



Writer in Residence: Dinos Aristidou
The Mayflower Theatre, Southampton
Tuesday 20 December 2016 - Wednesday 18 April 2018



Mayflower
Writer in
Residence

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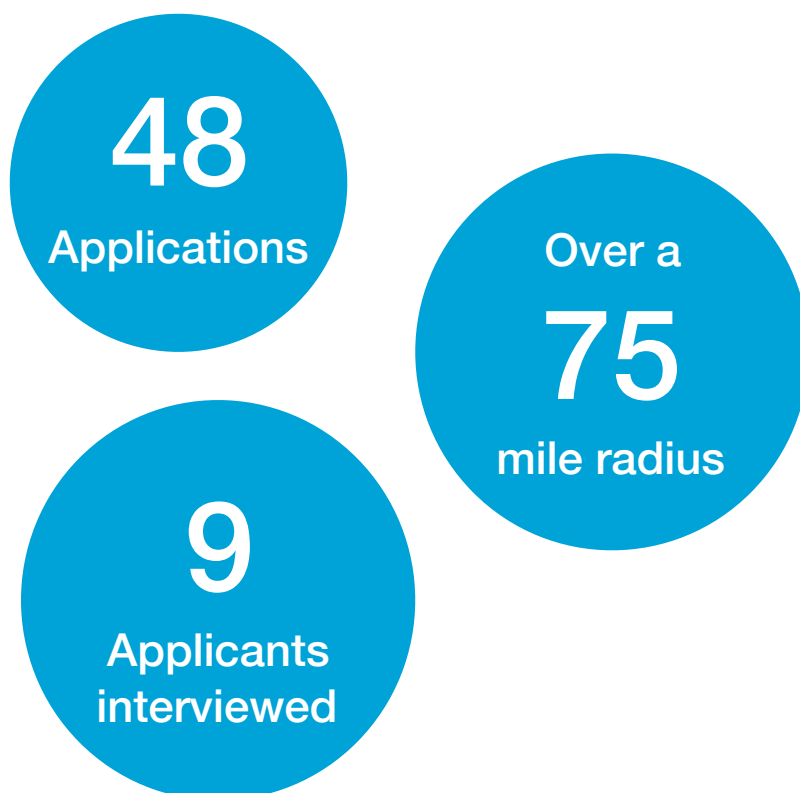


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About

Dinos was appointed Writer in Residence at the Mayflower Theatre on Tuesday 20 December 2016. Applicants consisted of writers with varying backgrounds and levels of experience. Applicants were interviewed by Sara Scott (Head of Creative Learning, The Mayflower Theatre) and Matthew West (Managing Director, ArtfulScribe).



Dinos' induction day at the Mayflower took place on 30 January 2017. Dinos' residency was fully underway from March 2017, after a few teething problems regarding contract wording and initial access to the building. These issues were swiftly and amicably resolved.

The Mayflower Theatre issued a press release announcing Dinos' Residency on 20 January 2017, broadcast both locally and nationally through media outlets including Southern Daily Echo (combined daily circulation figures 102, 821), and Radio Solent ([37,715 daily listeners](#)).

Dinos' finish date was the Mayflower 400 anniversary, in March 2018, with his last official event as a Writer in Residence in April 2018.

From a Project Manager's perspective, it was important that the Mayflower's first encounter of working with a Writer in Residence was a positive one. Dinos represented an experienced pair of hands that we could trust with this. He had extensive, relevant experience working in theatre settings as a playwright and creative facilitator. Dinos had thoroughly researched the venue and presented a proposal which took into account the theatre as a physical space, and engaged with future projects (Mayflower 400).

Residency Outline

Since beginning his Residency, Dinos has become an asset to the Mayflower team. Dinos has been included in several team meetings at The Mayflower. His presence was welcomed by staff. He interacts well with the Engage team and is treated as one of the crew.

The initial idea for the Residency was 50 days at £100 per day with a printed outcome. Dinos budgeted his time as follows:



Three evaluation sessions were scheduled between the SO:Write Project Manager and Dinos during the course of the Residency: July 2017, November 2017 and April 2018.

Workshops

Umbrella Arts Festival 2017.

Dinos carried out free drop-in workshops for the Umbrella Arts Festival 2017 - this was a wellbeing festival for the community of Southampton. Dinos offered participants the chance to create their own gift of writing for someone that they wanted to make a present for. This took place in one of Southampton's parks, and Dinos hosted his workshops from within a converted bus called "The Writers Cabin".

A wide range of people participated in Dinos' workshop, with the youngest aged 5-6 years old. The activity involved each participant choosing a person who they wanted to give a gift to and then, through a series of guided age appropriate exercises, they created a gift of writing which described the qualities of the person and also recorded their wishes for that person. Participants were offered the chance to write or dictate their gift.

The idea of kindness and gift giving as a contribution to wellbeing was explained to participants.



Other workshops.

Dinos planned to deliver two workshops for staff at The Mayflower Theatre. One will function as an update on his Residency, and the second will be a creative writing workshop.

Dinos delivered six workshops throughout his Residency, connecting directly with 130 people, including young writers aged 11-18. He also delivered outreach activities for the Mayflower Theatre at Wellow Primary School, and had input into the scripting of work for the Mayflower's *Titanic* project.

Dinos also contributed towards the organisation's Heritage Lottery funded project, ["MyStory"](#) - an archive initiative that forms part of the theatre's 100-year birthday celebrations.



The Gift of Writing

Your chance to own a unique handwritten piece of new writing.
Free of charge!

Look out for our Writer-in-Residence who will be offering gifts of writing related to a number of productions and to Mayflower Theatre.

This bespoke gift will be created on the day to remind you of your visit to Mayflower Theatre. Alternatively, if you'd like a piece of writing dedicated to a special person or to commemorate a particular occasion, please ask Dinos for an 'on the spot' response.



Meet our

Writer-in-Residence

Dinos Aristidou has been appointed Mayflower Theatre's Writer-in-Residence from March 2017 for a year as part of the citywide SO:Write initiative.

He's documenting a year in the life of Mayflower Theatre, capturing our history and the stories of the building and those who pass through its many doors. From the administrative team to front of house, from the action on the stage to the busy work offstage, everything is an inspiration!

Dinos' discoveries will be turned into a collection of fictional pieces which will be published in April 2018 as part of our Mayflower 90 celebrations.

As well as offering 'The Gift of Writing', Dinos will also be running workshops here at the theatre and across the city of Southampton.

You can keep track of his adventures at Mayflower Theatre through his blog:

writinresidence.wordpress.com



The Gift of Words

Dinos has offered the Gift of Writing to audiences at theatre shows, including bespoke responses and predetermined gifts based on show themes. This thoughtful initiative combined mindfulness and connecting with the community / individuals through writing.

Dinos attended a total of nine shows during his Residency, including *Madam Butterfly* (opera), *Jane Eyre* (theatre/adaptation), *The Play That Goes Wrong* (theatre/comedy), *Guys and Dolls* (musical), *Little Mermaid* (ballet), seasonal pantomime (family theatre), *Slava* (winter spectacle) and *Sunset Boulevard* (musical).

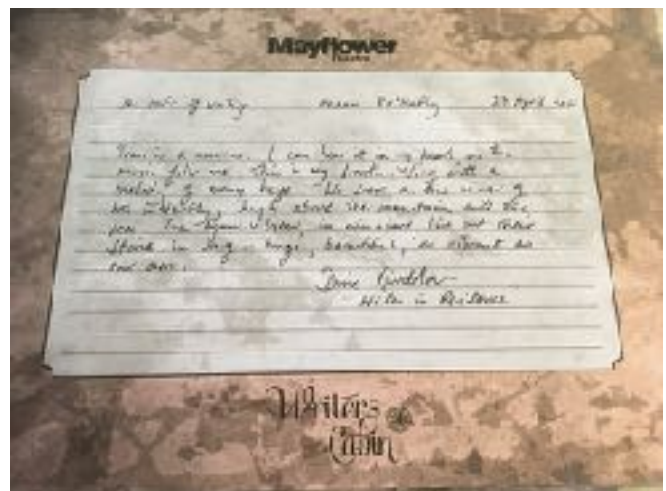
Mayflower had a bespoke pop-up banner designed to celebrate their Writer in Residence, and Dinos used this for his stall in the theatre foyer at these performances. Here, he would be able to offer a “gift of writing” to theatregoers.

The Mayflower Theatre’s overall capacity is 2,300 people. This gave a total of 20,700 visitors who would have at least seen Dinos, if only in passing, as the theatre’s Writer in Residence.

20,700
visitors

9
productions

433
Gifts of words



The Mayflower Deck

Conception

The Mayflower 400 project is a city-wide event to commemorate the Pilgrim Fathers' journey to America, setting sail from Southampton in 1620.

As part of the Mayflower 400 anniversary, Dinos intended to develop "The Mayflower Deck". This was intended to be a log book, recording the voyaged and life of the The Mayflower Theatre through a collection of writing miniatures and dialogues. This was originally intended to include impressions, fragments and thoughts for the day. Dinos suggested that he may draw inspiration from the building, the programme, its history, audiences and employees, artists and users, overheard conversations within the theatre and about the theatre.

The log book was thought to become something between a journal, performance pieces, conversation and record.

Final Outcome

Dinos' completed Mayflower Deck project was a sequence of 52 cards, comprised of personal reflections, poetry, and narrative shorts. Dinos shared extracts from this at a Writers in Residence event at Mettricks Guildhall in Southampton's Cultural Quarter. Here, Writers in Residence from John Hansard Gallery and Southampton Libraries joined Dinos to showcase their outcomes.



Outcomes and Feedback

Through surveys and direct mailing, Dinos' staff contact had a footfall of 512 people, and in total, he gave out 433 gifts of writing to Mayflower visitors. He was at least seen by 20,700 theatregoers over 9 productions. Not including online broadcast features or written outcome distribution figures, it's estimated that the Mayflower Writer in Residence reached 162,351 people through direct contact or radio/print broadcasting about the project.

Sara Scott (Mayflower) feels the organisation is starting to see writing in a new way, thanks to Dinos' presence. On the flip side, the Residency helped Dinos identify as a writer, and enabled him to combine a personal philosophy with his creative practice in the Gifts of Writing project strand. Dinos felt fully supported by the Mayflower and SO:Write Project Manager; he appreciated them as a broker with reference to any disputes.

The Mayflower wish to continue supporting writers on future projects with ArtfulScribe and as such, are considering writing as something that they are keen to imbed in the theatre. This has lead to the Mayflower identifying and refining future projects, and enhanced the sense of community at the organisation through writing initiatives.

ArtfulScribe is now a named associate company of The Mayflower Theatre, as of November 2017. Further to this, the organisation has confirmed funding to ArtfulScribe writing initiatives for two years, with a 50% increase on the previous funding window.

Reflecting on his residency, Dinos will produce a crib sheet called "Advice for Writers in Residence".

Dinos said "I've had an amazing year and felt very at home [...] working in a non-commissioning space where I had opportunity to engage as an observer." He described his Residency as "an opportunity to directly connect with audiences".

"Never in a million years could I have predicted that I would have been inspired in such a metaphoric way, blending family history, national identity and residency observations to create a new text that would enable me to use the Odysseus story as a backbone to telling my own tale."

From a Project Manager's perspective, Dinos was a model professional who self-managed to a high level and who was proactive in driving the residency forward. Dinos readily engaged with new ideas and nothing felt like it was too much trouble.