

## NINA LEMON BA (HONS)

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### PROFILE

#### Project Title

"I did want to be a teenage mum but after seeing your play I don't anymore."

How can playwrights working in applied theatre internationally make plays that change how young audience members think about and approach relationships and sex?

#### Supervisors

Dr Selina Busby and Dr Sarah Grochala

#### Abstract

Drawing on over a decade of practical experience creating plays for use in educational settings, this practice-led PhD sees the creation and delivery of new plays for young audiences in both the UK and in India, together with a thesis that analyses the work in the context of the learning play and explores their efficacy as a tool for social change.

As Artistic Director of theatre company Peer Productions, I write plays which respond specifically to the topics identified by young people as most important and most difficult to talk about and relationships and sex are a central concern. By writing two plays which respond to these specific needs of first a familiar UK youth audience and then a new and unfamiliar Indian one, I am able to observe my established practice through a different lens and dissect how, as a playwright, I can make work to speak to and for these different audiences.

The commentary will unpick the research and development methodology as well as the construction of the texts, bridging two different worlds: playwriting and applied theatre. This is fairly unusual as most research in this field focuses on devised work rather than the appeal of a well-crafted play. By exploring the process, the product and the inextricable link between the two, the thesis will seek to unravel the ethical considerations, power dynamics and questions about ownership inherent in using real life stories as inspiration for fictional ones.

## Profile

I am a playwright, theatre-maker, researcher and feminist. As Artistic Director of youth arts charity Peer Productions, I have spent the last fourteen years developing new plays tackling the risky issues that young people most want to talk about but that many teachers fear and dread. My PhD research explores what strategies playwrights could use to affect change in teenage attitudes to early sexual relationships in both the UK and in India. Outside of my research and practice, I am mum to two Autistic daughters and I am especially interested in inclusive theatre practice and creativity in neuro-diverse people. This personal experience has led to my appointment as Senior Practitioner on Playing A/Part, a Kent and Surrey University collaboration funded by AHRC exploring creativity in Autistic girls.

## Practice

### Current Positions:

2006 - Present - Artistic Director at Peer Productions. Peer Productions is a unique youth arts training charity specialising in peer education through theatre. In this role, I write and direct new plays for young audiences, devise outreach programmes for vulnerable young people and train young actors from a wide range of backgrounds. My current touring work includes 'Hidden - a play about self worth, mental health and self harm' and 'Losing It - a play about coming together and falling apart.' I am currently researching a new play in response to the knife crime epidemic for UK audiences and I am planning to tour another play 'LBA - Love, Beauty and Attraction' to teenage audiences in Mumbai next year. I have also developed 'Generation Girls' - this is an empowering programme which uses drama to teach autistic girls and girls with learning disabilities about themselves, their bodies and their relationships. [www.peerproductions.co.uk](http://www.peerproductions.co.uk)

2018 - Present - Senior Practitioner at Playing A/Part. Playing A/Part is an interdisciplinary project, exploring the identities and experiences of autistic girls and adolescents through creative and participatory research. It is a collaboration between the universities of Kent and Surrey, involving academics in drama, media arts and psychology. Funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, the project team includes a steering group of autistic women and a multidisciplinary advisory board. My role involves devising and delivering creative sessions and developing resources for autistic girls.

<https://playingapartautisticgirls.org/>

2018-19 - Playwright at Forgotten Women of History Podcast. 'Forgotten Women of History Podcast' is a history and performance project dedicated to remembering female activists of 20th century Britain. It is a partnership project between Peer Productions and Bishopsgate Institute and was funded by Heritage Lottery Fund and Arts Council England. I wrote two podcasts for the project; 'The Women of Greenham' about the Greenham Common Anti-Nuclear protest and 'Green Class' which was about Mencap founder Judy Fryd and the ongoing battles faced by parents of children with additional needs.

<https://www.peerproductions.co.uk/forgotten-women-of-history>

## Teaching

2006 - Present - Teacher at Peer Productions' Actor Development Programme

Facilitating workshops and training in all aspects of theatre practice on this Level 4 Creative Practitioner course.

2017 - Visiting Lecturer at Kingston University on Applied Theatre Module.

## Conference Presentations

2017 - 'Sex & Theatre - 'Making didactic plays for a porn fuelled generation'  
TaPRA Applied and Social Theatre Working Group. 'Age(s) and Age(ing) in Applied and Social Theatre'  
Interim Event. University of South Wales.