

Young Vic

Press Release – Wednesday 12 April 2023

Images can be downloaded [here](#)

TAIO LAWSON ANNOUNCED AS 2023/24 GENESIS FELLOW / YOUNG VIC ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

The Young Vic Theatre is delighted to announce director **Taio Lawson** as the **2023 Genesis Fellow / Associate Director**, a two-year programme for experienced directors and theatremakers to develop their craft in directing, programming and artistic planning, made possible with support from the **Genesis Foundation**.

Taio Lawson will be based within the Creators Program department and will play an integral role in the development and delivery of the Young Vic's artist development program. His previous credits at the Young Vic include the Boris Karloff Assistant Director on *Sizwe Banzi is Dead*, Jerwood Assistant Director on *Life of Galileo*, and Director of *Home 20*. Other credits include Resident Director on *Hamilton* (Victoria Palace); Associate Director at Kiln Theatre where he directed *NW Trilogy*; and Debbie Tucker Green's *hang* at Sheffield Theatres where he was RTYDS 18-Month Resident Director.

The Young Vic's longstanding partner, the **Genesis Foundation**, has provided leadership support for the Genesis Fellow for 10 years investing in exceptional directors, their strategic insight and creative growth. **Taio Lawson** will take over the role this summer from **Jennifer Tang** who concludes her tenure with *Further than the Furthest Thing* currently playing in the Main House until 29 April. Previous Genesis Fellows include **Nadia Latif**, **Gbolahan Obisesan**, **Natalie Abrahami**, **Carrie Cracknell** and **Joe Hill-Gibbins**.

Taio Lawson, Genesis Fellow / Associate Director, said: *"The Young Vic is a beacon in the industry as a venue for excellent, boundary-pushing art, as well as a training ground for the next generation of boundary-pushing artists. I saw my first play at the Young Vic on a school trip in 2000. Being able to make theatre in the same place I fell in love with the art form is a personal full circle moment. It's also exciting to see the evolution of the Directors Program into the Creators Program, which is now supporting multi- and anti-disciplinary artists to hone their craft. Along with curating workshops for the Creators Program, I want to help make this theatre feel like a home to those artists, in the same way it has for me over the years. It is an honour to join the team here. I hope I can be of service."*

John Studzinski, Founder and Chairman of the Genesis Foundation, said: *"Supporting creatives in the early stages of their professional lives is central to our work. The Genesis Fellowship has proved to be one of the finest training opportunities in the UK for talented young directors thanks to the quality of the Young Vic's artistic leadership. I am delighted to welcome Taio, an already experienced director, into the Genesis Fellowship family and have no doubt he will gain immensely from being in a creative environment that gives both freedom and firm professional support. No matter how far you are in your career as a director, you never stop benefitting from feedback from someone you respect and trust. Directors take on the considerable public challenge of bringing an entire production to life, and they need mentors and networks that are up to that challenge."*

Kwame Kwei-Armah, Young Vic Artistic Director, said: *"We're delighted to welcome Taio Lawson as our Genesis Fellow / Associate Director. It's clear he is an incredibly talented artist"*

and we are proud that the Young Vic has played an active part in his career to date. We look forward to continuing this journey with him. Together with our longstanding partner, the Genesis Foundation, we are committed to supporting and investing in exceptional artists and their creative growth through the vital work of the Young Vic Creators Program.”

The Young Vic is renowned for the Creators Program led by Sue Emmas, that grew from the Directors Program, and has been providing an extensive program of learning activities, traineeships, and opportunities to make work for artists for more than 20 years. Since 2003, the Genesis Foundation’s partnership has been the backbone of artist development at the Young Vic – forging community through the Genesis Network, and igniting careers through invaluable training opportunities such as the Genesis Future Directors Award and Genesis Fellowship. <https://creatorsprogram.youngvic.org/>

ENDS

Young Vic Press Contacts:

Su-Ann Chow-Seegoolam, Head of Press and Communications

Su-AnnChow-Seegoolam@youngvic.org

Karl-Lydie Jean-Baptiste, Press Officer

Karllydie@youngvic.org

Images:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/9mwcrcnkqhzwt53k/AACnSvtOKBkwsix8DoDjpN89a?dl=0>

Taio Lawson biography

Taio Lawson is a director raised between South London and St. Lucia. The Young Vic was where Taio saw his first play, thanks to the work the outreach departments did, and continue to do, with local state primary schools. After studying at The Brit School, Taio followed in David Lan’s footsteps, studying Anthropology at University. His work is varied, but he is fundamentally interested in political stories and stories that exist to explore the inherent contradictions of modern life.

As a teenager, Taio made work for fringe festivals across the UK, taking some of that work internationally. He has been the Boris Karloff Assistant Director and Jerwood Assistant Director at the Young Vic, as well as RTYDS (Regional Theatre Young Directors Scheme) 18-Month Resident Director at Sheffield Theatres where he directed debbie tucker green’s *hang*, and Resident Director on *Hamilton*, London. He was also an Associate Director at Kiln Theatre, directing *NW Trilogy* for them.

Other credits include *An Unfinished Man* (The Yard Theatre), *HOME 20 Digital installation* (Young Vic Theatre online) and *Home - Installation* (Young Vic Theatre).

About the Genesis Foundation

The Genesis Foundation has supported the Young Vic’s Directors Program since its inception nearly 20 years ago and currently funds the Genesis Future Directors Award and the Genesis Fellow.

The Genesis Foundation was founded by John Studzinski in 2001. Over the past 22 years, the Foundation has donated a total of more than £20 million to the arts. Through its funding and partnership model, it has enabled opportunities for thousands of young artists in theatre and music, building both their experience and their resilience. Cross-disciplinary networking and mentoring are inherent to the Genesis Foundation and form the basis of its work.

The Foundation's focus is on partnerships with leading arts organisations such as the Young Vic, National Theatre, Almeida Theatre and The Sixteen, and on training programmes that equip emerging artists for life as a creative professional. In 2020, it launched the Covid-19 Artists Fund, an emergency response to help freelancers facing hardship, and the £1 million Genesis Kickstart Fund that funded future-facing projects for outstanding freelance talent in the creative sector across the UK.

For more information, please visit [genesisfoundation.org.uk](https://www.genesisfoundation.org.uk)

About the Young Vic Theatre

Founded in 1970 as a space for world-premiere productions and unexpected takes on classic plays that speak urgently to our present, the Young Vic Theatre has been one of London's leading theatres for more than fifty years.

Welcoming more than 100,000 visitors a year to its London Waterloo location, the Young Vic stands out in the city's cultural landscape for balancing daring commercial drive, success and artistic flair with genuine grassroots social impact change in our neighbourhood. We forge deep connections in our neighbourhood through our Taking Part programme, where we engage with over 15,000 people every year via a wide range of projects, from skills-based workshops to on-stage performances. We give 10% of our tickets free to schools and neighbours, irrespective of box office demand, and we are committed to keeping ticket prices low.

The Young Vic's Creators Program is our space for multi- and anti-disciplinary artists, and is the only scheme of its kind. Launched in 2001, and formerly known as the Directors Program, we offer artists and producers a unique opportunity to develop their craft through opportunities that range from trainee and assistant director roles to a two-year residency through the Genesis Fellow/Associate Director position. The Genesis Network provides an online community to over 2,000 artists and producers. Each year, the recipient of the Genesis Future Directors Award directs a show in the Clare Theatre with full support from the Young Vic team.

Built upon the principles of access, innovation, and community, the Young Vic is deepening its roots nationally and internationally. Recent transfers include Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* and *The Collaboration* (Broadway), the multi-award-winning *Best of Enemies* (West End), and the smash hit musical, *Rodgers & Hammerstein's Oklahoma!* currently playing at Wyndham's Theatre, West End.

The Young Vic's founding spirit is iconoclastic and pushing at the forefront of possibility, bringing together artists and audiences on a global scale and using the power of stories to change our world.

Artistic Director: Kwame Kwei-Armah

Executive Director: Lucy Davies

www.youngvic.org

The Young Vic's annual activities are made possible with public funding from Arts Council England.

Additional support is provided by The Black Heart Foundation and the Genesis Foundation.

We gratefully acknowledge Ian Burford and Alec Cannell for generously supporting the Young Vic's mission.