

THE **PUBLIC.**

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

**FOR IMMEDIATE  
RELEASE**  
press@publictheater.org

## **THE BIPOC CRITICS LAB ANNOUNCES SECOND COHORT AT THE PUBLIC THEATER IN PARTNERSHIP WITH FOUNDER JOSE SOLÍS**

### **Applications for Incoming 2024-2025 Cohort at The Public Open Now**

April 3, 2024 – The Public Theater (Artistic Director, Oskar Eustis; Executive Director, Patrick Willingham) announced today it is hosting cultural critic Jose Solís' **BIPOC Critics Lab** in the 2024-25 season. After successfully hosting the 2023-2024 cohort, 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. Applications for the cohort are open now through **Wednesday, May 15**.

Sessions for the Lab will span the course of The Public's 2024-25 season. Those chosen to participate will receive offers to join the cohort in late June, with the cohort officially beginning in mid-September. This iteration of the cohort will be a hybrid model of in-person and online sessions. Applicants local to NYC or living in the tri-state area will be prioritized. For more information on The Public's second iteration of the BIPOC Critics Lab and to apply, visit [publictheater.org](http://publictheater.org).

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 second 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.

"I'm overjoyed to be working with the Public Theater again," shares BIPOC Critics Lab founder **Jose Solís**. "The first cohort at The Public proved to be a fantastic learning experience for the members and myself, and I cannot wait to meet a new group of critics willing to go on this journey with us. Thank you to The Public for making this such a wonderful, liberating space to work in and so many thanks to the staff for becoming a part of the Lab family."

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](mailto:BIPOCCriticsLab@publictheater.org).

#### **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](http://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 musical *Hamilton* by Lin-Manuel Miranda, *Suffs* by Shaina Taub, and *Hell's Kitchen* by Kristoffer Diaz and Alicia Keys. Their programs and productions can also be seen regionally across the country and around the world. The Public has received 60 Tony Awards, 194 Obie Awards, 57 Drama Desk Awards, 61 Lortel Awards, 36 Outer Critic Circle Awards, 13 New York Drama Critics' Circle Awards, 65 AUDELCO Awards, 6 Antonyo Awards, and 6 Pulitzer Prizes. [publictheater.org](http://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 LuEsther T. Mertz Legacy Trust** provides leadership support for The Public Theater's year-round activities.

**CONNECT WITH US**

[Facebook.com/PublicTheater](https://www.facebook.com/PublicTheater)

**Threads** | [@PublicTheaterNY](https://www.threads.net/@PublicTheaterNY)

**Instagram** | [@PublicTheaterNY](https://www.instagram.com/PublicTheaterNY)

**TikTok** | [@PublicTheaterNY](https://www.tiktok.com/@PublicTheaterNY)

# # #