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## NEW 42 ANNOUNCES THE 2024-25 COHORT OF NEW VICTORY LABWORKS ARTISTS



*From left to right: Salwa Meghjee, Ishita Mili, Utkarsh Rajawat, Zonia Tsang, and Divya Mangwani*

### *The Program Supports NYC-Based Artists in the Creation of New Works for Young Audiences*

**August 8, 2024** - Today, New 42 announced the 2024-25 cohort of New Victory LabWorks Artists and the 2024-25 New Victory LabWorks Launch project. Established in 2012, the New Victory LabWorks program offers individualized support for artists to help them develop new work for young audiences, aiming to diversify the field of performing arts for young people and the productions seen on stages across the nation.

The new cohort of New Victory LabWorks Artists includes **Salwa Meghjee, Ishita Mili, Utkarsh Rajawat, and Zonia Tsang, and LabWorks Launch project *The Ice Cream Dream***. Now in its twelfth year, the New Victory LabWorks program has supported over 100 artists in the development of adventurous new work for young audiences, many of which have developed their projects into full productions that have toured across the country and around the world.

Each New Victory LabWorks Artist receives a \$15,000 stipend in addition to opportunities for networking and community-building, including the chance to connect with industry professionals, education partners, and New Victory families to hold invited rehearsals with

facilitated feedback sessions. By providing professional development resources and exposure to new creative and artistic principles through New 42's international community of arts and education leaders, New Victory Labworks invites participants to create boundary-breaking art while exploring, devising, and reimagining what theater for families can be.

“We are so excited to work with these amazing New Victory LabWorks Artists this season.” said New 42 Artistic Director **Mary Rose Lloyd**. “This group of young creatives represent a variety of mediums, each with their own wonderful artistic vision and ideas. New 42 is committed to investing in the next generation, and this cohort's artistry will surely inspire young generations of theater-makers and theater-goers.”

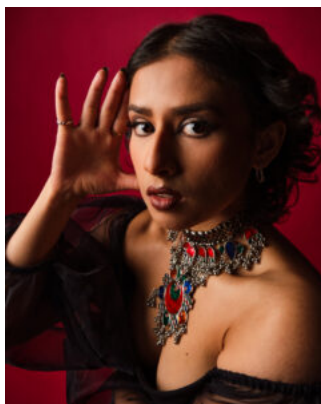
More about the 2024-25 cohort of New Victory LabWorks Artists:



**Salwa Meghjee** (she/her) is a playwright from Orlando, Florida. Her work tries to illuminate and soothe the big, unnameable feelings we all experience and can't otherwise explain.

Her plays include *U-Haul Mesbians* (2023 O'Neill National Musical Theater Conference Semi-Finalist), *Ender's Gay* (2024 Fault Line Theater's Irons in the Fire Finalist), *The Conference of the Birds* (Mudlark Theater's That's How We Grew the World Festival), *Word Play* (The Once and Future Festival), *Obligate Carnivores* (Trove Trinket Series), and, written with her twin sister Samah, *The Mysterious Mystery of the Lost Letters* (Brooklyn Publishers).

She co-founded the feminist theatre company The Golden and served as its Artistic Director for three years. She holds a BA in English from UC Berkeley and an MFA in Writing for the Screen and Stage from Northwestern University.



**Ishita Mili** (she/they) is a Bengali American director, choreographer, and iconoclast disrupting bharatanatyam, hip hop, Mayurbhanj chhau, and contemporary dance.

Ishita founded IMGE (“image”) as a performance company based in dance, film, and music that unravels cultural roots to thread together global stories with artists of diverse backgrounds. IMGE's holistic movement vocabulary encompasses dynamic imagery, mudra storytelling, and percussive footwork to confront social and cultural constructs.

Over the last six years, Ishita’s work has reached inter/national stages (New Victory Theater, Lincoln Center, Kala Ghoda Arts Festival), commercial campaigns (NBCUniversal, IndoWarehouse), and theater (Broadway Bares, Asolo Rep’s “Hair”). Ishita was awarded Artist of Exceptional Merit by the Asian American Arts Alliance, received a Folks Arts Apprentice grant under the NJ State Council of the Arts, and was a guest choreographer at Princeton University. IMGE was featured in Vogue and Vanity Fair and amassed a global fan base.



**Utkarsh Rajawat** (they/them) is a writer/performer.

You can learn more about them through the [bio](#) on their website.



**Zonia Tsang** (she/her) is a New York-based playwright and musical theater composer from Hong Kong.

Her works have been performed in the US, UK, Taiwan, and Hong Kong. She and her collaborator Erin J. Reifler were chosen as the Merit Award Winners for New Musical Inc. in collaboration with Disney Imagineering’s New Voices Project.

Other theater works include AFO Solo shorts – *Up Here to Breathe* (Drama League 2021 Nominee), *Eye of the Beholder* (Semi-finalist of Eugene O’Neill National Playwright’s Conference), *The Blue-and-White Porcelain* (Finalist of World Sinophone Drama Competition), and *Shadow on the Wall* (American Opera Project).

Established in 2021, New Victory LabWorks Launch invites a particular project for young audiences to be further developed with the aim of presenting the work on national and international stages in the future. New Victory LabWorks Launch provides individualized support focusing on specific steps needed to bring a work to a performing arts venue. This includes production support, dramaturgical input, industry relationship connections, rehearsal space and \$20,000.



The 2024-25 LabWorks Launch project, *The Ice Cream Dream*, is a story about three unlikely friends - a snake, a mouse and a human - who go on a journey to bring humans and snakes together. Set in India, the story incorporates Indian classical dance, music and puppetry and explores themes of xenophobia, questioning learned prejudices and perceptions and the ways we can rewrite history together. **Divya Mangwani** (she/her) is the lead artist on *The Ice Cream Dream*. A theatre artist from Pune, she creates reimaginations that question our perception of narrative truths and shared mythologies. Divya was the founder and Artistic Director of Moonbeam Factory Theatre and wrote, directed, and produced plays in India, Singapore and the UK. In New York, she has developed work with UNICEF, Soho Rep, NYTW, Bushwick Starr, The Civilians, Rattlestick, Mabou Mines, The Flea, among others.

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### **About New Victory Theater**

The New Victory opens new worlds to young people and families through extraordinary performances, education and engagement programs. Bringing kids to the arts and the arts to kids since 1995, this nonprofit theater has become a standard-bearer of quality performing arts for young audiences in the United States. Reflecting and serving the multicultural city it calls home, The New Victory is committed to arts access for all communities of New York to experience and engage with the exemplary international shows on its stages. A global leader in arts education, youth development and audience engagement, the New Victory Theater has been honored by the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities with the National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award, by Americans for the Arts with a national Arts Education Award, and by the Drama Desk for "providing enchanting, sophisticated children's theater that appeals to the child in all of us, and for nurturing a love of theater in young people."

### **About New 42**

Under the leadership of President & CEO Russell Granet, New 42 is a cultural nonprofit whose mission is to make extraordinary performing arts a vital part of everyone's life from the earliest years onward. Driven by a deep commitment to performing arts access, New 42 connects people to world-class performances, essential education and employment programs, and creative communities that push culture forward. Originally established in 1990 by New York City and State to revive West 42nd Street between 7th and 8th Avenues, New 42 stewards the block's seven historic theater properties and leads the dynamic evolution of the block as a safe and exciting destination. Through New Victory and New 42 Studios, the nonprofit serves artists, educators and New Yorkers of all ages with invaluable arts engagement and resources in and

beyond the performing arts. Together with our supporters, New 42 opens new perspectives, incubates new works and creates new opportunities to move us all.