

umass theater

College of  
HUMANITIES  
and FINE ARTS

2014

# DEVISING GILGAMESH

Collage theatremaking with Theatre Novi Most



## Documentary Film Screening

Come see the premiere screening of *Devising Gilgamesh*, a documentary homage to the collage process of collaboration and devised theatremaking. Over the course of two years, Minneapolis-based Theatre Novi Most made a piece of theatre around the ancient epic of Gilgamesh and UMass Department of Theater professor Megan Lewis captured that process with her camera.

A documentary about collage storytelling: on stage...and in film.

Monday 4/28 @ 6pm

Flavin Auditorium • Isenberg 137

Post-screening discussion with the filmmaker  
and Theatre Novi Most director, Lisa Channer

Friday 5/2 @ 7pm

Bezanon Hall

Post-screening discussion  
with the filmmaker, Prof Megan Lewis

Free • Open to the Public

Contact: [meganlewis@theater.umass.edu](mailto:meganlewis@theater.umass.edu)



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## MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 5, 2014

Media Contact: Megan Lewis  
Assistant Professor of Theater, UMass Amherst  
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### NEW DOCUMENTARY FILM ON COLLABORATIVE THEATRE TO SCREEN AT UMASS Devised Theatremaking Rocks the Ancient World

**Amherst, MA** – The collaborative process of devising a theatre piece from conception to opening night is the subject of UMass Amherst Theater professor Megan Lewis' new documentary film, which will screen at UMass on Monday April 28 and Friday May 2, 2014. Lewis collaborated with UMass graduate and founder of Northampton-based Sleeveless Theatre (1989-1997), Lisa Channer of Theatre Novi Most, on this project.

Over the course of two years, Lewis followed Minneapolis-based Theatre Novi Most as they devised a work – *The Oldest Story in the World* – around the ancient epic of Gilgamesh. The film is an homage to collage theatremaking, a form of “slow art” which, unlike the usual process of putting up a show, takes time to develop and gestate and involves communal and collaborative creation of the work. Whereas traditional theatre begins with a scripted text and comes to fruition in condensed time spans, devised theatremaking takes the time to create work slowly, in layers, and with the full participation of performers, designers, directors, and writers who all contribute to the creation of the piece.

*The Oldest Story in the World*, which premiered at The Southern Theatre in September 2010, layered physical training in the Russian system of biomechanics espoused by Vsevolod Meyerhold (1874-1940), training in the ancient Indian martial art of kallaripayattu, scripting by playwright Kira Obolensky, and the design talents of Vincent Olivieri (sound), Adrian Jones (scenic), Daniel Vatsky (video), Annie Katsura-Rollins (costume), and Rob Perry (lights). Original music by Cunei & The Forms (Sasha Gibbs, Molly Dworsky and Johanna Gorman Baer) complemented the talents of nine performers: Barbra Berlovitz, Juliana Drajko, Erik Hoover, Billy Mullaney, Stephen Pearce, Vladimir Rovinsky, Dario Tangelson, Vanessa Voskuil, and Jeanne Wilcoxon. For director Lisa Channer, this collaborative approach – and the physical training process – was an attempt to “stage ancientness differently.”

*The Oldest Story in the World* was a rock ‘n roll take on the 4000 year old epic Gilgamesh text, which was written in cuneiform; a hero’s journey for our time. Layering a robust physical vocabulary with video projections and live music – created by Cunei & The Forms – the play made connections between this ancient story of unbridled greed and grave personal loss and our own contemporary moment, including the 2003 looting of the National Museum of Iraq in Baghdad, environmental destruction, and the political landscape of contemporary America.

The process of making the documentary film about collage theatremaking was a collage (or montage) process of its own. Drawing on two years worth of footage, editor Lisa Bettencourt and filmmaker Megan Lewis wove a visual homage to and exploration of devised storytelling in theatre. *Devising Gilgamesh* is a story of creativity-in-the-making and the potentials – and pitfalls – of this type of collage collaborative work. It’s a documentary about collage storytelling: on stage...and in film.

#### DATES:

*Monday April 28, 2014 at 6pm in Flavin Auditorium (Isenberg 137) on UMass Amherst campus.*

Post-screening discussion with filmmaker, Megan Lewis, and Theatre Novi Most director, Lisa Channer.

*Friday May 2, 2014 at 7pm in Bezanzon Hall on UMass Amherst campus.*

Post-screening discussion with filmmaker, Megan Lewis.

Both screenings are free and open to the public.

This film was made possible with generous support from the UMass Department of Theater and the College of Humanities and Fine Arts, Theatre Novi Most, The University of Minnesota, The Institute for Advanced Study and the generous support of our Kickstarter funders.

- end of release -



# DEVISING GILGAMESH

Collage theatremaking with Theatre Novi Most



## Documentary Film Screening

Come see the premiere screening of *Devising Gilgamesh*, a documentary homage to the collage process of collaboration and devised theatremaking. Over the course of two years, Minneapolis-based Theatre Novi Most made a piece of theatre around the ancient epic of Gilgamesh and UMass Department of Theater professor Megan Lewis captured that process with her camera.

A documentary about collage storytelling: on stage...and in film.

**Monday 5/5 @ 7pm**

Bryant Lake Bowl, 810 W Lake St, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55408

Post-screening discussion with filmmaker, Megan Lewis, and Theatre Novi Most director, Lisa Channer

\$6-\$12 sliding scale

Contact: [lisa.channer@gmail.com](mailto:lisa.channer@gmail.com)



## MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 10, 2014

Media Contact: Lisa Channer  
Artistic Director, Theatre Novi Most  
lisa@theatrenovimost.org  
612.308.1365

[www.theatrenovimost.org](http://www.theatrenovimost.org)

### NEW DOCUMENTARY FILM ON COLLABORATIVE THEATRE TO SCREEN AT BRYANT LAKE BOWL Devised Theatremaking Rocks the Ancient World

**Minneapolis, MN** – The collaborative process of devising a theatre piece from conception to opening night is the subject of Megan Lewis’ new documentary film, which will screen at Bryant Lake Bowl on Monday May 5, 2014. Lewis, a UMass Amherst Theater professor, collaborated with Minneapolis theatre director, Lisa Channer of Theatre Novi Most, on this project.

Over the course of two years, Lewis followed Minneapolis-based Theatre Novi Most as they devised a work – *The Oldest Story in the World* – around the ancient epic of Gilgamesh. The film is an homage to collage theatremaking, a form of “slow art” which, unlike the usual process of putting up a show, takes time to develop and gestate and involves communal and collaborative creation of the work. Whereas traditional theatre begins with a scripted text and comes to fruition in condensed time spans, devised theatremaking takes the time to create work slowly, in layers, and with the full participation of performers, designers, directors, and writers who all contribute to the creation of the piece.

*The Oldest Story in the World*, which premiered at The Southern Theatre in September 2010, layered physical training in the Russian system of biomechanics espoused by Vsevolod Meyerhold (1874-1940), training in the ancient Indian martial art of kalaripayattu, text by playwright Kira Obolensky, and the design talents of Vincent Olivieri (sound), Adrian Jones (scenic), Daniel Vatsky (video), Annie Katsura-Rollins (costume), and Rob Perry (lights). Original music by Cunei & The Forms (Sasha Gibbs, Molly Dworsky and Johanna Gorman Baer) complemented the talents of nine performers: Barbra Berlovitz, Julianna Drajko, Erik Hoover, Billy Mullaney, Stephen Pearce, Vladimir Rovinsky, Dario Tangelson, Vanessa Voskuil, and Jeanne Wilcoxon. For director Lisa Channer, this collaborative approach – and the physical training process – was an attempt to “stage ancientness differently.”

*The Oldest Story in the World* was a rock ‘n roll take on the 4000 year old epic of Gilgamesh, which was the first story humans recorded in written form (cuneiform). Layering a robust physical vocabulary with video projections and live music – created by Cunei & The Forms – the play made connections between this ancient story of unbridled greed and grave personal loss and our own contemporary moment, including the 2003 looting of the National Museum of Iraq in Baghdad, environmental destruction, and the political landscape of contemporary America.

The process of making the documentary film about collage theatremaking was a collage (or montage) process of its own. Drawing on two years worth of footage, editor Lisa Bettencourt and filmmaker Megan Lewis wove a visual homage to and exploration of devised storytelling in theatre. *Devising Gilgamesh* is a story of creativity-in-

the-making and the potentials – and pitfalls – of this type of collaborative work. It's a documentary about collage storytelling: on stage...and in film.

DATE:

*Monday May 5, 2014 at 7pm Bryant Lake Bowl, 810 W Lake St, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55408*

Post-screening discussion with filmmaker, Megan Lewis, and Theatre Novi Most director, Lisa Channer.

Pre-screening music by special guests Annie Enneking, Daniel Bonespur, Johanna Gorman-Baer and others.

Film running time: 48 minutes.

Sliding scale: \$6-\$12

Tickets can be purchased at [www.bryantlakebowl.com](http://www.bryantlakebowl.com)

Bryant Lake Bowl Information and Ticket line: 612-825-8949

This film was made possible with generous support from the UMass Department of Theater and the College of Humanities and Fine Arts, Theatre Novi Most, The University of Minnesota, The Institute for Advanced Study and the generous support of our Kickstarter funders.

End of release

**DVDs of the film are available upon request**