HLF helps reveal a treasure of South Asian memories

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The one year oral history project aims to uncover a treasure of memories from key practitioners in the world of British South Asian Theatre, and will explore the local history of Asian communities in Britain. The project seeks to celebrate how Asian culture has contributed to our wider society through popular forms of music, dance and drama as well as exploring more sensitive issues such as racism and diversity in the UK over the past 57 years.

Running from the start of 2013 for just over a year, this project will involve volunteers from Essex and Lancashire. They will be involved in recording and digitizing histories from early playwrights and directors, to be made accessible to the public in an online collection. The volunteers will be given training in oral history techniques and the opportunity to help organise exhibitions at Thameside Complex (Grays), Slack Space (Colchester) and Contact Theatre (Manchester).

Avaes Mohammad, an exciting writer, poet and performer of the younger generation, will lead learning workshops. Mary-Ann Connolly, Creative Producer and Founder of Essex based Pinpoint Create, will bring her teacher training skills in structuring workshop models for Continuous Professional Development sessions with teachers.

Jameer Ali, Director of FIPA, explained the importance of the award: “This project will mean volunteers will be able to delve deeper into the past and origins of British South Asian Theatre in Britain. They will be able to uncover key stories and significant events, for example that of the first established and still running South Asian theatre group Tara Arts, which was set up in direct response to the racist murder of a 17 year old Sikh boy from Southall, West London, in 1976. They will then be able to trace these stories right up to today’s exceptionally popular Bollywood inspired productions.”

If you live in Grays, Colchester or Manchester and are interested in participating and learning about this project please contact FIPA on 07846 614691 or email hi.ching@fipa.org.uk or via facebook (tbc). Alternatively contact the project partners:

Grays - Thurrock Asian Association and Thurrock Council
Colchester - Slack Space
Manchester - Contact Theatre

Local oral history training sessions will begin on the following dates:

Sat 26th January 2pm. Thameside Complex, Orsett Road, Grays, Essex, RM17 5DX

Sat 2nd February 2pm. Slack Space, Victoria Place, Eld Lane, Colchester, Essex, CO1 1LR

tbc. Contact Theatre, Oxford Road, Manchester, Lancashire M15 6JA

Further information

HLF press office: Vicky Wilford on 020 7591 6046 / 07973 401 937 / vickyw@hlf.org.uk or Phil Cooper on 07889 949 173.

Hi Ching, FIPA (Foundation for Indian Performing Arts) on 07846 614691 or hi.ching@fipa.org.uk