FORWARD TOGETHER

A look back at The Public
March 2020–December 2021
COVID-19 closed The Public’s doors on March 12, 2020. From that moment through the end of 2021, The Public Theater devoted itself to:

MAKING ART
CIVIC ORGANIZING

SUPPORTING
ARTISTS & COMMUNITIES

EMPOWERING EQUITY

BRINGING SAFE, LIVE PERFORMANCES BACK TO NYC
Throughout this time, The Public:

- Employed more than 1,700 artists
- Produced more than 50 shows & events
- Viewed by 500k audience members
- From 65 countries
The Public produced one of the first digital plays:

RICHARD NELSON'S

WHAT DO WE NEED TO TALK ABOUT?

The Apple Family: Conversations on Zoom

Written & Directed by Richard Nelson

Streamed April 29–June 28, 2020
Reached over 100,000 people in 36 countries
We banded together with PUBLIC THEATER, RADIO & TELEVISION to make new work and connect artists to audiences around the world.
Radio play broadcast on WNYC from July 13–16, 2020 and streamed nationwide on hundreds of public radio channels

FREE SHAKESPEARE ON THE RADIO

RICHARD

By William Shakespeare
Conceived for the Radio and
Directed by Saheem Ali
Produced in partnership with WNYC
PUBLIC WORKS’ UNDER THE GREENWOOD TREE

Documentary film tracking the creation of Public Works’ AS YOU LIKE IT

NY Premiere on October 7, 2020, aired nationwide on hundreds of public television channels and streamed on All Arts
In March 2020, The Public created a Freelance Theater-Maker Relief Fund. We distributed $1.2M in relief grants to 1,200+ independent theater-makers. 

Picture: Allison Caan in Wake, photo by Joan Marcus
A bilingual Spanish/English radio play presented in partnership with WNYC Studios. Premiered March 18, 2021

By William Shakespeare
Adapted by Saheem Ali & Ricardo Pérez González
Based on the Spanish Translation by Alfredo Michel Modenessi
Directed by Saheem Ali, Featuring Lupita Nyong'o
A world-premiere docu-play crafted from firsthand interviews with NYC medical first responders during the COVID-19 pandemic

Premiered
July 8, 2020

The Line

Written by Jessica Blank and Erik Jensen
Directed by Jessica Blank
Original Composition by Aimee Mann & Jonathan Coulton
Produced by Michael Penn

More Info
In June 2020, The Public created a Public Works COMMUNITY SUPPORT FUND.

We distributed nearly $400K to 300+ Public Works Community Members and 4 Community Arts Organizations.

8 Public Works Community Partner Organizations
10 Public Works National Partners

& We kept making art together.
A national public visual art project that asked Public Works community members to finish the sentence: “Today I am planting a seed of..."

PUBLIC WORKS’

THE

SEED

PROJECT

NYC Premiere
October 29, 2020

Projections featuring 164 members of the New York Public Works community
Performed by the Hunts Point Children’s Shakespeare Ensemble
Featuring the 4th, 5th & 6th graders of the Hunts Point Alliance for Children

A Midsummer Night’s Dream

Digital Premiere June 30, 2021
The Public is a civic pillar of NYC. In 2020, we worked to:

- **Get Out The Vote**
- **Drive Census Participation**
- **Support Our City’s Demands for Justice**
A VOTER REGISTRATION & CENSUS INFO POP UP

RUCKUS

September 26, 2020

Featuring live performances by Laurie Anderson, Arto Lindsay, and Ryuichi Sakamoto
We joined a city-wide call for theaters to open their lobbies as safe spaces during summer 2020 demonstrations for justice in NYC.

#OPEN YOUR LOBBY

June–July 2020

OPEN FOR 50 DAYS

SERVED 5,000 PEOPLE

SHARED 1,000 FREE MEALS
In 2020, The Public joined our field in demanding greater justice and equity in theater.

THE PUBLIC THEATER

ANTI-RACISM & CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION PLAN
A visual installation on The Public’s façade dedicated to the Black lives lost to police brutality and white violence

SAY THEIR NAMES

Curated by Carlia Cornelia Jones
Designed by Lucy Mackinnon
Premiered October 26, 2020
In the summer of 2021, The Public helped lead New York’s return to large-scale, live performances with

THE RETURN OF FREE SHAKESPEARE IN THE PARK

Picture: Thought for FREE SHAKESPEARE IN THE PARK, design by Tom Delio
FREE SHAKESPEARE IN THE PARK

July 6 - September 18, 2021

MERRY WIVES

64 free performances & more than 80,000 tickets distributed

By William Shakespeare
Adapted by Jocelyn Bioh
Directed by Saheem Ali

MORE INFO
The Public partnered with Downtown Community Television Center Inc. to document the journey of Free Shakespeare in the Park

REOPENING NIGHT

HBO Premiere December 20, 2021
In September 2021, The Public’s celebratory Gala honored founder Joe Papp and presented our first annual

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP AWARD

Inaugural Community Leadership Award Winner
Ms. Vivian Jett Brown, Recreation Director at Brownsville Recreation Center
The Mobile Unit toured with the NATIONAL BLACK THEATRE's Stage for Healing and Resilience, Malik Work's VERSES @ WORK—THE ABRIDGED MIX, Patricia McGregor's SHAKESPEARE: CALL AND RESPONSE & the PEOPLE'S BUS.

SUMMER OF JOY

18 free performances at 8 community venues

July 6 - September 18, 2021

MORE INFO
In the Fall of 2021, Joe’s Pub welcomed back live audiences to its one-of-a-kind performance venue.
In October 2021, The Public kicked off a Fall season of live, performances with two world premieres:

**A NEW MUSICAL**

**THE VISITOR**

October 14–December 5, 2021

Music by Tom Kitt, Lyrics by Brian Yorkey
Book by Kwame Kwei-Armah & Brian Yorkey
Choreography by Lorin Latarro
Directed by Daniel Sullivan

Based on the Groundswell Productions and Participant Media
movie picture written by Thomas McCarthy

**A NEW PLAY**

**CULLUD WATTAH**

November 2–December 12, 2021

By Erika Dickerson-Despenza
Directed by Candis C. Jones
NONE OF THIS WOULD HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE WITHOUT YOU!
Over the past 2 years, The Public's activities and operations cost more than $68 million. Funding for our work came overwhelmingly from supporters like you.

- 70% Donations from supporters like you
- 20% Federal relief
- 10% Earned revenue
THE PUBLIC THEATER
BELONGS TO
THE PEOPLE OF NEW YORK.
MEET OUR DONORS here
Throughout every challenge of the past two years, one thing has remained true: we moved forward, together.

THANK YOU FOR BEING A PART OF THE PUBLIC!