ABOUT FACE
Women, War, and Re-envisioning Troy

Thursday, March 21, 2024
Friends of the USC Libraries Lecture Hall
Doheny Memorial Library 240
University of Southern California

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO
- About Face presents short plays by students that explore gender issues, war, and violence through the lens of Greek tragedy and examine and reimagine USC’s Trojan symbolism with the values of today’s campus community.
- On April 1 and 2, guided walking tours by Ruth Wallach, a public art historian and Associate Dean of the USC Libraries, will illuminate the histories and origins of Tommy Trojan, Hecuba, and other statues, sculptures, and public art on campus.

THE WOMEN OF TROY IN ART AND LITERATURE
The ancient city of Troy was an important site in trade routes between Europe and Asia. The city’s legendary history—especially the conflict between the ancient Greeks and the people of Troy—is a foundational subject of western literature and culture. The Trojan War and its aftermath are the subjects of Homer’s *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, epics of the western canon.

Euripides’ *The Trojan Women* (415 BCE), set in the aftermath of the sacking of Troy, explores the impact of the war on the city’s women and children, including Hecuba, Cassandra, and Andromache. The classic tragedy has been translated, adapted, and reworked in many forms, often conveying an anti-war message with relevance to a contemporary conflict. Among the numerous and varied adaptations are:
- A 1965 play by Jean-Paul Sartre
- A 1971 film starring Katharine Hepburn
- A 2021 comic by the experimental poet and translator Anne Carson
- 2018 and 2021 novels by Pat Barker

Christine Evans’s 2009 play *Trojan Barbie* reflects on the experiences of women during the Iraq War, while Sartre’s adaptation included references to European imperialism in Asia.

Sources: British Museum, Britannica
GREEK AND TROJAN ART ON THE USC CAMPUS

USC’s mascot horse, Traveler, is a symbol of ancient Troy. Its rider is a symbol of a Trojan warrior. Several sculptures and artworks on the USC campus reference Greek and Trojan history and symbols.

**Trojan Shrine (“Tommy Trojan”)**
**Bronze statue, 1930, Roger Noble Burnham (1876–1962)**
**Outside Bovard Administration Building in Hahn Plaza**

The Trojan Shrine was modeled after USC football players to represent an athletic, physical ideal, as well as the five traits of an ideal Trojan inscribed on its base: faithful, scholarly, skillful, courageous, and ambitious. “Tommy Trojan” performs the physically impossible: flexing every muscle in his body at once.

**Trojan Column**
**Architecture, c. 30 BCE to 400 CE, Unknown**
**Taper Hall**

Though a plaque indicates that this granite column came from a temple in the ancient city of Troy, the column in fact dates to the time of the Roman Empire—centuries after the legendary city was destroyed. The column was probably quarried somewhere near Troy, however. Credit is due to USC professor of classical art and architecture John Pollini for dispelling an accidental legend with actual research.

**Hecuba**
**Bronze Sculpture, 2017, Christopher Slatoff (1953–)**
**USC Village Central Plaza**

Hecuba, Queen of Troy, stands as a female counterpart to Tommy Trojan, symbolizing gender equality at USC. Six female figures at the base of the statute represent the Trojan Family’s global heritage and symbolize the intellectual diversity of USC.

**Seated Knowledge**
**Decorative Archway, 1927, Peter Krasnow (1887–1979)**
**Built by Gladding-McBean & Co.**
**Doheny Memorial Library Main Entrance on Trousdale Parkway**

Created in the form of a terra-cotta grill, this piece features the classical Greek representation of Knowledge, flanked by two students bearing the University seal. The recreational activities of college youth fill out the archway.

**Dart Aphrodite**
**Sculpture, c. 100 BCE to 100 CE, Artist Unknown**
**Greco-Roman**
**Ronald Tutor Campus Center**

This rare Greco-Roman marble sculpture of Aphrodite’s head is from the ancient Roman colonial city of Arles, France. It is one of two known Arles-type heads of the Goddess of Love. The other is housed in the Louvre Museum in Paris.
Hephaestus Sculpture, 1977, Dimitri Hadzi (1921–2006)
Anna Bing Arnold Plaza and Sculpture Garden

Hephaestus, God of Fire and patron of craftsmen and sculptors, is rendered here by Dimitri Hadzi. Hadzi himself was a master craftsman, famous for sculptures both mythic and modern.

Other Greek and Trojan symbols on campus include

- a 1928 medallion on Bridge Hall that alludes to Aeschylus’s Agamemnon
- Argonauts Hall and Diogenes in Search of an Honest Man, both from 1929, Mudd Hall of Philosophy
- a 1950 sculpture of Prometheus in Taper Hall for the Humanities
- 1921 sculptures of Cicero and Plato on the Bovard bell tower
- a sarcophagus from c. 100 CE; 1932 mosaics of Hercules and Alexander the Great; and 1932 stained glass showing ancient Greek philosophers in Doheny Memorial Library

Adapted from USC Art and Architecture Self-Guided Tour and various pages at usc.edu

WARRIOR BARDS

The Warrior Bards project gives veterans an opportunity to study Greek dramas, discuss them in light of their own experiences, and respond to their discoveries by creating their own public performances. The project is a USC and community partnership funded by a USC Arts in Action grant in collaboration with Southern California Grantmakers.

ABOUT THE PANELISTS

Afroditi Angelopoulou is an assistant professor of classics at USC. Her first book project, The Body and the Senses in Greek Tragedy, evaluates the role of embodied experience in the construction of dramatic narratives, and in the generation and communication of emotional meaning. She was a fellow at the Harvard Center for Hellenic Studies from 2021 to 2022.

Christine Evans is a professor of performing arts at Georgetown University who writes fiction, plays, opera libretti, and essays. Her award-winning plays have been produced in the United States, Australia, Canada, England, and Wales, and her debut novel, Nadia, was published in fall 2023.

Rena Heinrich is an assistant professor of theatre practice in critical studies at the USC School of Dramatic Arts and an affiliated professor of East Asian studies in the USC Dornsife College of Letters, Arts, and Sciences. Her teaching and areas of expertise include interculturalism; race, representation, and gender in performance; postcolonial theatre; Asian and Asian American drama; acting; ethnography; and performance studies.

Diana Shield is a U.S. Marine Corps veteran and participant in USC’s Warrior Bards.
FOR FURTHER REFLECTION
- What are some of the core themes in ancient Greek literature that continue to resonate today?
- Why do you think Euripides’ The Trojan Women has been so frequently adapted in different forms and different eras?
- What has changed in how sculptures and other art on the USC campus are viewed today compared to how they were viewed at the time of their creation? In different chapters of USC’s history?
- How do you relate to ancient Greek myths and symbols?

IF YOU LIKED THIS EVENT, YOU MIGHT WANT TO CHECK OUT:
- 4/1 and 4/2: About Face Walking Tours
- 4/2: War, Justice, and Democracy in the Films of Steven Spielberg: Munich
- Warrior Bards
  warriorbards.org
- Classes and Performances at the USC School of Dramatic Arts
  dramaticarts.usc.edu

DISCOVER MORE AT THE USC LIBRARIES
Marje Schuetze-Coburn, Melissa Miller, and Ruth Wallach of the USC Libraries selected the following resources to help you learn more about this event. Electronic resources are accessible through the search bar on the USC Libraries homepage at libraries.usc.edu but may require the user to log in using their USC credentials.

ARTICLES


BOOKS


STREAMING MEDIA

*Euripides’ Life and Times: The Trojan Women* (Fordham University, 1986).

*Andrei Serban’s The Trojan Women* (Creative Arts Television, 1974).


WEBSITES

*Warrior Bards: USC Arts in Action*

Website for Professor Paula Cizmar

Website for Dr. Rena M. Heinrich
ABOUT FACE

THE PLAYS

Miss USC by Emma Aitchison-Madill
Recovery by Jed Levinson
Sacrifice by Ariel Urmann
By the Sacred Grove by Alex Cardona
Cass’s Cake by Brian Mendoza
Cassandra’s Curse by Ashley Sommers
Hecuba’s Echo by Kayla Quevedo
Step on My Neck by Eliza Kuperschmid

THE COMPANY OF ACTORS

ÁKOS JÓNÁS

Ákos is a junior Theatre major at USC and is excited to perform in About Face! His credits include Algernon in The Importance of Being Earnest and Mr. Laurence in Little Women. Ákos will also be performing in Fables and Rumors’ upcoming production, Where Within, an original musical premiering at the Hollywood Fringe Festival this summer. He’s very passionate about history and social justice, so he thanks Professor Heinrich for inviting him to this project!

BRIANNA BARTON

Brianna is so excited to be a part of About Face! She is a senior theatre major at USC and has just returned from her semester abroad at the British American Drama Academy. Her recent credits include Mad for Love (Celia) at the New Diorama Theatre and various short films for the USC SCA Film and TV Production Year 1 MFAs. She’d like to thank Bob Bailey for submitting her for this project.
HENRY PARKER-ELDER

Henry Parker-Elder is incredibly excited to present these wonderful stories to the larger USC Community. He is a (hopefully) graduating senior in both Theater and Cinema and Media Studies. When he is not directing or acting, he can be found doing improv comedy, cooking, and occasionally daydreaming. You can find him on Instagram @henry.parker.elder.

ISADORA SWAN

Isadora Swann is a current Junior BA studying Theater with an emphasis in acting and double majoring in NGOs and Social Change. She is an avid storyteller in all its forms and is so excited to be a part of About Face!

TESS PATTON

Tess Patton’s time at USC is coming to an end more quickly than she wants, but she is a graduating senior studying theatre and journalism. In her time at USC she has performed on stage in shows like Our Town, Sick Boys and bloody noses. She also served on the board for USC’s oldest student production company, Brand New Theatre, where she got to bring new works like these to life. She is grateful to be a part of this production!
ZOE POOLE

Zoe Poole is ecstatic to be a part of the About Faces event, telling these ever-important stories from student voices. She is originally from Seattle, Washington, and is currently a Junior at USC studying Theatre with and Emphasis in Acting. Over the past couple years, you may have seen her on stage in *bloody noses* (written by Matilda Corey Schulman!) or on the screen in film student projects.

THE DIRECTORS

EMILY MAE KAMP

Emily-Mae is so excited to be returning to USC to direct in About Face! Recent credits include: Macbeth (Swing Witch), A Midsummer Night’s Dream (First Fairy), Once Upon A Mattress (Director), Grease (Director) and In the Green (Choreographer) which won her Orange Curtain Review’s “Best Choreography” as well as nominated her for “Best Choreography” for the upcoming 2024 Orange County Theatre Guild Awards. She would like to thank Rena for bringing her in on this project. Socials: @emilymaekamp

MATILDA CORLEY SCHULMAN

As a recovering student athlete (Equestrian) (yes, she is a horse girl), and now a writer/actor and director based in Los Angeles, Matilda finds herself sharing stories filled with a little bit of magic and a whole lot of heartbreak. Matilda hopes to give voice to women who have maybe been told to quiet down one too many times -- and maybe in the process, makes us all feel a bit less alone. She would like to thank Rena and Paula for bringing her on and her amazing cast and company that made this happen. @matildacorleyschulman
NICO FIFE

Nico Fife (he/she/they) is a multi-hyphenate Queer Latine theater artist. From Long Beach, Nico received a BA in Theater, Acting Emphasis from USC, appearing as a performer in productions such as *Body of Faith* and *Fuente Ovejuna*. They also direct and write, directing *Next to Normal*, and directing and co-writing *MADD About The Boy*. Currently, they’re honored to be studying at The Actors’ Gang, and are thrilled to return to USC with these play.

PRODUCER

ELIZA KUPERSCHMID

Eliza Kuperschmid (she/her) strives to show how ordinary stories can be extraordinary. She holds a B.A. in English and Music from Skidmore College and is currently a second year student in USC’s Dramatic Writing MFA program. Eliza is also the Director of Operations for an indie theater company called First Kiss Theatre and the Program Coordinator for USC’s Institute for Theater and Social Change. Thank you to Paula Cizmar and Rena Heinrich for this opportunity, and thank you to Matilda Corley Schulman for both the impeccable directing and for our many hilarious conversations that may or may not have inspired this piece…