

Naomi Cortes - theatremaker

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HIGHLIGHTS

Poetry & Performance Director - Communitas Education Trust
Lecturer in Applied Theatre - Central School of Speech and Drama
Writer - "Not Bound Within" & "Umtolo" - Young Vic Theatre (Zimbabwe)
Young Actors' Theatre Director - Donmar Warehouse, Kiln Theatre & Trinity Laban

KEY SKILLS

Effective methods for working with young people who have Special Educational Needs and EAL pupils
Specialist knowledge of drama making techniques with migrant and refugee communities
Experience of writing for family and mainstream theatre, and poetry for younger readers
Extensive experience of theatre directing, including devising and physical theatre, voice and text
Teacher in poetry and performance including the LAMDA Performing Verse and Prose exams

CURRENT WORK

- 2020 - 21** **Writer** *YMCA & Mousetrap Theatre Projects*
During the pandemic, Naomi's creative writing project with residents at the YMCA continued. In person, she led a series of workshops, inspired by her love of poetry, where participants were encouraged and supported to voice the challenges they experienced personally during the Covid crisis and their optimistic ideas for the future.
- 2020 -** **Writer** *Unicorn Theatre*
Naomi is developing a play inspired by West African traditional storytelling, exploring the themes of acceptance, confidence, identity and imagination. Her 'rebel yell' is aimed at those in society who strive to silence the voices of those they malign, and a rebel yell to all children who endeavour to be heard in spite of difficult circumstances.
- 2019** **Director** *Discover Children's Centre*
Working collaboratively with a team of story builders, Naomi directed a series of storytelling sessions for babies and toddlers - "You're Safe With Me" by Chitra Soundar and Poonam Mistry. She used multi-sensory approaches, with puppetry and song to create an engaging and charming performance for families.
- 2019** **Writer - Umtolo (The Tree)** *Young Vic Theatre*
Naomi was commissioned to write a play in Zimbabwe, exploring the country's history. Using the symbiotic relationship between nature and traditional cultures, she told the story of how Christianity and Colonialism arrived in Zimbabwe uninvited, 'arm in arm', with a poetic telling of their legacy today in Umtolo - 'The Tree'.
- 2018 -** **Poetry Teacher & Consultant** *John Keats Primary - Communitas Education Trust*
Naomi's reputation continues to grow with Communitas Education, as she is asked to introduce her Primary Poetry Programme to the newest school in the trust, encouraging Early Years & Key Stage 1 pupils to engage with new approaches to literacy and language in their early educational development.
- 2018** **Theatre Director** *Trinity Laban at the Tate Exchange*
Inspired by John Akomfrah's Unfinished Conversation exploring the work of cultural theorist Stuart Hall, Naomi created a new theatrical response with young actors and musicians, presenting their perceptions about our world and how their own identity enhances their own 'unfinished conversations', performing at Tate Modern.
- 2017 -** **Goose Green Primary - Communitas Education Trust** *Poetry Teacher*
After the success of her Poetry Programme at one of their other primary schools, Communitas invited Naomi to be part of their new team to improve the overall standards of learning with Key Stage 2 pupils. Her dynamic personality and successful teaching techniques ensures she is a continuing inspiration within the school.
- 2015 -** **Visiting Lecturer** *Central School of Speech and Drama*
Naomi's many years of experience and successful delivery of a broad range of participatory arts projects with hard to reach communities and participants has brought her to the attention of Central School of Speech and Drama, where she is a lecturer on their BA and MA Applied Theatre courses.

2014 - Playwright & Producer *Not Bound Within*
After successful play readings with Blacktress UK at the Tristan Bates theatre and the Albany, Naomi continues to develop and find new audiences for her show, a poetic and surrealist battle-cry response to the exploitation of women both past and present, inspired by the real life story of Saartjie Baartman - the Hottentot Venus.

2013 - Poetry and Performance Teacher *John Donne Primary - Communitas Education Trust*
Naomi was invited to create and implement her Primary Poetry Programme aimed at Key Stage 2 pupils. Her work has led to the school winning the National CliPPA Poetry Award and success in LAMDA's accreditation exams. She now works with all pupils within the school from Early Years through to Key Stages 1 & 2.

PAST PROJECTS

2013 - 2017 Associate Artist *Stratford Circus*
After the success of her production *The Littlest Quirky* which premiered at the venue, Naomi works alongside their education team. She continues to be a part of their work, developing their annual School's Drama Festival and championing their senior citizen's theatre company.

2013 - 2017 Drama Practitioner *Kiln Theatre (the Tricycle)*
Working in partnership with the College of North West London, Naomi used drama to develop the language and confidence skills of ESOL and EEM students on the *Minding the Gap* project. She was also lead artist on the theatre's *Story Lab* project, sharing her enchanting methods of storymaking with local primary schools.

2012 - 2017 Education Practitioner *the Donmar Warehouse*
Naomi has worked with the venue's education team, creating an impressive body of work for their *Take the Stage* programme and the *Tomorrow Project*. She also directed ensemble casts of young women from schools and community settings on the Donmar's pop-up stage at Kings Cross for their *Shakespeare Trilogy* season.

2013 - 2017 Writer - The Littlest Quirky *Theatre Centre and Stratford Circus*
After a research and development phase on her first play *The Littlest Quirky* an enchanting and animated adventure for younger audiences, Naomi was commissioned by Theatre Centre to present a premiere at Stratford Circus and the Egg, Theatre Royal Bath. Her play was shortlisted for The Brian Way Award for Best New Play.

2012 - 2015 Community Director and Associate Artist *Soho Theatre*
Naomi collaborated with local community groups to create a large scale performance, as part of Soho Theatre's Community production. She also performed on the venue's stage for a series of educational projects and delivered creative writing workshops for their community and outreach programme.

2011 - Associate Artist - Graeae Theatre Company
Naomi shares the Graeae aesthetic of placing D/deaf and disabled artists centrestage in the world of live performance. She is also lead artist using her particular approach to creating new work with their Young Company and training the new generation of theatre maker in their Ensemble programme, since its beginning.

2011 - 2017 Actor-Practitioner *Almeida Theatre*
As part of the theatre's Residencies initiative, Naomi worked within SEN and mainstream secondary education to create new work in response to the venue's artistic programme. She was also lead tutor with the Almeida Academy, a programme of drama classes for children which explored devising, movement and puppetry.

2007 - 2018 Young Actors' Director *Tramshed (Greenwich & Lewisham Young People's Theatre)*
Naomi worked for many years on GLYPT's outreach programme. Her interest in authentic voices led to a series of shows exploring identity and immigration, local politics and the media's perception of them. She was also director for the Senior's acting company, including their participation in the National Theatre's Connections.

Naomi has also developed educational arts projects with various venues and companies including the Old Vic Theatre, Ambassador Theatre Group, the Roundhouse, the Southbank Centre, the Yard, Boundless Theatre and Creative Partnerships.

She has worked with both primary and secondary schools (mainstream and SEN), nurseries and children centre's in Southwark, Lewisham, Camden, Barnet, Barking & Dagenham, Hackney, Kensington & Chelsea, Islington, Lambeth, Haringey, Greenwich, Newham, Brent, Hammersmith & Fulham, Wandsworth and Tower Hamlets.

Naomi has collaborated with the Museum of Childhood, Museum of London, Foundling Museum, National Trust, Greenwich & Docklands Festival, Liberty Festival, St Clement's & nia Charities, Lewisham Refugee Network and the Shoreditch Trust.

Naomi had a degree in Drama (B.A) University of Bristol and is a member of Equity trade union

Enhanced DBS and insurance details available on request