

THE PUBLIC.

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THE PUBLIC.+ **BIPOC CRITICS LAB** **CRITICAL MINDED**



Amanda L. Andrei



Shanaé Burch



Lindsley Howard



Regina Madanguit



Zoe Marín



e.jin O'Malley



Miranda Purcell



Katsuto Sakogashira



Ciaran Short



Angie Shin



Soumya Tadepalli



Dezi Tibbs

**THE BIPOC CRITICS LAB
AND THE PUBLIC THEATER ANNOUNCE
YEAR-LONG PARTNERSHIP WITH CRITICAL MINDED;
APPLICATIONS NOW OPEN FOR
2025-26 BIPOC CRITICS LAB COHORT**

2024-25 Cohort Members Complete Program

June 3, 2025 – The Public Theater (Artistic Director, Oskar Eustis; Executive Director, Patrick Willingham) announced today a new partnership between cultural critic **Jose Solís' BIPOC Critics Lab, Critical Minded, and The Public Theater**. After successful cohorts for the past two years, The Public is honored to continue Solís' commitment to creating an educational space for BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) writers in the realm of cultural criticism. This season is made even more special by **Critical Minded's** sponsorship of the 2025-26 cohort at The Public. **Critical Minded** is a grantmaking and learning initiative whose work is focused on resourcing and raising the visibility of critics of color and cultural writers through direct support to publications and individuals, research, and convening. Like the BIPOC Critics Lab, the organization has long been committed to removing barriers and expanding opportunities for critics of color through reporting, funding, and bringing creators together. Applications are now open for the upcoming cohort.

"**Critical Minded** is honored for the opportunity to support the 2025-26 cohort of cultural critic Jose Solís' BIPOC Critics Lab hosted at the legendary Public Theater," shares **rashid shabazz**, Executive Director of Critical Minded. "Since 2020, the Lab under Solís' guidance and leadership has created a nurturing space giving rise to a new generation of theater critics who now write for a range of publications from *The New York Times* to *3Views on Theater*."

Sessions for the Lab will span the course of The Public's 2025-26 season. Those chosen to participate will receive offers to join the cohort in August, with the cohort officially beginning in mid-September. This iteration of the cohort will be a hybrid model of online sessions and optional in-person activities. For more information on The Public's third iteration of the BIPOC Critics Lab and to apply, visit publictheater.org. The deadline to apply is **Monday, July 7**.

The Public has long operated on the principles that theater is an essential cultural force and that art and culture belong to everyone. Hosting the BIPOC Critics Lab at The Public for a third season aligns directly with the goals outlined in The Public's Cultural Transformation Plan, acknowledging that the field of arts journalism and the theater industry have historically upheld white supremacy, and, as a result, critics of color have far too often been left out of the conversation.

Additionally, The Public is pleased to announce that 12 members have successfully completed their training for the BIPOC Critics Lab over the past year. These writers are **Amanda L. Andrei, Shanaé Burch, Lindsley Howard, Regina Madanguit, Zoe Marín, e.jin O'Malley, Miranda Purcell, Katsuto Sakogashira, Ciaran Short, Angie Shin, Soumya Tadepalli, and Dezi Tibbs**. These cohort members come from over six different cities and four different countries, bringing incredibly unique perspectives, backgrounds, and voices. These writers are passionate and eager to join the cultural conversation in both New York City and beyond. To add these individuals to your press lists, please email BIPOCCriticsLab@publictheater.org and we'll be happy to share their contact information.

"I'm still in awe of how brilliant our most recent cohort was—each of them brought such heart, insight, and boldness to the Lab," shares program founder **Jose Solís**. "Returning to The Public Theater truly feels like coming home, and I'm so grateful to continue this journey with their support and the unwavering backing of Critical Minded. Every time we do this work, I'm reminded just how vital and urgent it is to carve out space for BIPOC critics to thrive, dream, and lead. I can't wait to meet the next group and see how they'll challenge, expand, and reimagine what criticism can be."

In a continued effort to further the movement initiated by Jose Solís and to expand both past and present cohorts' networks, The Public welcomes theaters in New York City, arts and cultural press agencies, and regional theaters around the world to collaborate with the Lab's early career BIPOC journalists for future commissioning opportunities. Institutions are also invited to host their own cohort of the BIPOC Critics Lab to expand the number of opportunities. To learn more, please email BIPOCCriticsLab@publictheater.org.

BIOS:

AMANDA L. ANDREI is a playwright, literary translator, and theater critic/journalist residing in L.A. by way of Virginia/Washington D.C. She writes epic, irreverent plays that center concealed, wounded places of history from the perspectives of diasporic Filipina women. Her play *Mama, I wish I were silver* won the 2022 Jane Chambers Award for Feminist Playwriting. She co-translates from Romanian to English with her father, and their translations of Tatiana Niculescu and Oana Hodade appear in *Asymptote Journal* and *Another Chicago Magazine*. She was named a Rising Leader of Color by Theatre Communications Group in 2023. MFA: University of Southern California.

SHANAÉ BURCH (*she/her*). Dr. Shanaé Burch is an arts in public health liberation scholar who resides in Brooklyn with her service dog, Dodger. As restful research, she listens and creates healthful narratives as an artist and public health creative, and this takes shape as theatre, poetry, collage, and play. She serves as a Deacon of Double Love Experience Church, board member of Community Conversations: Sister 2 Sister and co-associate editor of Poetry for The Public's Health (Health Promotion Practice). She is a proud union-member of Rutgers Adjunct Faculty Union and Actors Equity Association, and has run three world-major marathons. www.shanaeburch.com

LINDSLEY HOWARD is a Texas-born, Brooklyn-based actor, storyteller and cultural observer. As a mixed-race artist and an avid traveler, a throughline in all her creative pursuits is the intersectionality of our culture; the crossroads of human experience where many things can be true at once. Select artistic credits include collaborations and developmental work with EST, The Huntington, The Lark and Studio Theatre. She holds a BFA in Acting from St. Edward's University.

REGINA MADANGUIT is a multimedia storyteller, born and raised in the suburbs of Chicago, where she met her first love: video. She has created a number of short films and competed in local festivals. She studied people and place at the University of California, Berkeley, earning degrees in American Studies and Environmental Design. She's written about the [inventor of banana ketchup](#), the [house she lived in](#) when the pandemic began, and various topics in global health for [Common Thread](#). She makes things that people can connect to. She is currently based in the Philippines, exploring the island her parents left behind.

ZOE MARÍN (*she/her*) is an Argentine-American theatre artist and comedian, who is based in Toronto. She has a BFA in Theatre from York University. Recent credits include: *GRINGAS* (director; Toronto Fringe, Hamilton Fringe), *Internet Sensation* (director/creator; Paprika Theatre Festival), and *Do You Think You're Better Than Me?* (performer/creator; Toronto Fringe, Hamilton Fringe, Toronto Sketch Comedy Festival). She is First Born Theatre Company's (@firstborntheatre) Artistic Producer and the co-creator of sketch-comedy troupe Small Friend Tall Friend (@smallfriend.tallfriend). Marín loves: horror, comedy, music, politics, and pop culture, and hopes you see that in her work.

e.jin O'MALLEY is an adoptee writer who is based in New York. They have received nominations for a Pushcart Prize, Best of the Net, and Best New Poets, and their work has appeared or is forthcoming in *The Nashville Review*, *The Margins*, *TriQuarterly*, and others. They are a Roots. Wounds. Words., Lambda Literary, and Asian American Writers Workshop Margins Fellow.

MIRANDA PURCELL is a Puerto Rican actress and writer, best known for her lead role in the award-winning film *Antes que Cante el Gallo*. She earned her B.F.A. in Theater Arts from Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers University, where she specialized in the Meisner technique, and furthered her craft with studies in Shakespearean acting at the Globe Theater in London. After graduating, she worked as a screenwriter for "The Writer's Gang," as a reporter at Puerto Rico's leading newspaper *El Nuevo Día*, and as a content creator for Caribbean Cinemas, the fourth-largest movie theater franchise in Latin America. These roles deepened her interest in exploring diverse forms of storytelling. Currently, Purcell is pursuing a master's degree in journalism at Harvard University, finalizing a communications internship at art non-profit Art Bridges Foundation, and continuing to develop her acting career starring in both local and international productions. She is excited to be a part of the 2024-2025 Critic's Lab Cohort and looks forward to exchanging insightful perspectives with other BIPOC writers.

KATSUTO SAKOGASHIRA (*he/him*) is a writer and actor from Amakusa, Japan, based in Providence, Rhode Island. He holds a BA in Theatre and a BS in Biology with a minor in Music from Albright College, where he received the Leach Prize in theater making and the Gold A Award for outstanding leadership. He earned his MFA in Acting from Brown University/Trinity Repertory Company on a full scholarship, where he was also awarded the David Wickham Prize in Playwriting. An alumnus of the National Theater Institute, Katsuto is also a recipient of the Miranda Family Fellowship.

ANGIE SHIN (*they/she*) is a civil rights activist, theater critic, and dramaturg originally from Los Angeles, California. Trained in Shakespearean theater starting at age 9 with the Hobart Shakespeareans, they dramaturged for the Hyperion Shakespeare Company's 2022 production of *King John* at Harvard College. They are interested in postmodern studies of class, race, and gender in Shakespeare's plays; in their spare time, they enjoy seeing as much Shakespeare in New York City as they can, and writing on their [Substack](#) about theater and politics. They currently work as a paralegal at the NAACP Legal Defense Fund and organize with the nonprofit Nodutdol for Korean Community Development.

CIARAN SHORT is an interdisciplinary artist, writer, and activist born and raised in NYC. His work explores New York culture and tackles issues of race and masculinity. His multifaceted creative practice stems from an interest in holistic storytelling using a multimedia approach. He co-founded All Street, an art collective and protest group utilizing art to raise visibility and support social movements in NY. In the spring of 2022, All Street established a permanent gallery space for emerging and underrepresented artists in the East Village. He holds a master's degree in Media Studies from The New School.

SOUMYA TADEPALLI (*she/her*) is a theater maker, comedian, and administrator based in New York City and is passionate about telling new stories that uplift underrepresented voices and inspire social and political change. Previously, Soumya worked as the Public Relations Fellow for the two-time Tony Award-winning musical *Hell's Kitchen* on Broadway. She also worked as the Development Operations and Database Coordinator at Oregon Ballet Theatre, an administrative intern at The Tank NYC, and as an artistic intern at Syracuse Stage. Soumya is a graduate of Syracuse University's theater management program.

DEZI TIBBS (*they/she*) is a New York-based dramaturg and writer specializing in deepening our relationship with dramatic text. Dezi believes in the theatre's ability to inspire. As a reflection of life, the theatre allows an arena for audiences to better understand the world around them. To emphasize this power, Dezi created their blog "[Dezi's Thought Bubble](#)" to engage with the theatre scene critically and encourage audiences to view the theatre as a place that challenges their mind and opens their hearts; pieces that Dezi has self-published have been used to teach collegiate-level workshops on inclusion, race performance, and many other topics. They've also written for the Media Theater, the Wilma Theater, and the [Civilians' Extended Play](#). Dezi has sharpened their analytical eye through collaboration and mentorship with Tony Award-nominated director/choreographer Sam Pinkleton and Public Theater's Associate Director of New Work, Jack Moore. Let's make some cool stuff!

ABOUT THE BIPOC CRITICS LAB

The BIPOC Critics Lab was founded in 2020 by Jose Solís as a first-of-its-kind program designed to train and create work by emerging BIPOC theater journalists. Solís noticed a gap in training based on his own experience as a cultural critic in the field and created an educational space for BIPOC writers who had not been welcomed into cultural criticism, whether due to systemic oppression, lack of opportunity, or because they didn't know they were allowed to see themselves as critics. Solís solicited applicants for the first cohort through Twitter where over 100 BIPOC participants expressed interest in participating. From 2021-2023, The Kennedy Center hosted the BIPOC Critics Lab online as a part of the American College Theater Festival. In the summer of 2023, a cohort was also co-hosted by the Stratford Festival and *Intermission Magazine*. During its 2023-2024 season, The Public Theater hosted its first BIPOC Critics Lab cohort. Alumni of the program have gone on to write and work as editors for outlets such as *The Los Angeles Times*, *Andscape*, *Elle*, *Glamour*, *American Theatre*, *Broadway News*, *3Views*, *Brooklyn Rail*, and *Token Theatre Friends*.

Following the tenets of dialogue, compassion, and nurturing one's unique voice, future critics who participate in the cohort will contribute to the creation of a custom program that fits their specific needs and encourages them to pursue the path of criticism that best serves them. Participating in the cohort is at no cost to members. Selected members will have the opportunity to learn all aspects of arts journalism through a variety of mediums beyond the written word. BIPOC experts in the field also serve as guest speakers for the Lab. Writers who meet the attendance requirements at the culmination of the program will be assigned a future commissioned piece with compensation.

Since its creation, The Public has been committed to the work of the BIPOC Critics Lab, commissioning all current and alumni writers to pen features for most productions. Past commissions from former BIPOC Critics Lab members can be read at publictheater.org.

ABOUT JOSE SOLÍS

Jose Solís began his career as a critic at age 16 when he launched a film review website while living in Honduras, where he was born. He began writing professionally about theater while attending college in Costa Rica, and upon moving to NYC in 2012 focused entirely on the stage. His work appears in *The New York Times*, *American Theatre*, *TDF Stages*, *Backstage*, *3Views*, and *America Magazine*. In 2020 he was selected as the Floria Lasky Visiting Artist at Hunter College where he hosted the *Wed@One* series, and started the BIPOC Critics Lab, a workshop he created meant to train the cultural critics of the future. The Lab was previously hosted by the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. He is also the creator and host of *Token Theatre Friends*, a web series/podcast where he talks to some of the most influential theater artists working today.

ABOUT THE PUBLIC THEATER

THE PUBLIC continues the work of its visionary founder Joe Papp as a civic institution engaging, both on-stage and off, with some of the most important ideas and social issues of today. Conceived over 60 years ago as one of the nation's first nonprofit theaters, The Public has long operated on the principles that theater is an essential cultural force and that art and culture belong to everyone. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Oskar Eustis and Executive Director Patrick Willingham, The Public's wide breadth of programming includes an annual season of new work at its landmark home at Astor Place, Free Shakespeare in the Park at The Delacorte Theater in Central Park, the Mobile Unit touring throughout New York City's five boroughs, Public Lab, Public Works, Public Shakespeare Initiative, and Joe's Pub. Since premiering *HAIR* in 1967, The Public continues to create the canon of American Theater and is currently represented on Broadway by the Tony Award-winning musicals *Hamilton* by Lin-Manuel Miranda and *Hell's Kitchen* by Alicia Keys and Kristoffer Diaz. Their programs and productions can also be seen regionally across the country and around the world. The Public has received 64 Tony Awards, 195 Obie Awards, 62 Drama Desk Awards, 64 Lortel Awards, 36 Outer Critic Circle Awards, 13 New York Drama Critics' Circle Awards, 70 AUDELCO Awards, 6 Antony Awards, and 6 Pulitzer Prizes. publictheater.org

The Public Theater stands in honor of the first people and our ancestors. We acknowledge the land on which The Public and its theaters stand—the original homeland of the Lenape people. We acknowledge the painful history of genocide and forced removal from this territory. We honor the generations of stewards and we pay our respects to the many diverse indigenous peoples still connected to this land.

The Public also gives our respect to the people of Seneca Village, a community of Black property owners who were removed from their land and whose village was destroyed in the creation of Central Park. We recognize the sacrifice that these ancestors made and honor Seneca Village's legacy.

The 2025-26 BIPOC Critics Lab Cohort at The Public is supported by **Critical Minded**, a grantmaking and learning initiative whose work is focused on resourcing and raising the visibility of critics of color and cultural writers through direct support to publications and individuals, research and convening.

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