

# talya chalef

55 Herbert Street,  
Brooklyn, 11222  
919 802 1474  
[talya.chalef@gmail.com](mailto:talya.chalef@gmail.com)

## profile

I am a South African /Australian independent theatre-maker, director and writer who has developed and presented new performance since 2004. I am concerned with themes of cultural geography, social justice, memory, history and identity and seek out new forms of performance. My practice often involves site specific locations, interdisciplinary and international collaborations.

## education

- 2013 Columbia University in the City of New York, MFA playwriting (Theatre)
- 2004 Victorian College of the Arts, Melbourne, Graduate Diploma in Animateuring (Theatre)
- 2003 Monash University, Melbourne Australia, First class Honors in Theatre & Performance
- 2000 University of Cape Town, Bachelor of Arts in Drama & Psychology

## production & employment history

- 2013 **The Foundry Theatre New York**  
Research / Documentation / Dramaturgy assistant  
Compiled extensive philanthropic fundraising research document tailored to The Foundry's specific needs. Editing three short videos to reflect past and present programming, company philosophy and research.  
  
Dramaturgy / Assistant Director  
Assisting in the development of a new play by Marcus Gardley for their first creative development.
- 2013 **L'Chaim**  
Writer / Director / co-producer  
Managed successful fundraising campaign, researched, developed and presented full-scale theatre production at the Horace Mann theatre, Columbia University.
- 2013/12 **Columbia University International Summer School program**  
Teaching Assistant for Theatrical Collaboration.  
Mentoring international high school students over a six week theatrical laboratory aimed at equipping students with basic theatre writing, researching, directing and acting skills.
- 2011 **Port Cities**  
Researcher / Writer/Director  
Presented a first stage development performance presentation investigating five cities connected to eighteenth century Dutch Trade Routes, aboard the Red Hook Museum barge, NY.

- 2011 **An Improvised Explosive Device: An MTV War Story**  
Director  
 New York City International Fringe Festival produced by Creative Infantry
- 2011 **Traces**  
Writer/Director  
 Workshop production as part of Columbia's New Voices Festival
- 2009 **In Other Words**  
Researcher / Writer / Director / Producer  
 Proyecto 34'S Proyecto 34'S International tour, CheLA Arts, Buenos Aires, Argentina.  
 - Adapted the performance to support Spanish speaking audience.  
 - Gained support through the Australian consul in Argentina  
 - Hosted two public post showing discussions with invited guests; Marcelo Brodsky, Teatro x Identidad (Theater for Identity), HIJOS (Sons and Daughters for Identity & Justice against Forgetting & Silence) various consul representatives (Australia & Brazil) and others.
- 2009 **Eyton Rd**  
Researcher/ Writer / Director / Producer  
 Researched (using interviews, video documentation, photographic documentation, archival research through Eastern Europe in 2008), developed and presented new performance work in collaboration with internationally recognized artist Domenico De Clario and actor Andrew Gray.  
 Invited to perform at La Mama in Melbourne<sup>2</sup> and as part of the annual ITC Festival in Cape Town.
- 2007 / 06 **The South Project, Melbourne**  
Local coordinator for international artist conference held in Johannesburg, South Africa  
 Responsible for coordination and organization of local South African logistics & welfare of international participants. Liaison between Melbourne office team and South African support crew. Liaison between event and sponsors; BHP Billiton, City of JHB, The New Zealand High Commission & The Australian High Commission.
- Office Support & Research  
 Compiled data base of South African artists for possible inclusion in commissioning program.
- 2007 **In Other Words, Abbotsford Arts Convent, Melbourne, Australia.**  
Researcher / Writer/ Director / Producer  
 Researched international truth commissions; The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, The Argentinean *Nunca Mas* Truth Report and the Australian Stolen Generation Report.  
 Conducted interviews with community organizations, social justice organisations, lawyers connected to Victorian Aboriginal Rights & Academics.
- 2006 **site**  
Researcher / Director / Producer  
 The old Melbourne Gaol, National Trust, Australia  
 Researched, developed and presented original solo performance inspired by slave burial grounds uncovered in Cape Town. Interviewed academics, community groups, archeologists, researchers, journalists, stake-holders in Cape Town and Melbourne.

2005 **District Six Museum, Cape Town**  
Research Assistant to Dr Karen Till,  
Memory Methodology Workshops  
Responsible for co-conceptualizing and facilitating memory methodology workshops to be held with community leaders whose communities had been affected through forced removals under apartheid. Assisted in logistics, leadership and liaison between the museum and the various workshop stakeholders.

## residencies / workshops / guest artist presentations

2012 **Center for Advanced Study, University of Minnesota**  
Guest Artist speaker as part of Mapping Spectral Traces - Symposium on 'Site and Incitement'  
Researched, developed and presented hour long presentation of audio performance project in development, in collaboration with Melbourne based artist Kelly Ryall and Sofy Yuditskaya.

2012 **AAIG conference, Hilton Hotel, New York**  
Guest artist speaker, Mapping Spectral Traces, NYC  
Presented paper on Memory, Trace & performance project *L'Chaim*.

2011 **University of Maynooth & IMMA (Ireland Museum of Modern Art), Dublin Ireland.**  
Invited as an *Omos Aite* guest artist speaker for week long symposium on Memory traces in the Irish landscape. Presented research paper on the development showing of performance *Port Cities*.

2011 **Robert Wilson's Watermill Center, Long Island, NY**  
One of eight selected across Columbia University's School for the Arts for their Spring Residency collaboration Laboratory.

2010 **Spectral Traces Symposium, Blacksberg Virginia**  
Invited to participate in week long symposium for the Mapping Spectral Traces international network, presented research paper on performance project *In Other Words* international tour to Argentina.

2010 **Australia Council for the Arts - Woman Directors Forum, Sydney**  
Invited to participate in national discussion on representation of women in Australian theatre.

2010 **Dramaturgies #4: New Dramaturgies for the C21, Melbourne**  
Invited to take part in collaborative working group to research new practices for artists.

2009 **CultureLAB residency, City of Melbourne, North Melbourne Meat Market**  
redeveloped performance "In Other Words" for international touring to Argentina, held post show discussion on themes of law, justice and memory in collaboration with University of Melbourne's International Justice Studio.

2007 **University of Minnesota, Space Place Collaborative**  
Week long guest artist, presented work in progress (on the Research & Development) of new performance piece *In Other Words*, facilitated workshops with Drama undergraduates and presented paper on performance project *Site*

## research & professional development

- 2012**      **ASI Creative Capital & Lower Manhattan Cultural Council Summer Institute**  
One of fifty NY artists selected for week long professional development. (Research & Development skills, Marketing, Business, Strategy & Communications)
- 2008**      **Site Specific Research Trip - Europe Tour**  
Awarded Ian Potter scholarship to research location specific arts practise & develop performance. Attended Urban Festival (Prague, Czech Republic), attended and participated in professional program at Oerol Festival (Terschelling Island, Netherlands) met with OverHetUj Festival & Skulpturenpark artists (Berlin).
- 2007**      **Australia Council for The Arts Spark Mentoring Program**  
One of eight selected nationally for year-long professional development.

## features / publications / press

- 2011**      JK Fowler, Fresh Angles Series: Talya Chalef and Space(S) of Theater, The Mantle - a forum for progressive critique. mantlethought.org/content/fresh-angles-talya-chalef
- 2009**      Kamien, David, Performing a personal Odyssey, Australian Jewish News, February 2009
- 2009**      Bailey John, No room for pyscho-realism, realtime, volume 90, 2009
- 2009**      Jose Luis Ferrero, ObservadorGlobal.comSource - El espacio oscuro de la memoria, 2009.
- 2008**      Karen E Till ,Artist & Activist Memory Work: Approaching place based practise. Memory Studies Vol 1; No 1, 99-113, Sage Publications, 2008
- 2008**      Prichard Stephen, sites of remembering, Remembering Melbourne - Memory, Place & Culture, Monash University, 2008
- 2008**      Reck Tony, Beyond Words, Realtime, Volume 81 2008

## awards

- 2012**      prestigious bi-annual Dame Elizabeth Murdoch Travel Fellow, Besen Family Foundation scholar, Ian Potter Cultural Trust Scholar
- 2011**      Dame Joan Sutherland Fellow, Besen Family Foundation scholar, Albert Nerkin Scholar, Columbia University Dean's Fellow, Australian Business Arts Foundation Fellow
- 2010**      Columbia University Dean's Fellow, Besen Family Foundation Scholar
- 2009**      City of Melbourne ArtsHouse residency, Besen Family Foundation Funding
- 2008**      Ian Potter Cultural Scholarship, La Mama Theatre Gwandalan Award
- 2007**      two nominations in the Victorian Green Room Awards for excellence in the Performing Arts in Victoria, Australia. Sydney Myer Performing Arts Award, Besen Family Foundation Funding