

# NEW VICTORY® SCHOOL TOOL®

2017-18 SEASON

RESOURCE GUIDE



PING CHONG + COMPANY

# UNDESIRABLE ELEMENTS: GENERATION NYZ





# NEW VICTORY® EDUCATION

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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. Featuring artistic disciplines and traditions from a multitude of cultures, New Victory presents theatrical stories and experiences that spark the imagination and broaden our understanding of the world and our place in it.

NEW VICTORY Education has made it possible for more than 610,000 students across 200 NYC schools to experience international performing arts with their classmates for little to no cost. Typically serving approximately 40,000 schoolkids every year, New Victory pairs these visits with free, arts-based classroom workshops and residencies, and offers professional development for educators who want to incorporate the arts into their daily curriculum.

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. The nonprofit is celebrated for programs including New Victory Dance, which provides free dance performances and education to NYC summer schools; SPARK, a multi-year program to infuse arts-deprived school communities with live performing arts and arts education; and GIVE, a new initiative to address equitable student engagement in inclusion classrooms.

## JOBS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Discover the New 42 Youth Corps, a youth development initiative that pairs life skills training with jobs in the arts for high school and college students. The Youth Corps is composed of three different tracks to meet students where they are academically and professionally, and to serve New York City with a diverse, creative pipeline of young talent.

### NEW VICTORY Usher Corps

At New Victory, students ages 16-19 make up the Usher Corps, a rigorous three-year program that offers:

- Live theater from around the world
- Job training and workshops
- A supportive team of young adults from across the city
- Hands-on work with kids and families in a friendly, fast-paced environment
- Personal and professional growth

## NEW VICTORY® SCHOOL TOOL® Resource Guides

Filled with practical, engaging and ready-to-implement activities that allow any teacher to incorporate performing arts into their curricula, NEW VICTORY SCHOOL TOOL Resource Guides are designed to enrich students' arts skills and creative expression.

During a typical NEW VICTORY season, NEW VICTORY SCHOOL TOOLS are available to school partners for every show, designed for educators to explore the artistry and key themes of each production.

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NEW VICTORY® SCHOOL TOOL® Resource Guides are made possible by a generous gift in memory of Fr. John R. Scarangelo, OFM whose lifelong passion for the theater was a powerful influence on all who were fortunate to know and love him.





## INSIDE

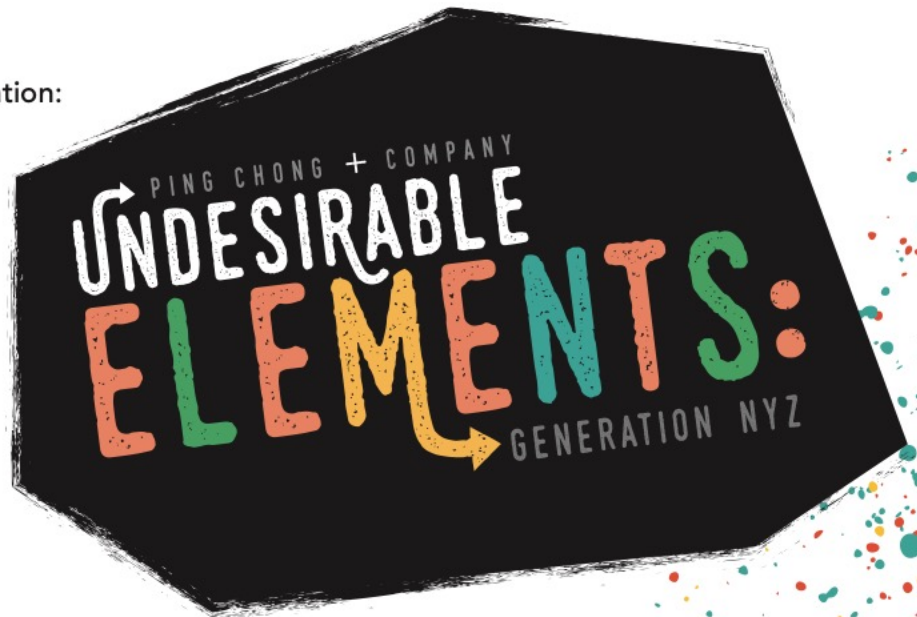
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# OUR GUIDING PILLARS

*Want to know what guides the work we do in NEW VICTORY Education?  
The Guiding Pillars on this page are the foundation of how we strive  
to cultivate collaboration and creativity for everyone!*

## ARTS FOR ALL

How is the work accessible to and inclusive of everyone?

## ART FORM

How are we honoring and exploring the technique of the art forms presented on our stage?

## COMMUNITY

How are we encouraging ensemble and collaboration within the communities we work with?

## CREATE

How can we activate art-making and creativity to explore the art form in each production?

## DISCOVERY

What methods are we employing?  
What questions are we asking to encourage opportunities for meaning-making, deepening understanding, inquiry, curiosity, risk-taking and learning about oneself, one's peers and the world around us?

## PLAY

How is the work sparking imagination, encouraging joy in learning and evoking laughter?

# INSIDE

A behind-the-curtain look at the artists, the company and the art form of this production

## COMMON CORE STANDARDS

**Reading:** 4

**Writing:** 2; 3; 6; 7

**Speaking and Listening:** 1; 2; 4; 6

**Language:** 1; 2; 3

## NEW YORK STATE STANDARDS

**Arts:** 4

**Career Development**

**and Occupational Studies:** 1

**English Language Arts:** 1; 4

**Social Studies:** 1; 2

## BLUEPRINT FOR THE ARTS

**Theater:** Developing Theater Literacy

Making Connections

Exploring Careers and

Lifelong Learning

**Visual Art:** Art Making

## Summary

Exclusively for The New Victory Theater, Ping Chong + Company will amplify the voices of young New Yorkers in the 25th Anniversary of the *Undesirable Elements* series with the New Victory's presentation of **UNDESIRABLE ELEMENTS: GENERATION NYZ**. For this world premiere production, National Medal of Arts recipient Ping Chong and his award-winning collaborators have conducted intensive interviews to capture the untold stories of New York City youth. From recent discord to distant dreams, hear every experience as they speak their truths and share their stories. Real People. Real Lives. Real Theater.



Photo Credit: Adam Nadel



Where in the world is  
**UNDESIRABLE ELEMENTS:  
GENERATION NYZ** from?

**NEW YORK CITY**



## DID YOU KNOW?

UNDESIRABLE ELEMENTS: GENERATION NYZ is a work of interview-based theater. The performers you'll see on stage are telling their own personal stories!

The show is not a traditional play performed by trained actors. Instead, it is presented as a chamber piece of storytelling and is presented through the voices of the people sharing their own stories.

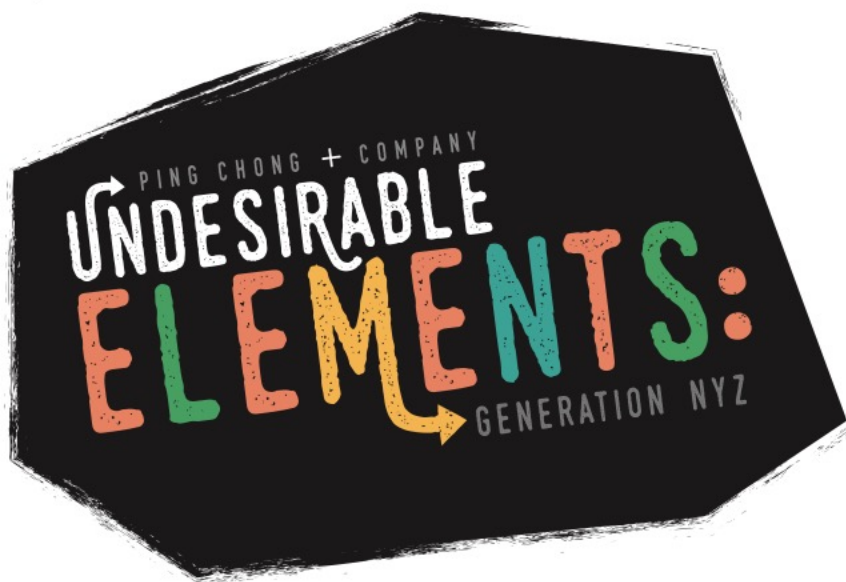
All productions in the *Undesirable Elements* series are created in partnership with a local host organization in the community where the show is being presented—in this case, The New Victory Theater!

Ping Chong + Company refers to *Undesirable Elements* as a "seated opera of spoken word."

Many of the performers (or interviewees) you'll see on stage in this production have never before performed publicly!

Since 1992, nearly 200 individuals have performed in the *Undesirable Elements* series, which has been presented in over 40 cities in the U.S., Germany, the Netherlands, Japan, France and Italy.

IDENTITY + COMMUNITY  
× STORYTELLING =



## A Closer look:

The artists at Ping Chong + Company (*Cathay: Three Tales of China*, New Vic 2005) use theater to bring communities together. Through a wide variety of art forms, including puppetry, dance, oral history and documentary theater, they explore the idea of social responsibility through artistic innovation. The company's artistic director, Ping Chong, broadens his audience's understanding of identity by visiting different, underserved communities and creates shows written by and starring people living outside of society's norms. The company has won several awards for their outstanding work in theater, including two Obies (the highest honor for Off-Broadway productions) and five National Endowment for the Arts fellowships.

Ping Chong is a theater and visual artist. In 1992, he was making a visual arts installation entitled, *A Facility for the Channeling and Containment of Undesirable Elements*. Shortly before the opening, Ping was asked to create an accompanying performance piece, which became the first production in the *Undesirable Elements* series. The piece included a group of bilingual New Yorkers from different cultural backgrounds, who explored what it meant to be "desirable" or "undesirable" in their cultures of origin. Since then, *Undesirable Elements* has become an ever-evolving series of stories told by real people from real communities across the globe!

*Undesirable Elements*, which celebrated its 25th Anniversary in October 2017, is an ongoing series of community-specific, interview-based theater works examining issues of culture and identity of individuals who identify as outsiders. The series, including this production of UNDESIRABLE ELEMENTS: GENERATION NYZ, is comprised of over 30 interview-based theater productions created by and representing myriad communities! Other works in this series include: *Beyond Sacred: Voices of Muslim Identity* (2015, LaGuardia Performing Arts Center), *PUSH: Real Athletes, Real Stories, Real Theatre* (2015, Tangled Arts + Disability) and *South of the 8* (2017, La Jolla Playhouse).



## INTERVIEW-BASED THEATER

This style of theater—sometimes referred to as Documentary Theater, Theater of Fact, Testimonial Theater, Tribunal Theater or Verbatim Theater, though they are each slightly different in execution—is created by using the spoken words of real people, gathered by way of recorded interviews. In *UNDESIRABLE ELEMENTS: GENERATION NYZ*, those interviews or testimonials, are curated by Co-writers Sara Zatz and Kira Taber into a cohesive script that is performed by the interviewees in front of a live audience.

## STORYTELLING

*UNDESIRABLE ELEMENTS: GENERATION NYZ* is a work of interview-based theater. This production, which is the newest in Ping Chong + Company's *Undesirable Elements* series, features seven performers telling their personal stories, reflecting on what it means to be a young adult in New York City. *UNDESIRABLE ELEMENTS: GENERATION NYZ* uses music, rhythm, choral speaking, video projection and spoken word as a means to enhance the telling of these real life stories told by real people.

### WHAT DO YOUR STUDENTS KNOW NOW?

Prior to exploring *UNDESIRABLE ELEMENTS: GENERATION NYZ* with your students, find out how much they already know about **INTERVIEW-BASED THEATER**. In addition, allow them to explore the themes: **INDIVIDUALITY** and **COMMUNITY**.

*What community or communities do you identify with? What does it mean to belong to a community?*

*Have you ever seen a piece of interview-based theater, spoken word or a personal storytelling performance? If so, how did you feel listening to the performer's personal stories?*

*The outside world often tells us that conforming to societal norms is better than being our own individual self. How do you feel about that?*

*In what ways do you try to be your own unique self?*

*Do you feel a personal connection to your community? How does one belong to a community and maintain their self-identity?*

*What type(s) of stories are you hoping to hear or see represented on stage at the theater?*

*Do you have a personal story that you want to tell, but haven't? What do you think it would be like to tell that story in front of an entire audience?*





**WHAT IS IT  
LIKE TO BE:**

SEARCHING FOR YOUR

**TRUE  
IDENTITY?**

**HOMELESS?**

**LOST AND ALONE?**

**LGBTQIA?  
ESTRANGED FROM YOUR  
FAMILY?**

**AFFECTED BY NEIGHBORHOOD VIOLENCE?**

SURROUNDED BY  
DOMESTIC  
VIOLENCE?

**AN IMMIGRANT  
IN THIS COUNTRY?**

**DEPRESSED or  
SUICIDAL?**

**STRUGGLING  
WITH SELF-ACCEPTANCE?**

IN SEARCH OF COMMUNITY?

**A PERSON  
OF COLOR**

**IN THE FOSTER SYSTEM?**





## PICTURE THIS: DOCUMENTING REAL LIFE (SOCIAL STUDIES, ELA, VISUAL ARTS, MEDIA ARTS)

**UNDESIRABLE ELEMENTS: GENERATION NYZ** is an interview-based theater piece in which young people from New York City tell their personal stories of what it is like living in an urban environment, in their borough, in their neighborhood. Engage your students in a photojournalism unit in which they investigate their own communities! Have them take pictures of friends, neighbors, houses, buildings, parks, etc., and create a visual art gallery to tell the story of their respective communities! **Note:** For students who wish to take the digital route, have them create an Instagram series to tell their story using #RealLife. Finally, have each student share their investigative findings with the class! To support this unit, use the **Activity: Making Connections** in the **After** section

## THE STORY OF US (THEATER, SOCIAL STUDIES, ELA)

If your class was going to create its very own version of *Undesirable Elements*, what would it be about? What would the themes be? What would the overall message be? As a class, work together to find out how students are alike and how they differ. Talk about themes that would be interesting to explore and bring to life through interview-based theater, making a list of prompts to help guide your theater-making process! Then, embark on a creative writing unit by instructing students to write a one page monologue or story based on the prompt or selection of prompts chosen by the class. Have each student share their written work with the rest of the class. Then, as a group, decide the best way(s) to bridge all of the students' personal stories into a cohesive storytelling performance! To support this unit, use the **Activity: Walk the Line** in the **Before** section.

## GETTING SOCIAL (ELA, VISUAL ART, MEDIA ARTS, THEATER)

Now that you've seen **UNDESIRABLE ELEMENTS: GENERATION NYZ**, and you've created your very own version of *Undesirable Elements*, it's time to get the word out! Connecting this to the Unit Plan Brainstorm **The Story of Us**, how would you begin to market your production? Guide your students in a unit on marketing and audience development strategies. Ask questions like: *Who do we want to see our show? What is our mission? What are our core values? Why should people see our show?* Have students research how professional theater companies, like The New Victory Theater, market their own productions. Then, using materials found in your classroom, design posters to help promote your show! If you want to go the digital route, create online ads, including Twitter, Snapchat and Facebook campaigns! To support this unit, use the **Creativity Page: Doing Good** in the **After** section.

**Teacher's Note:** You may choose to use the questions on Page 8, which consider the myriad themes addressed in **UNDESIRABLE ELEMENTS: GENERATION NYZ**, as classroom conversation starters. Do this before OR after you see the performance!

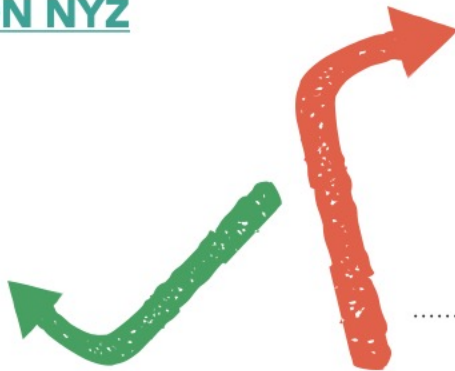
**Watch Together!**  
**UNDESIRABLE ELEMENTS: GENERATION NYZ**

**WATCH**

[Click here to watch UNDESIRABLE ELEMENTS: GENERATION NYZ](#)



**ASK**



After watching UNDESIRABLE ELEMENTS: GENERATION NYZ, use the prompts below to engage in a conversation about the show!

**BEFORE the show:**

*What do you think it will be like to see a play with real people telling their real life stories?*

*What are you most excited about for your trip to the Duke?*

**AFTER the show:**

*What was your favorite part of the show?*

*Did anything about the show surprise you?*

*What different elements of theater did you see the show incorporate?*

*Do you feel like you now know more about the city you live in, and the people in it?*

To extend the conversation, use the "Teacher Tip" prompts on page 16



# BEFORE

Ready-to-implement classroom activities that explore the themes and artistry of the show

**COMMON CORE STANDARDS**  
**Speaking and Listening:** 1; 2; 6  
**Language:** 1; 3; 5

**NEW YORK STATE STANDARDS**  
**Arts:** 1; 2  
**English Language Arts:** 1; 4

**BLUEPRINT FOR THE ARTS**  
**Theater:** Theater Making  
Developing Theater Literacy  
Making Connections  
**Visual Arts:** Art Making

## Heads Up!

**UNDESIRABLE ELEMENTS: GENERATION NYZ**, originally performed at The Duke on 42nd Street (229 West 42nd Street) in 2018, is a production based in interview-based theater—real people telling real-life, personal stories about what it means to grow up in New York City. Prepare your students to watch closely to listen to these captivating stories of real New Yorkers addressing themes such as cultural identity, sexuality and bullying, just to name a few, and see what resonates with them.

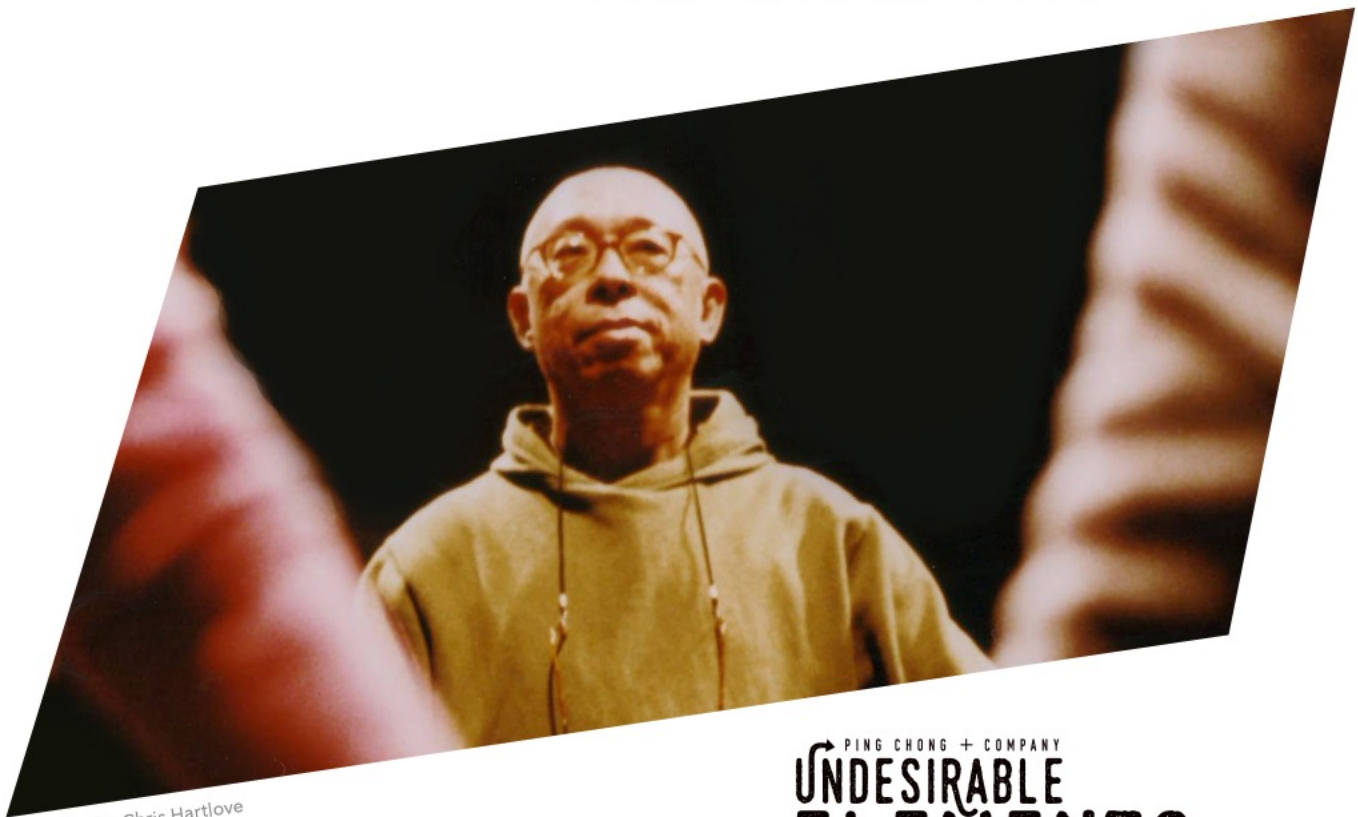


Photo Credit: Chris Hartlove

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**UNDESIRABLE  
ELEMENTS:**  
GENERATION NYZ



# WALK THE LINE

Before you see **UNDESIRABLE ELEMENTS: GENERATION NYZ**, work with your students to discover and talk about their shared commonalities, while celebrating their differences, and encourage thoughtful discussion as they travel through the spectrum of discourse!

1. Have students stand shoulder-to-shoulder in one line and walk across the room. Once students arrive at the other side, instruct them to turn around and walk back to their starting position, all the while attempting to stay connected at the shoulder.
2. After students have crossed the room two or three times, tell them that they are going to do yet another pass as you call out certain prompts. When they hear prompts that resonate with them they are to freeze in position, creating a shape with their body that conveys their connection (positive, negative or indifferent) to your prompt. They are to hold their pose until the line comes back to pick them up, effectively “sweeping” the room clean. Possible prompts are:
  - I am not originally from New York City.
  - My favorite pastime is reading books.
  - I don't know where my family is from originally.
  - My favorite type of music is R&B.
  - I have a strong connection to my community.
  - I have a story that I really want to share, but I'm too shy.
  - I am proud of my cultural heritage.
  - I have been bullied before.
  - I love the city I live in.
  - I am afraid of the current political climate.
3. State one prompt per pass across the room or choose to state a few in one walking pass. When the moving line of students reaches the other side of the room to which they are travelling, have them turn and look at the other students who are frozen in individual tableaux (frozen pictures) around the room.
4. Encourage students to take note of the shapes their peers are making with their bodies based on the given prompt(s) and ask questions like: *What do you see? What emotions are represented in these shapes? What does looking at this make you think?*
5. Next, choose a few students frozen in tableau to thought-track. *Note: Thought-tracking is a Process Drama technique in which the teacher taps a student on the shoulder and asks what their character is thinking. When a student replies, inform them that they are speaking aloud the thoughts of their character.*
6. Repeat this process periodically as you make statements and students create tableaux. After you have activated all of the prompts, have a full group discussion about the statements, noting students' individual reactions and the group's communal reaction to each of the prompts.

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

.....

*How did it feel to think about these statements as individuals?*

*What was it like to see your classmates' physical reactions to these statements?*

*What surprised you about this activity?*

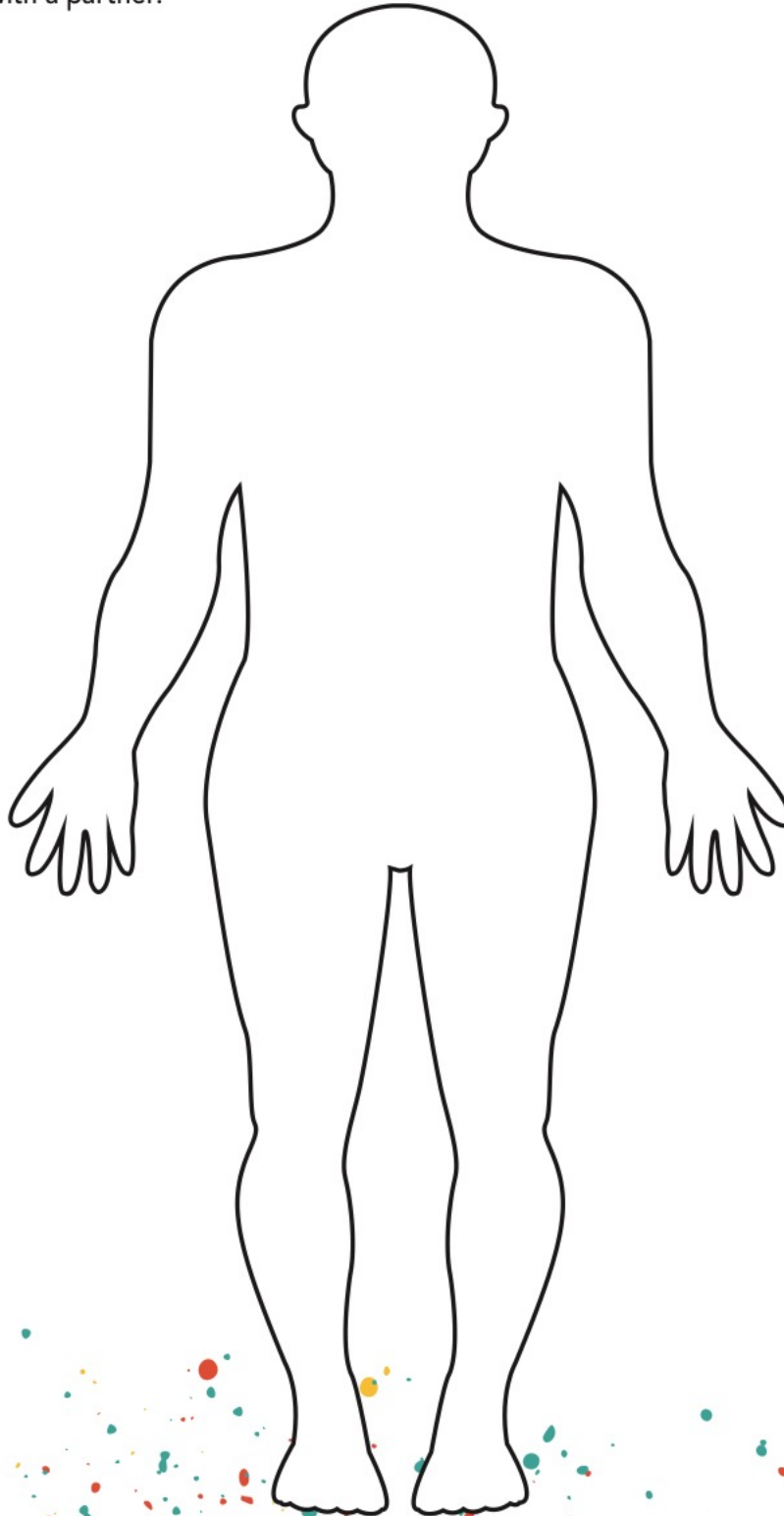
*What questions do you have after participating in this activity?*





# INSIDE AND OUT

In UNDESIRABLE ELEMENTS: GENERATION NYZ, the performers you'll see on stage have looked inside themselves to tell captivating, personal stories to audiences just like you! Take a moment to look inside yourself, think about the kind of person you are or want to be. Consider the following questions: *How do you view yourself? How do people view you?* The outline below represents you. Use the space inside to write words or phrases to describe how you see yourself. And use the space on the outside to describe how the outside world sees you. Then, share your results with a partner!



WHO AM I?

WHAT ARE MY LIFE GOALS?

WHAT DO I STAND FOR?

WHO DO I WANT TO BE?

# ALONE TOGETHER: OBSERVING HUMAN BEHAVIOR

In *UNDESIRABLE ELEMENTS: GENERATION NYZ*, you'll hear stories about community and isolation. In a city of nearly 8.5 million people, what connects us all? What keeps us from connecting? On your way to the theater, observe people on the subway train or on the city sidewalks. Choose a subject or group of subjects and ask yourself: *How are they interacting? What made that happen? How are they not interacting? What prohibited them from making a connection?* Use the space below to write a detailed story or create a visual work of art based on what you observed. When you've finished, share it with a partner or the class!





# AFTER

Ready-to-implement classroom activities that offer the opportunity to reflect on and extend the experience of attending the performance

## COMMON CORE STANDARDS

**Reading:** 1

**Writing:** 2; 4

**Speaking and Listening:** 1; 2; 3; 4; 6

**Language:** 1; 3

## NEW YORK STATE STANDARDS

**Arts:** 1; 2; 3

**English Language Arts:** 1; 3

## BLUEPRINT FOR THE ARTS

**Theater:** Theater Making

Developing Theater Literacy

Making Connections

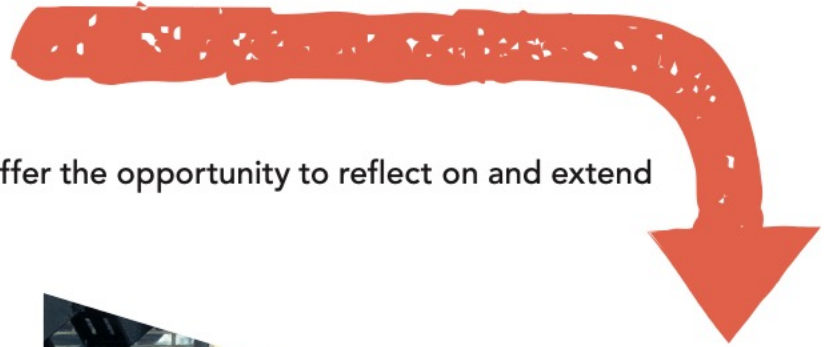


Photo Credit: Adam Nadel

## AFTER / PERFORMANCE REFLECTION

After you've watched the show or read the script, you may find that your students want to discuss the performance and their own opinions. Reflecting on the show and voicing an aesthetic response is an important part of the theater-going experience. Allowing your students the opportunity to articulate their own thoughts and hear the ideas of their classmates will increase the impact of the experience.

**Engage in a conversation with your students** regarding their thoughts and feelings about the show. Use the following questions as prompts:

*What was it like to hear real stories from young New Yorkers like yourselves?*

*How do you think it felt for the performers to tell their own personal stories in front of an audience?*

*What do you think the rehearsal process was like?*

*Which story resonated most with you? Why?*

*What surprised you?*

## TEACHER TIP

Engaging in dialogue, asking questions and recalling observations are skills that we believe should be fostered and encouraged. When leading a performance reflection discussion, try the following model of critical response:

**Describe** (*I saw...*)

**Analyze** (*I wonder...*)

**Interpret** (*I think/feel...*)

**Evaluate** (*I believe...*)



PING CHONG + COMPANY  
**UNDESIRABLE  
ELEMENTS:**  
GENERATION NYZ







# THE CRITICAL THINKER

IF I WAS WRITING A NEWSPAPER ARTICLE ABOUT THIS SHOW, THE HEADLINE WOULD READ:

---



THE PART OF THE SHOW THAT GRABBED MY ATTENTION THE MOST WAS

---

---

WHILE WATCHING THE SHOW, THE STRONGEST REACTION I HAD WAS

---

---



THE SHOW MADE ME THINK ABOUT

---

---



A QUESTION I HAVE ABOUT THIS SHOW IS

---

---

ONE THING I SAW ON STAGE DURING THIS SHOW THAT I'VE NEVER SEEN BEFORE WAS

---

---



BEFORE SEEING THIS SHOW, I DIDN'T KNOW THAT

---

---



AFTER SEEING THE SHOW, MY FRIENDS AND I TALKED ABOUT

---

---



IF I WAS THE DIRECTOR, ONE CHANGE I WOULD MAKE TO THE SHOW WOULD BE

---

---

OVERALL, THE SHOW MADE ME FEEL

---

---



# MAKING CONNECTIONS

One of the themes of UNDESIRABLE ELEMENTS: GENERATION NYZ is community and listening to the stories of other individuals that live in the world around us. Have your students think of someone in their neighborhood they encounter every day and encourage them to make connections and learn more about a member of their community!

1. Have students think of the people they see in their neighborhood every day but have little to no interaction with (i.e., a bus driver, deli counter worker, subway station attendant, etc.).
2. Next, have students decide which of their community members they would like to interview and, as a class, devise a set of questions to ask their chosen person, like:
  - What is your name?
  - Where are you from originally?
  - Why did you choose to live/stay in New York City?
  - What is your cultural background?
  - What is your favorite thing about your neighborhood?
3. Once they've conducted their interviews, have students write a monologue or short story from their interviewee's point of view. **Note:** *Be sure to encourage them to stay true to the interviewee's statements and not to build in unnecessary story elements. The idea is to identify, respect and honor another person's untold story.*
4. Finally, have each student share their monologue or short story with the class, encouraging each student to tell the story with authenticity.

**Bonus:** Connect this activity with the Unit Plan Brainstorm **Picture This: Documenting Real Life** in the **INSIDE** section!

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

.....  
*What was your favorite part of this process?*

*What was it like to interview someone you didn't know very well?*

*Do you feel more or less connected to your community now that you've learned more about it?*

*How did it feel to tell your interviewee's story to your class?*



# DOING GOOD

What is an issue that is meaningful to you? Maybe it's global warming, animal rights, women's rights or LGBTQ rights, community outreach or peer counseling! Use one of the spaces below to write a letter to an elected official (local, state or federal) to advocate for your cause. Use the other space to create an online campaign to help gather public support! Consider the following questions as you write: *What do I believe in that, if implemented, would help better the world around me? Why do I want to fight for this cause? What is my connection to this belief? What other actions can be taken to help advocate for this cause?*

## UE UNDESIREABLE ELEMENTS

**What do I believe in that would help better the world around me?**

 LIKE  COMMENT  SHARE

**SEND**

**Why do I want to fight for this?**

 LIKE  COMMENT  SHARE

**SEND**

**What actions do I plan to take to address this issue and make the world a better place?**

 LIKE  COMMENT  SHARE

**SEND**

## Sources

<http://www.pingchong.org/>

<http://howlround.com/your-guide-to-theatre-education-ping-chong-company>

<http://www.dramaonlinelibrary.com/genres/verbatim-theatre-iid-2551>