

## ShakespeareAMERICA features OSF artistic directors

On Wednesday, May 8th at 4pm, Artistic Directors from Oregon Shakespeare Festival will be coming to SOU to speak with Shakespeare Studies professor David McCandless, touching on inclusivity in Shakespeare's works. Rosa Joshi, Associate Artistic Director as of December, supports the Artistic Director (Tim Bond) in terms of season planning, casting, supporting artists and art-making, and is specifically the liaison with the performing company at OSF.

In 2025, Joshi plans to restart the FAIR program (Fellowships, Assistantships, Internships, and Residencies). This professional development program reaches out to and ranges from more experienced professionals with fellowships to people emerging into their careers as assistants, interns, and positions held across the company. This is an opportunity for young theater professionals to work with more experienced people at OSF and gives individuals with less access more opportunity to get more experience!

Joshi explains that with essentially limitless interpretations, Shakespeare's works can withstand a lot. Messages within his plays can be interpreted in many different ways depending on the audience, the time it was written in, the time it was written for, and the time it was produced in. The work has been reinterpreted across time.

"Every age finds the way it speaks to them," says Joshi. "The work can be expansive and speak to a community. It's ultimately up to us to make it speak to us, to find the way in."

When it comes to awareness of current social problems and issues, Joshi says that in order to be a living, breathing art form, Shakespeare's work must approach it all. With young actors grappling with the concept of gender and race, it's important to encounter that in the art form, and transform it and make it work so it serves the current generation.

"And that's not by watering it down," says Joshi, "but by allowing us to see how expansive it can be."

Some parts of Shakespeare's works don't "hold up" today—there are a handful of racist and sexist things in the text. A common challenge for modern interpretations is how to work with those ideas. Art must evolve as it moves through generations and to love art is to love all of it, including its faults and flaws. The phrase "to be loved is to be changed" works well especially with Shakespeare. Shakespeare's works aren't dying out or going anywhere anytime soon and that's because of how different the world is now.

Joshi and Bond are looking forward to what's to come in the new generation of actors. New experiences bring new approaches to classic works and how they speak to the collective humanity. Looking at the potentialities, Joshi regards inclusivity in Shakespeare:

“We don’t always examine what it means. Shakespeare is universal and for everyone, but what do we mean by that?”

Tim Bond and Rosa Joshi will be visiting SOU on Wednesday, May 8th at 4pm in the SOU Art Building’s Meese Auditorium. Limited seating available, free and open to the public. Shakespeare Studies Professor David McCandless will be hosting the conversation and a Q&A will follow the interview. No tickets are necessary!

*Story by Sierra Jameson*