



**BELGRADE
THEATRE**
COVENTRY

SWIM, AUNTY, SWIM!

Written by Siana Bangura and directed by Madeleine Kludje

Swim, Aunty, Swim! is a profound, poetic story of friendship, loss, sisterhood, motherhood, ageing, starting again, and the sublime power of water.

DAT REN WE BIT BITA-LIF SOTE I BITA, NA-IN BIT SHUGA KEN SOTE I SWIT – Krio Proverb

Translation: **The same rain that beats bitter-leaf until its bitter, beats sugar cane until it's sweet.**

As the fifth anniversary of the killing of her son approaches, Fatu is in search of a new life and a fresh start. Leaving London behind, she makes her way to Coventry, in the West Midlands where she forms a friendship with fellow members of her new church - Aunty Blessing and Aunty Ama - a fiery, entertaining, sharp-whitted duo of West African women in their prime, navigating changes and transitions in their own lives. At Ama's whim, the three of them embark on a watery challenge.

What begins as light-hearted fun and a distraction from the mundane routine of life and church, becomes a ritual of healing and rebirth, after a season of grieving.

Set across Lagos, Accra, Freetown, London, Birmingham, and Coventry, *Swim, Aunty, Swim!* celebrates and centres black, older West African women at the heart of this play. Paying homage to our aunts, mothers and grandmothers on stage, sharing their experiences of migration and the comfort of West African traditions and culture with joy, love and care.

About Madeleine Kludje

Madeleine is currently the Associate Director at The Rep leading on Door Programming and Talent Development. Madeleine is an alumni of the Regional Theatre Young Director Scheme and the National Theatre Directors Course. Madeleine has worked with a range of theatres as a freelance practitioner, dramaturg and director.

Currently directing **Swim, Aunty, Swim!** by Siana Bangura (Belgrade).

Past directing work includes **Parklife** short comedy plays by Mahad Ali, Alice Etches, Mari and Lowri Izzard and Ed Amsden and Tom Coles (Sky Comedy Rep 22 & 23) **Grimeboy** by Birmingham Poet Laureate Casey Bailey (The Rep, Barry Jackson Tour, Birmingham Festival 23), **City of a Thousand Trades** by Choreographer Miguel Altunaga (Birmingham Royal Ballet) **Park Bench Plays**, short plays by David Edgar, Janice Connolly, Liam Steel and Lucia Deyi (The Rep, Barry Jackson Tour, Sky Arts). **Brummie Iliad** by Rodrick Smith (The Rep), **Subtitled** by Michael Southern and **Fathers, Family and F**kboys** by Sophia Griffin (Rep Foundry), **I Am a Man** by Luke Barnes and **Love Liquidators** by **Ashley Zhangazha** (North Wall Alchemy Festival), **Futureopolis**, a devised piece for the new entrance opening of the Victoria and Albert Museum with young people from Emergency Exit Arts, **Check The Label** by Eno Mfon and **Normal** by Theresa Ikoko (Talawa First), **Fable** by Luke Barnes in London, New York and Cape Town (Young Vic).

Past Associate and Assisting work includes **Migrations** Directed by David Poutney, (Welsh National Opera), **Peter Pan** Directed by Liam Steel, **A Thousand Splendid Suns** and **Woyzeck** directed by Roxana Silbert, **The Wizard of Oz** Directed by Liam Steel, and **Elephant** Directed by Lucy Morrison (The Rep)

As a freelance practitioner and mentor past work includes NT Connections, NT Public Acts, Talawa TYPT, Old Vic Schools Projects, Emergency Exit Arts, Stratford Theatre Royal Creative Activism, BID drama group.