

## **Ava Roy**

Producer, Director, Performer, Educator

Founding Artistic Director, We Players

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**ABOUT:** Ava Roy is the Founding Artistic Director of *We Players* (established in 2000, incorporated as a 501c3 in 2012). Since 2008, she has pioneered unique partnerships with the National Park Service, the California State Park system, and San Francisco Recreation and Parks, creating large-scale performances at park sites throughout the Bay Area including Alcatraz island, Angel Island, Sutro Baths, The Palace of Fine Arts and many more. Her unique style of interactive, site-integrated performance aims to highlight the historical and natural treasures of local landscapes and encourage new ways of experiencing and appreciating these places. She is deeply inspired by the entrenched histories and energies of each site, as well as the natural environment. Ava is an alumna of Stanford University.

**EDUCATION and TRAINING:** Stanford University, BA with Honors, self-designed major: *Ritual and Performance in Aesthetic Education* (Stanford, CA, Spring 2003); actor training intensive with Shakespeare & Company, Artistic Director: Tina Packer (Lenox, MA, January 2008); yoga Alliance registered yoga teacher, 200 hr. level training completed at *Frog Lotus Yoga* (North Adams, MA, Fall 2003); ongoing yoga training (California, Australia, Greece, India; including intensives with senior teachers Tim Miller, Dena Kingsburg, and Ana Forrest, among others; 2003-present); training intensive with Mario Biagini of Grotowski's Work Center (Italy), held at NACL theater (NY, Summer 2006); workshop intensive with Wlodzimierz Staniewski and Gardzienice (Poland, Summer 2002), Lenox Memorial High School, graduated with Honors, (Lenox, MA, Spring 1999); performance and training with Shakespeare & Company (Lenox, MA, 1995-1999).

**ARTISTIC RESIDENCIES & FELLOWSHIPS:** Guest Artist at the Lucas Arts Fellowship, Montalvo Arts Center (Saratoga, CA, August 2015; April 2016; October 2016; December 2019, September 2023); Inaugural Artist in Residence at The Chapel, Fort Mason Center For Arts And Culture (SF, CA, September/ October 2015 & January - April 2017).

### **GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIPS**

**FEDERAL:** Five year cooperative agreement with SF Maritime National Historical Park (August 2012 - August 2017), *the first cooperative agreement of its kind between an arts nonprofit and a National Park Service site*. Partnerships with the NPS at: Black Point Battery, SF, CA (2017); Sutro Baths and Sutro Heights Parks, SF, CA (2015); Marin Headlands, CA (2014); Fort Point, SF, CA (2014, 2013 & 2008); SF Maritime National Historical Park, CA (2011-2012); Inaugural Artistic Residency on Alcatraz Island, CA (2009-2011).

**STATE:** Partnerships with California State Parks at: Rancho Petaluma State Historic Park, Sonoma County, CA (2016); Angel Island California State Park (2012).

**MUNICIPAL:** Partnerships and Special Use Permits with San Francisco Recreation and Parks Department at: Golden Gate Park (extensive) (2023); Golden Gate Park: Shakespeare Garden (2021, 2022); Sunnyside Conservatory (2019); The Music Concourse, Golden Gate Park (2018); The Palace of Fine Arts (2018); Strawberry Hill at Stow Lake, Golden Gate Park (2017).

**REGIONAL:** Partnership and Special Use Permit with East Bay Regional Parks Department at Kennedy Grove, El Sobrante, CA (2017); Special Use Permit from the City of Albany, CA, for performances at the Albany Bulb (2006); Special Use Permit from the California State Park System for Eastshore State Park (2006).

### **SPEAKING APPOINTMENTS**

*Audio archives available upon request.*

#### **PUBLIC:**

- Guest Speaker at The Commonwealth Club of San Francisco (Spring 2023)
- Panelist at The Commonwealth Club of San Francisco (July 2018, 2 engagements)
- Guest Speaker at the Adventure Design Group, SF (2018; 2014)
- Guest Speaker at the Presidio Dialogues, Presidio, SF (2015, 2 engagements)
- Guest Speaker at Google, Mountain View, CA (2013)
- Guest Speaker at The Commonwealth Club of San Francisco (Fall 2010)

#### **ACADEMIC:**

**California College of the Arts: *Insights in Site***

**Adjunct II Professor, Upper Level Interdisciplinary Studio Program**

*Co-creator and co-teacher with Shalini Agrawal*

*(spring semester: 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023)*

**Class description:** *Insights in Site* examines how we shift from interloper to belonging through performative interactions with each other, our communities, and broader society. Students will evaluate and activate public space through exploratory site analysis informed by intersectional experiences and multi-disciplinary activations. This class will consider race, gender, class and ecology to (re)define common ground for accessible public space. How might equity-based response and analysis guide a reimagination of urban public space? How might we upend traditional practices of site design towards an integrative understanding of public space? Using theatre as metaphor, and performance as a conduit of exploration, students will conduct integrative site analysis through a series of site visits that have been settings for performances by theatre company We Players. Students will develop sensory and somatic analysis, understand the permissions processes, and create and activate site-specific interventions.

### **Northeastern University School of Architecture, Boston, Massachusetts**

- Guest Speaker, College of Art Media and Design, “Understanding Design” (faculty: Mary E. Hale; March 2021)

### **University of California, Berkeley**

- Guest workshop instructor, Environmental Design Research Methods (faculty: Zachary Lamb; September 2022)
- Guest Speaker, Future Histories Lab: A Year on Angel Island (faculty: Susan Moffat; September 2022)
- Guest Speaker, Global Urban Humanities Interdisciplinary Research Studio: “Siteworks: Understanding Place through Design and Performance” (faculty: Susan Moffat, Erika Chong Shuch, A. Ghigo DiTommaso; February 2018).
- Workshop Leader, Global Urban Humanities Initiative: designed and led workshop for interdisciplinary students at Fort Point National Park (2016).
- Guest Speaker, “Who Owns the Past: Cultural Heritage in the Digital Age” (faculty: Ruth Tringham and Meg Conkey; November 2015).
- Guest Speaker, Global Urban Humanities Initiative: “Public Space: Placemaking and Performance” (faculty: Erika Chong Shuch and A. Ghigo DiTommaso; March 2015).
- Guest Speaker at symposium “Re-imagining the Urban” (September 2013).
- Berkeley Extension (UCBX) Guest Speaker (2012).

### **California College of the Arts**

- Workshop leader/ guest speaker for undergraduate course “Landmarks, Memory, and Mobile Media” (faculty: Michael Epstein; 2014).
- Workshop leader/ guest speaker for undergraduate course “Activating Public Space” (faculty: Shalini Agrawal and Chris Treggiari; 2014).
- Guest Speaker at graduate level course “Topophilia” (faculty: Lynn Kirby; 2013).
- Artist/consultant for undergraduate course “Locative Media” (faculty: Ben Wood; 2013).

### **Stanford University**

- Presentation & discussion for The Senior Reflection program (lead faculty: Andrew Todhunter; 2017, 2016, 2014, 2013). “*The Senior Reflection (TSR), provides student scientists the opportunity to develop creative works rooted in areas of scientific passion over the course of three quarters.*”
- Workshop leader/ guest speaker for undergraduate arts course in *ITALIC* (lead faculty: Janice Ross; 2014). “*ITALIC is an arts-minded, residence-based academic program for first year students.*”
- Presentation & discussion to “ReDesigning Theatre” summer fellowship program (2012).
- Lecture & discussion; part of the “Art of Living” section of the freshman Interdisciplinary Studies in the Humanities course (2010).

### **University of Colorado, Boulder, CO (2012)**

- Guest Artist: presentation and discussion within the Theatre Department, including classes in theatre management, theatre for social justice, and a department-wide presentation.

### **American Conservatory Theatre, San Francisco, CA (Fall 2011)**

- Guest Artist: led week-long workshop with second year MFA students, culminating in site-specific performance between the school on Grant St, along Market street and in the environs of Yerba Buena gardens.

### **Nueva School (San Mateo, CA, 2018 and 2019)**

Senior class (*high school*): Performance of *Mother Lear* and discussion.

### **Menlo School (Atherton, CA, 2017)**

English Department (*high school*): presentation and discussion on BEOWULF.

### **Headroyce High School (Oakland, CA, 2011)**

Guest Artist: presentation to senior class, guest teacher in theatre classes.

### **Post-performance discussions with private groups:**

- Las Positas College (2017)
- Cornell Alumni (2010)
- Dartmouth Alumni (2010 and 2011)

## **PRESS and RECOGNITION**

### **Academic Publications featuring We Players/ Ava Roy:**

- Rand Harmon and Penelope Cole, Eds. "Ethics and Site-based Theatre: A Curated Discussion." *Theatre History Studies*, vol. 38, 2019.
- Rand Harmon. "Hamlet on Alcatraz, a Journey into the Power of Sacred Space." *Ecumenica*, vol. 6, no. 2, 2013, pp. 39–56. JSTOR.
- "40 Years of Theatre History", by Mary-Kay Gamel (2014).
- *English Journal*: "Songs of the Caged Birds: Literacy and Learning with Incarcerated Youth", by Peter Williamson, Megan Mercurio, and Constance Walker (2013).
- *Didaskalia*: "We Players' *The Odyssey* on Angel Island", by Al Duncan (2013)
- "Refereeing the Muses: A Theater Criticism/Arts Journalism Primer", by Bob Abelman and Cheryl Kushner (*Peter Lang Publishing, 2013*).

### **Selected Radio:**

- KQED's Forum with host Michael Krasny (2015).
- West Coast Live with host Sedge Thompson (*annual appearance, 2010-2014*).
- Pirate Cat Radio with host Leonidass Kassipedes (*annual appearance, 2010-2013*).

- “Let Me Touch Your Mind” on KPOO with host Marilyn Fowler (*annual appearance, 2011-2018*).
- “Art’s Desire” on KWMR with host Julie Motz (*2013, 2014, 2018*).
- “Method to Madness” on KALX with host Lisa Katovich (*2013*).

#### **Selected Press:**

- **Ozy: “Rising Stars”** (*video profile, 2016*).
- **Sierra Magazine** (*feature*) "*We Players... has taken the tradition of alfresco theater in a new and ambitious direction by using national and state parks as the stage itself. The theater group's productions transform park settings into scenes, creating theatergoing experiences that blend art, history, and landscape... and sometimes a good bit of hiking.*"
- **Backstage (named 1 of 7 companies world wide creating groundbreaking immersive theatre)**, "*drawing on the energy of the natural environment to break down barriers between language and audience....We Players sheds innovative light on very old works.*"
- **American Theatre Magazine (feature), New York Times, Huffington Post, The Week, Stanford Magazine (feature), San Francisco Magazine, San Francisco Chronicle, NPR, & others.**

#### **AWARDS & RECOGNITION:**

**Grant recipient** - California Arts Council (CAC) Local Impact (2018); Kenneth Rainin Foundation (2017); San Francisco Arts Commission (2017); NEA “Imagine Your Parks”(2017, 2016); Fort Mason Center Presents (2015; 2016); Grants for the Arts (GFTA) (2018, 2017, 2016, 2015); Zellerbach Foundation (2014, 2015); Gerbode Foundation (2014, 2013, 2012); Belle Foundation grantee (2010); California Arts Council “Creating Public Value” (2010); Stanley Langendorf Foundation (2008); Angell Grant for performance work, Stanford (2003); Stanford Shakespeare Institute (2002), “Major Grant” from Undergraduate Research Opportunities, Stanford, for performance research in Costa Rica (2002); Honors – Senior Thesis in Performance, Stanford (2003); Eleanor Prosser Prize – excellence in study and practice of dramatic arts, Stanford (2003). Annual finalist in multiple categories for **Theatre Bay Area awards: 2019: awarded “Outstanding World Premiere Play” for Caesar Maximus; 2018:** Four nominations for *Mother Lear* (*including outstanding production of a play, outstanding direction of a play*), **awarded “Best Performance in a Principal Role” for Mother Lear; 2016-2017:** two nominations for *BEOWULF*, one for *Midsummer of Love*, four for *Romeo & Juliet* (*including outstanding costume design and fight choreography*); **2014-2015:** Seven nominations for *Ondine at Sutro* (*including outstanding production of a play, outstanding performance by the ensemble of a play*); two nominations for *Macbeth at Fort Point*. **Theatre Bay Area recommended production: Caesar Maximus, Mother Lear; San Francisco Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle recommended production: Caesar Maximus; Best Theatre of 2017 Marin Independent Journal** (for *Mother Lear*); **Best Immersive Theatre: SF Weekly 2015** (“*We Players actors have the ability to draw power out of their surroundings, channeling it into spectacular, immersive experiences for audience members unlike anything you’ll see on Broadway.*”); **Top 10 Bay Area**

**Theatre Events of 2014** (for *Macbeth at Fort Point*); **Best of the Bay SF Magazine 2012**  
(“*We Players didn’t just break the fourth wall, it toppled the whole playhouse.*”)

## **PRODUCTION HISTORY**

(*We Players, unless otherwise noted.*)

*Adventures with Alice*: Adaptor / Director/ Producer (2023, 2024)

- Golden Gate Park, San Francisco, CA (2023, 2024)
- Montalvo Arts Center, Saratoga, CA (2023)
- NY Botanical Garden, Bronx, NY (2024)

*The Keeper*: Co-creator/ Performer/ Producer (2022)

- World premiere performance of a new one woman show performed aboard a mobile stage at the Alameda Naval Base. An absurd and joyful drama about a lighthouse keeper in limbo.

*PSYCHOPOMP* at McLaren Park: Creator/ Director/ Producer (2021)

- An intimate journey through the liminal realm, with ancient gods from diverse cultures as guides.

*CAESAR MAXIMUS* the film: Director (2020)

- A short film adaptation based on the 2018 production of the same name. Filmed on location at The Music Concourse, SF.

*Odyssey Audio Drama* and *Wonder StoryTime, with Alice and Friends*: Producer (2020)

- Two podcasts. An audio drama inspired by the 2011 sailing production of *The Odyssey* aboard the historic scow schooner *Alma*, and an audiobook adaptation of Lewis Carrol’s *Wonderland* and *Looking-Glass* books.

*Undiscovered Country* at Sunnyside Conservatory: Performer/ Adaptor/ Director/ Producer (2019)

- A neo-western love story derived from Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*.

*CAESAR MAXIMUS* at The Music Concourse: Director/ Producer (2018)

- A new circus and opera infused adaptation of Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar*.

*Roman Women* at The Palace of Fine Arts: Adaptor/ Director/ Producer (2018)

- An new work adapted from Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar*, for an all-female ensemble.

*Mother Lear*: Cordelia/ Co-Creator/ Director/ Producer (2017, 2018, 2019, 2022)

- A new play adapted from Shakespeare’s *King Lear*, for two female actors.

*Midsummer of Love*: Quince, Helena/ Adaptor/ Director/ Producer/ (2017)

- An original adaptation of Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, for six actors.

*BEOWULF*: Performer/ Co-Creator/ Co-Director/ Producer (2017)

*Romeo & Juliet*: Director/ Producer (2016)

*The Capulet Ball*: Creator/ Director/ Producer (2016)

*HEROMONSTER*: Performer/ Co-Creator/ Director/ Producer (2015)

*Ondine at Sutro*: Ondine/ Producer/ Director (2015)

*King Fool*: Cordelia & Fool/ Producer/ Co-Director (2014)

- Co-director John Hadden

*King Lear*: Cordelia & Fool/ Co-Director (2014)

- The Theatre Company at Hubbard Hall, Cambridge, NY, co-director John Hadden.  
*Macbeth at Fort Point*: Lady Macbeth/ Producer/ Co-Director (2013, 2014)

- Co-Director John Hadden

*Twelfth Night at Hyde Street Pier*: Viola/ Producer/ Director (2012)

*The Odyssey on Angel Island*: Producer/ Director (2012)

*The Odyssey aboard the Alma*: Ensemble /Producer/ Director (2011)

*Hamlet on Alcatraz*: Producer/ Director (2010)

*Iphigenia & Other Daughters*: Iphigenia/ Producer/ Director (2009)

*Macbeth at Fort Point*: First Witch/ Producer/ Director (2008)

*The Tempest at The Albany Bulb*: Caliban/ Producer/ Director (2006)

*Romeo and Juliet*: Mercutio (2004)

- Shakespeare & Company, Lenox, MA; Director Jon Croy

*Jabberwocky*: Cheshire Cat/ Producer/ Director (2003)

*Twelfth Night*: Feste/ Producer/ Director (2002)

*Hamlet*: Hamlet/ Producer/ Director (2001)

*Portrait of a Fool*: A Fool/ Producer/ Director (2001)

*Romeo and Juliet*: Juliet/ Producer/ Director (2000)

Other significant roles include: Elektra (*Elektra*), Corday (*Marat/Sade*), Castiza (*Revenger's Tragedy*), Maria (*Twelfth Night*), Henry V (*Henry V*), Titania (*Midsummer*).

**Related Experience:** Fiscal Sponsee of CounterPULSE, San Francisco, CA (2008-2011); Artist in Residence, Sobrante Park Elementary, Oakland, CA (2005); Artist Educator for Riotous Youth summer program at *Shakespeare & Company*, Lenox, MA (2004); Artist in Residence, (director middle school play), Writer in Residence (high school creative writing teacher), Lenox Memorial Middle and High School, Lenox, MA (2003-2004).

**Of Note:** In addition to her performance work, Ava is a sailor and established yoga practitioner. She has been teaching yoga professionally since 2003. She has trained and taught yoga in India, Greece, Mexico, Australia, and the US. Her blue water sailing experiences include a 3400 nautical mile passage across the Pacific Ocean, as first mate of a two person crew. She is the captain of a wooden ketch called *Ingwe*.

### **YOGA INSTRUCTION (2003-present)**

#### **Yoga and mindfulness instructor SF Opera Center (launched in 2022, ongoing)**

Developing the first yoga and mindfulness curriculum at SF Opera Center, working with the Adler Fellows and Merola program participants.

#### **Yoga instructor SF Conservatory of Music (2023)**

Introducing yoga to young singers at SFCM. Along with teaching at the SF Opera Center, developing specific yoga based curriculum tailored for musicians/ performers.

## **Regular on-line group and private classes**

[www.yogawithava.net](http://www.yogawithava.net)

**In person workshops** offered at a variety of California studios including [Arise Yoga](#) in Oakland, CA and [Radiate Studio](#) in Sebastopol, CA.

**Studio Employment 2005-2020:** Namaste, Oakland, CA, <https://ilovenamaste.com/>  
Kimberly Leo, Owner, [kleo@namasteoakland.com](mailto:kleo@namasteoakland.com)

*\* Due to the 2020 global pandemic, this studio, among many others, closed its doors.*

## **PERSONAL REFERENCES:**

Adrian Benepe - advisor  
President, Brooklyn Botanic Garden  
Former Senior VP at the Trust for Public Land  
Former NYC Parks Commissioner (2001-2011)  
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Howard Levitt - advisor  
Former Chief of Interpretation, National Park Service (retired)  
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Rebecca Popell - advisor  
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Ann Podlozny - mentor  
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