

ITI Mongolian Center Report

(June 2022 to April 2024)

ITI Mongolia Center activities focus on the international theater, theater workshops and masterclasses as well as supporting young and emerging theater artists.

Saint Muse International Theater Festival

“Saint Muse 16” International Theater Festival was organized in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, from 3-10 June 2022. The festival received more than 50 applications and selected 20 to be presented for the festival in categories of drama, musical drama, children’s play, two-actor performance and monodrama. Professional theater artists from Mongolia, Buryatia of Russia, Romania, Italy, India, Georgia, Sri Lanka, Iraq, Japan, Slovenia, and Greece participated in the festival with their performances. The festival enjoyed the presence of ITI members Tatjana Azman from Slovenia, Savvas Patsalidis from Greece, Kakumoto Atsushi from Japan as jury members.

The festival held its awards ceremony on 11 June 2022 at “Hun Theater”, and the awards for best director, best actor and actresses, best scenographer, best composer, best playwright, and so on in each category were presented to the winners. The awards ceremony live broadcasting was done by national television as well as on Facebook shared on festival page.

The festival also marked a change in its rules, which will have effect for the next edition of the festival. According to the change, the festival committee decided to divide the categories into two classifications: (i) full-scale drama that includes drama, children’s play and musical drama; and (ii) short plays including two-actors performances and monodrama. Each classification will have grandprix instead of one that will be awarded to the best works in its classification.

“Saint Muse 17” International Theater Festival was organized from 9-17 September 2023 commemorating the 220 anniversary of the Noyon Khutagt Danzanjavjaa under the patronage of Mayor of Ulaanbaatar within the framework of “Visit Mongolia Year”. The festival has received over 60 applications from 12 countries and selected 23 performances from Mongolia, Romania, South Korea, Italy, Poland, Germany for entry. Through the cooperation of ITI Mongolia within the ITI family, Janice Poon from Hong Kong, Levan Khetaguri from Georgian Center of ITI and Kakumoto Atsushi from Japan were invited as guest jury members.

The awards ceremony was held at Cultural Palace on 17 September 2023 presenting performing art works of the Mongolian artists. The festival especially enjoyed the innovative creations of emerging artists forming new private theaters as strong competitors. These are “Pro” theater with their performance “A Man Who Laughs” by Victor Hugo, a visual drama, receiving the award for best innovative work, “Orfey” theater with their performance “Opal” as well as director Yondonsharav from State Academic Theater with his work “Good Man from Sichuan”, that was awarded with Grandprix.

Short-plays section also enjoyed works “Swan Song” and “Phoenix” from “Bee Theater Mongolia”, “Tale of 1001 Nights” of Coquette theater from Romania, “Made in Ilva” from Instabili Vaganti theater from Italy. The Grandprix of the short-play section was awarded to Instabili Vaganti theater from Italy for their work “Made in Ilva”.

Masterclasses and Workshops

ITI Mongolia Center places a strong focus on offering masterclasses and workshops during the festivals as means of common ground to allow closer connection and integration with the international participants of the festival. In 2022, during the festival the jury members were each invited to conduct workshops as follows:

- “If you want – monodrama...” by Tatjana Azman from Slovenian Center of ITI,
- “Modern trends – Theater critic” by Savvas Patsalidis from Greece,
- “Fundamentals of Physical Theater” by Kakumoto Atsushi from Japan Center of ITI.

Saint Muse 17 festival participants Nicola Pianzola and Anna Dora Dorna from Italy conducted masterclass workshop “Organic Body” on 11 September 2023 at School of Theater Art of National University of Culture and Arts with 30 students. The workshop was well received by all participants as unique training offered as part of the festival.

Supporting young and emerging artists

From the festival held in 2022, the Saint Muse Academy and ITI Mongolia has initiated a project “The Art of Spreading Art” aimed develop theater criticism by encouraging and guiding young and emerging researchers. The research students selected to participate in the project are required to see all the plays presented at the festival and write professional criticism and submit their paper for group discussions led by festival jury members who are theater critics.

In 2023, to commemorate the 220th anniversary of Noyon Khutagt Danzanravjaa, a prominent figure in the history of Mongolian theater as founder of “Saran Khukhuu” /Moon Cuckoo/ theater, ITI-Mongolia and Saint Muse Academy in cooperation with the National University of Culture and Arts organized interntainal conference on “Nomadic Culture Thinking to be the Foundation of Professional Theater”. There were 12 presenters from 6 countries like Mongolia, India, Bangladesh, Germany, Philippines, and Iran participated in the conference with interested presentations. During the conference, special performance presenting the first nomadic theater performance, which is Danzanravjaa’s datsan performance, was presented demonstrating the traditions of how it was performed 200 years ago in the gobi region among the nomadic herders.

Moon Cuckoo theater demonstration



The conference indicated that the understanding of nomadic culture differs from country to country and how the culture is preserved today and what role it has played in the development of theater today varies and there are so much to learn from each other.