

Gemma Kerr
Theatre-maker and Director

SOCIALLY ENGAGED THEATRE PRACTICE: In 2023 I was co-lead artist on *At the Forest's Edge*, a placemaking and co-creation project produced with the RSC www.rsc.org/forest.

As a former Associate Artist at The Point I have developed *Quiet Girls*, a new piece of work co-created with local women alongside a professional creative team. <https://www.gemmakerr.com/8767064-quiet-girls>

In 2024 I was awarded a DYCP grant from the Arts Council to develop my work and identity as an artist in co-creation, spending time with Common-Wealth, Tangled Feet, The Agency and Brighton People's Theatre.

I completed my PhD at the University of Surrey in 2026, carrying out practice research with communities across London and the UK who have been affected by gentrification and displacement, exploring spatial practice and politics in socially engaged theatre. I have co-created performance projects with communities in Roehampton, Deptford, and in Southampton using creative mapping, storytelling and site-specific interventions to perform place.

DIRECTING: My directing work includes *To Have to Shoot Irishmen* written by award-winning playwright Lizzie Nunnery, a production which toured to Liverpool Everyman and Omnibus Theatre London. I was co-Artistic Director of High Hearted Theatre until 2020 with writer Marcelo Dos Santos, creating and producing site-responsive work for unconventional theatre spaces, including *The End of History* (in association with Soho Theatre) and *Cheer up, this is only the Beginning* (Liverpool Playhouse).

WORK HISTORY

Associate Lecturer (freelance) GSA, University of Surrey
Jan 2026 – current

Visiting Lecturer (freelance) University of Winchester
Feb 2023 – current

Visiting Director University of Chichester
Jan 2025 – May 2025 / Dec 2025 – Jan 2026

Lead Artist *Quiet Girls*
April 2024 – ongoing

- Running a participatory project with a group of local women working with a professional creative team to explore how women's voices have not been heard
- Developing a co-created site-specific performance

Co-Lead Artist *At the Forest's Edge* RSC
March 2023 – September 2023

- Leading a large-scale participatory placemaking project.
- Writing and directing a celebratory performance involving six community groups and professional practitioners.
- Designing and facilitating workshops with community groups.

Freelance theatre director
2006 – present

- Directing multiple professional productions across the UK
- Directing productions for drama schools including RADA, LAMDA and LIPA
- Fundraising for productions through Arts Council England, trusts and foundations

CREDITS AS DIRECTOR

<i>Harper Regan</i>	Simon Stephens	University of Chichester	2025
<i>Lemons Lemons Lemons</i>	Sam Steiner	University of Winchester	2023
<i>Lemons Lemons</i>			
<i>Nora</i>	Stef Smith	University of Winchester, Winchester Theatre Royal	2023
<i>Blood Brothers</i>	Willy Russell	PPA, Guildford	2022
<i>Quiet Girls</i>	created by Gemma Kerr	The Point, Eastleigh	2021
<i>Macbeth</i>	William Shakespeare	London College of Music (UWL)	2021
<i>Hooves and Wings</i>	Amy Ewbank	London College of Music (UWL)	2019
<i>Sick Stories</i>	Chris Katic	Pulse Festival, New Wolsey Theatre	2019
<i>Welcome to Thebes</i>	Moira Buffini	LIPA	2019
<i>To Have to Shoot</i>	Lizzie Nunnery	Omnibus Theatre, Liverpool Everyman, and national tour	2018
<i>Irishmen</i>			
<i>The End of History</i>	Marcelo Dos Santos, created by High Hearted Theatre	St Giles-in-the-Fields Church (association with Soho Theatre)	2018
<i>Spiked</i>	Félicité du Jeu	Pleasance Theatre (Pepperbox)	2018
<i>Under Milk Wood</i>	Dylan Thomas	The Bridge Training Theatre Company	2017
<i>'Tis Pity She's a Whore</i>	John Ford	RADA	2017
<i>Clothes Swap Theatre Party</i>	Gabriel Bisset Smith, Tim Price, Ben Ellis, Evan Placey & Alison Carr	Derby Playhouse (Forward Theatre Project)	2016
<i>A Chord</i>	Marcelo Dos Santos & Gemma Kerr	St Giles-in-the-Fields Church	2015
<i>The Spanish Tragedy</i>	Thomas Kyd	RADA	2015
<i>New Cross Spartacus</i>	David Dandridge	The Albany Deptford	2015
<i>Macbeth</i>	William Shakespeare	Omnibus Clapham	2014
<i>The Mezzotint</i>	MR James	Omnibus Clapham	2013
<i>Blood on the Dole</i>	Jim Morris	Liverpool Playhouse Studio (Young Everyman and Playhouse)	2012
<i>This Place Means</i>	Frazer Flintham, created by High Hearted Theatre	Greenwich + Docklands International Festival	2012
<i>Scarberia</i>	Evan Placey	York Theatre Royal (Forward Theatre Project)	2012
<i>Cheer up, this is only the beginning</i>	Marcelo dos Santos, Chloe Moss, Jeff Young & Helen Blakeman, created by High Hearted Theatre	Liverpool Everyman and Playhouse	2011
<i>The Last Sign of Life</i>	Henry Martin	Theatre 503	2011
<i>Births, Marriages and Deaths</i>	Marcelo dos Santos, Clara Brennan & Nikki Williams, created by High Hearted Theatre	Manor Farm site, Ruislip	2011
<i>Liars</i>	work by Lizzie Nunnery, Nick Leather, Ella Greenhill & Lindsay Rodden	Cornerstone Theatre (Cornerstone Festival/Almanac Arts)	2010
<i>Lovers Walk</i>	Marcelo dos Santos and Gemma Kerr, created by High Hearted Theatre	Brighton Fringe Festival & Southwark Playhouse	2010
<i>Airswimming</i>	Charlotte Jones	Courtyard Theatre Studio	2009
<i>Hitting Town</i>	Stephen Poliakoff	Southwark Playhouse	2006

EDUCATION

- 2018-2025 PhD at University of Surrey/GSA (part-time) – *Gentrification, performance, and the practice of space: walking and mapping narratives of home* (completed Jan 2026)
- 2008 National Theatre Studio Directors Course
- 2004-06 MFA Theatre Directing (Birkbeck, University of London)
- 2000-03 BA Hons (1st Class) Drama, Film & TV (University of Bristol)

OTHER TRAINING

- 2024 PG Cert in Education (FHEA) with Distinction (University of Surrey)
- 2021 Mental Health First Aid training (University of Surrey)
- 2019 Theatre of the Oppressed for Housing Justice (You Should See the Other Guy Theatre)
- 2017 AirB2B Residency with People's Palace Projects & British Council, Rio de Janeiro – undertaking practice research with displaced communities from Vila do Autódromo in Rio de Janeiro
- 2013 DRIFT Residency with British-Brazilian theatre company Zecora Ura in Belo Horizonte, Brazil