

Madrid MS artist biographies

Artist biographies



Anthony Cunningham – Artistic director (AD)

I am a Canadian/UK citizen who studied theatre/literature at McGill University in Montreal. I value the opportunities I have had to live and to teach in several wonderful countries like Turkey and Peru. I reside in The Netherlands and teach at the American School of The Hague.

Entering my 31st year of teaching I am forever learning. I am interested in the therapeutic power of theatre and how it can give a voice to those in need. I love so many variations— Butoh, Punchdrunk, Soulpepper, Boal, Playback, DV8. I love to be challenged by theatre, to think and to feel.

After 22 years with ISTA, I have experienced many diverse and inspiring roles: the teacher who is amazed when he brings his students to festivals/TaPS, ensemble leader, trustee, teacher workshop leader for IB, artistic director, Rep, festival host and former Online Curriculum Centre facilitator for IB DP Theatre.



Chilla Tamas – Rep

I'm an Aussie who went walkabout to Transylvania pursuing my love of folk music and dance. While in Australia, I worked with Kengugro & The Transylvaniacs creating original dance theatre before moving to Hungary where I teach drama at the American International School of Budapest.

As a teacher I enjoy directing and devising with students as well as organising arts events. Outside of school, I perform with the Szeki Ruzsmarint dance group. My Masters of Drama in Education from Trinity College Dublin has allowed me to combine two passions: drama and infusing host culture into my work with students.

I helped to found and organise a now thriving dance camp in Transylvania, encouraging young people to take pride in their culture and uphold their traditional arts. Having hosted and participated in a plethora of ISTA festivals from a teacher perspective, I am proud to be a part of the ISTA artist team.

Student ensemble leaders (SEL)



Aileen Gonsalves

I am passionate about empowering actors to discover and express their authentic, unique selves. I've developed a new way of training actors: The Gonsalves Method (rooted in Meisner). A methodical, replicable approach which creates truthful, alive performance moment to moment. Building a trusting ensemble, awakening permission, inspiring risk taking and true connection.

I directed an MA acting course, taught BA acting, direct courses and do many workshops for young people internationally. I have done extensive CPD teacher training with the Royal Shakespeare Company over a decade of working across all ages. I am very used to working with other practitioners to create events, programmes and workshops.



Claudia Kennedy

Trained in contemporary dance/theatre and with an MA in Drama in Education, I've worked mainly in Europe and Africa as a dancer, choreographer, theatre artist and teacher. I'm also a teacher trainer, workshop leader and schools' consultant for the IB and work with artists young and old and educators from all around the world.

I love taking the seeds of an idea and exploring it through movement, gesture, text, voice, sound... to evoke images in the imagination. To create something where before there was nothing. Physical theatre and the use of non-naturalistic forms such as puppetry and mask fascinate me as well as creating site-specific and promenade pieces that challenge an audience.



Laurie Neall

I was born in the United Kingdom and have lived in three continents over my lifetime. I'm one of the first generation of non-Brazilians to be a Contra-Mestre of Capoeira Angola, I've played capoeira for over 20 years. Wherever I'm living, I play capoeira: with adults, with children, with my shadow.

I'm inspired by how each game keeps bringing joy and challenges everyone who plays. I've taught at dance academies, schools and universities across Europe, Latin America, Asia and Africa. My art form reminds me of the endless beauty and variety of life. And that there are always challenges to learn from.



Julia Roberts

My career has included working as an actor, singer, director, television producer and arts manager in a wide spectrum of organisations. I have also trained performing arts teachers for the specialist schools and academies trust and I am a director of an arts organisation called Culture Shift, based in Sussex.

Through working in schools and marginalised groups within communities, I have gained specialist knowledge relating to disability and access and a conviction that theatre provides the best platform to explore and celebrate our diverse experiences and find common ground – exactly what I love about the work of ISTA.



Sydney Smith

I was born in Ghana and moved to Greenwich in southeast London as a child. The youngest of five siblings I relied heavily on my imagination using games and role play with friends to escape my everyday reality, always yearning for something more. Little surprise I decided to become an actor.

My passion lies in devising and improvisation. I have just finished a year in the Olivier Award winning *The Play That Goes Wrong* in London's prestigious West End and am about to embark on an exciting production of *As You Like It* by William Shakespeare. I love performing, I love teaching. I believe everyone can act and I want to help each individual at ISTA harness the full power of their imagination.

External workshop leader biographies

Antonio Monedero

I am a drummer, percussionist and producer. I have worked with reputable Spanish artists and

groups both within Spain and abroad. I have studied at Hardrum, Madrid and at Drummers Collective, New York and have worked alongside artists such as Miguel Ferreira, Juanma Barroso and Salvador Niebla, amongst others. I have also studied the musical techniques of Samba, Reggae and Axe music at Salvador de Bahia, Brasil. I currently work as the musical director of the percussion group Zumbalé and teach percussion in various schools in Madrid.

Teresa Jesús López

I am an art teacher at SEK Ciudadcampo. I achieved an Advertising and Fine Arts degree at Murray State University, Kentucky, USA. I have been painting since I was a little girl. I have always found it easier to express myself through colors, shapes and brushstrokes.

As an artist, I have participated in art exhibitions all over the world (Italy, the United States, France, China, Germany, etc.). My paintings have been used as illustrative covers for several books and magazines.

As a teacher, I've worked at a variety of institutions. I taught creativity at the Center for Gifted Studies in Paducah, KY. I have worked for many years at the Spanish Centro Huerta del Rey, a place where gifted and talented students create the best versions of themselves.

I believe that as human beings we all have the capacity to be creative. We can all draw, paint and sculpt and there is much enjoyment to be found within the diversity of our individual expression. As Harry Potter once said: *"Working hard is important but there is something that matters even more: believing in yourself."*

Lola González

I am a choreographer and artistic director. I began my studies in Spain, completing my professional development in the US before returning to Madrid where I have been working in various mediums, including television, theatre, advertising and shows of all types, shapes and sizes. I have worked on television shows that include Tele 5, Antena 3, and Canal 9, at companies such as Telefónica, El Corte Inglés, Diesel and Coca Cola and alongside artists such as Agatha Ruiz de Prada and Julio Iglesias.

In 2008 I formed part of the production team for the Spanish TV series *Fama ¡a bailar!*, based on a dance academy where I worked both as director and director of studies. In 2009 I opened my own dance academy *IDANCE* where I have been working ever since with students of all ages and abilities, alongside many other professional dancers of high esteem.