playwrights.

March 7, 2024 | 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.: Second online meeting, collection of drama scenarios, readings, comments on drafts, and settlement of second instalment (500 euros) of fees.

April 28, 2024 : Reception of participants at USEK and/or at the Beirut International Airport, and settlement of the third and last instalment (500 euros) of fees.

April 29 and 30, 2024: Writing monologues based on group life experiences – A workshop with drama therapist Zeina Daccache.

May 1, 2024 : Guided tour of Beirut.

May 2 to 6, 2024 : Therapeutic writing workshop with Sandrine Pitarque.

- May 7, 2024** : Storytelling workshop with Rafic Ali Ahmad.
- May 8, 2024** : Guided tour of the temple and museum of Baalbek or of Tripoli.
- May 9 to 12, 2024** : Internal readings with the playwrights in charge.
- May 12, 2024** : Staging, vocal, and/or space work on set.
- May 13, 2024** : Plenary session, open readings, and presentation of the short theatrical forms to the public.
- May 14, 2024** : Departure of the participants.

HYPOTHESIS

In playwriting, a hypothesis presents the author's intentions in the preliminary stages of writing. It explains to outside readers the approach underlying the future project by summarizing the project, presenting the characters of the play, and describing the references behind its development or the matters handled, among others.

The theme for this first edition is titled "Ruins and Resilience".

Special attention will be given to applications that reflect on ecological and sustainable development issues associated with their artistic practice.

However, this criterion is not essential to apply for this residency. Any proposal must find resonance and coherence with the general theme if the applicant chooses to develop their work around this axis.

PROFESSIONAL ADVISORS

- Pierre Koestel** : ENSATT author and drama advisor for residency works in French
- Nagy Souraty** : Stage director and artistic/drama advisor for residency works in English
- Betty Taoutel** : Author/Director and drama advisor for residency works in Arabic
- Valérie Cachard** : Author
- Sandrine Pitarque** : Director, drama therapist, and psychological counselor

PARTNERS

- *École Nationale Supérieure des Arts et Techniques du Théâtre (ENSATT)* – Lyon, France
- *USEK's Atelier des Arts du Spectacle (AAS)* – Kaslik, Lebanon

CHOICE OF TOPIC: INTRODUCTORY NOTES

“I have lived alone for so long that I acquired a sensibility akin to a field of rubble.”

And in the manner of Arthur Conan Doyle, I would say that “of all ruins, that of a distinguished mind is the most lamentable”. Patrick Chamoiseau

The theme chosen for this second edition directly echoes the tragedy of August 4, 2020, namely the dual explosion at the port of Beirut, which destroyed several districts of the capital and deeply scarred Lebanese society. This unexpected cataclysm, the scale of which is unprecedented on a national level, has aggravated the country’s worst political and economic crisis and has stoked past wounds that have yet to heal. Lebanon is currently struggling to find solutions to address this situation which is, in every way, tragic. The Lebanese people, so often praised for their resilience, are struggling to keep hope in better days to come.

How can this disaster be represented? How can it be thought? or healed? What story(ies) are to be written with and/or after the destruction? All these questions underlie our artistic approaches in an attempt to find plausible answers to the current and seemingly endless disaster.

Yet the theme of this residency is also open for interpretation in a broader sense.

A brief look at art history reveals that ruins have often been a source of inspiration for many artists. As an object of fascination, they remind us of our relationship to time, finiteness, and memory. They represent a state of survival in the face of oblivion and disappearance as an important part of our heritage and, therefore, of our collective identity. In a sense, they are the marker of destruction, but they nonetheless also herald a certain renewal and remind us that the history of humanity was built by successive mutations.

Applicants are therefore invited to freely develop this theme into an original project based on the various aspects raised by this proposal. They may reminisce on Lebanese events or on events specific to another country, or even to consider a fiction, the main object of which would be to tell the story of a state of ruin (material, psychological, philosophical, political, etc.). Whatever the angle, each applicant will be required to develop their artistic need and to demonstrate a unique brand of writing.