



SEEKING VOLUNTARY ROCHDALE COMMUNITY PARTICIPANTS FOR **COCONUT** AT THE FESTIDALE

We're looking for local people to take part in **Coconut**, a performance-conversation happening on 9th August at **The FestiDale** - a 2-week community festival of local arts and culture at Kingsway Park High School, Rochdale (8-18 Aug 2024).

Check out the full **festival programme** [here](#) and watch the trailer [here](#).

We would like to invite you to a getting-to-know-you session on Tuesday 30th July 6pm-7pm @ Spotland Community Centre, Rochdale, OL12 6PJ, to find out more about *Coconut*, so you can get involved!

For those who want to be involved in the show, there will be a Preparation session and then the Performance itself.

ABOUT COCONUT

Coconut is an hour-long conversation between 8-10 local people in front of a live audience led by global majority* artist Ria Phatarphekar-Karmarkar.

Together we will explore the shared experiences of people from different cultures, through questions about identity, food, community, ethnicity, belonging etc. This guided conversation will be set at a dining table and accompanied by Indian snacks and handmade 'modaks'; a type of sweet coconut dumpling from Ria's culture. This setting aims to recreate the experiences that Ria had growing up, of communal eating, bonding and sharing.

While the conversation itself will come from the participants and their interactions, it will likely touch on themes such as race, being made to feel different or 'othered', community, and solidarity. It will also focus on how our shared experiences of being 'othered' might bring us together. While the conversations may revolve around difficult themes, the experience aims to empower both participants and audience members and make them feel heard.

At the end of the conversation, the audience will be invited to engage with the participants and each other, ask questions and share any experiences, reflections, or learnings. Everyone will then move out into the hall where there will be more space for discussion and interaction.

***Global Majority is a shortened version of the term 'people of the global majority'. We use it to refer to all ethnic groups except white British and other white groups, including white minorities. Global Majority includes people from black, Asian, mixed, and other ethnic groups who are often racialised as 'ethnic minorities', but actually constitute 85% of the global population.**

ABOUT RIA

Ria is an Indian immigrant who moved to the UK over 3 years ago.



She is a facilitator and theatre practitioner, with a focus on co-creating with underrepresented people and communities to create meaningful work that inspires hope, joy and an opportunity to showcase marginalised voices.

Ria specialises in real performance-conversation events which sensitively and openly engage with difficult personal and political subjects. She created *Coconut* to encompass all her favourite things- eating, talking to people, and sharing important experiences.

PARTICIPANT OPPORTUNITY

We are looking for Rochdale based people of the Global Majority who are happy to volunteer and share their experiences, and engage in the conversation described above. No particular experience is required. We welcome people who are not fluent English speakers if they are able attend with someone who can aid in translation and engage in the conversation themselves.

This is a voluntary position and as such is an unpaid opportunity. We want to ensure that there are no barriers for people wanting to take part and will cover any participant expenses incurred (e.g travel, childcare costs) for any involvement beyond the **Getting-to-Know-You Session**.

Before you commit to the attending the Getting-to-Know-You Session, please ensure you would be available for the Preparation Session and the Performance day itself if you were to be involved.

If you would like to attend the Getting-To-Know-You Session, or have any further questions, **please contact Esme**, the Royal Exchange Theatre's Local Exchange Coordinator on esme.moszynska@royalexchange.co.uk by **Midday Friday 26th July**.

GETTING-TO-KNOW-YOU SESSION

Date: Tuesday 30th July

Time: 6pm-7pm

Address: Rochdale, OL12 6PJ

RSVP: drop into the session or confirm your attendance to esme.moszynska@royalexchange.co.uk

This session will be a fun and casual introduction to *Coconut*, through workshop games, activities, and gentle, informal conversations around topics such as community, culture, and identity. It is a chance for you to get a better idea of what taking part in the performance-conversation at The FestiDale will be like, and for us to get to know one another a little.

Please RSVP to this session by emailing Esme at

esme.moszynska@royalexchange.co.uk by **Midday Tuesday 30th July**

If you cannot make the Getting-To-Know-You Session but would still like to be involved, please email Esme and we will set up a Zoom call with Ria, the lead artist.

PREPARATION SESSION



Date: Monday 5th August

Time: 6pm-7:30pm

Address: Spotland Community Centre, OL12 6PJ

RSVP: you can confirm attendance after the Getting-to-Know-You Session

Participant expenses can be reimbursed (please retain receipts).

Following the Getting-to-Know-You, and for those who would like to participate in the show, we will hold a pre-show Preparation Session (this will be a maximum of 10 participants).

In this workshop session we will further develop the content of *Coconut* together, through in-depth conversations on topics such as race, ethnicity and belonging.

The final performance-conversation will be an unrehearsed, natural conversation. As such, we will create a group agreement together, establishing our ground rules for the performance-conversation, to create a trusting and open atmosphere in which we are all comfortable. This will ensure that everyone knows what to expect from the conversations in the performance and allows us all to relax and enjoy our open conversation together.

PERFORMANCE OF COCONUT AT THE FESTIDALE

Date: Friday 9th August

Address: Kingsway Park High School, Turf Hill Road, Rochdale, OL16 4XA

Times:

- **3:30pm Arrival**
- **4pm-6pm Technical Rehearsal** to familiarise ourselves with the performance space, and play a game or two to relax into the evening's conversation
- **6.30-7.30pm Coconut performance**
- **7.30-8.30pm Conversations with the audience in the Dining Hall**

Participant expenses can be reimbursed (please retain receipts).

NEXT STEPS

Please RSVP to this session by emailing Esme at

esme.moszynska@royalexchange.co.uk by **Midday Friday 26th July**.

If you have any questions about this opportunity **please contact Esme**, the Royal Exchange Theatre's Local Exchange Coordinator, at

esme.moszynska@royalexchange.co.uk.

The FesitDale is part of Local Exchange, The Royal Exchange Theatre's ambitious long-term programme co-curated with Ambassadors and Champions in communities across Greater Manchester.