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## STAGE DIRECTORS AND CHOREOGRAPHERS FOUNDATION (SDCF) AWARDS \$10,000 DENHAM FELLOWSHIP TO DIRECTOR ARPITA MUKHERJEE

(February 12, 2020 – New York, NY) **Stage Directors and Choreographers Foundation (SDCF)**, the not-for-profit foundation of Stage Directors and Choreographers Society (SDC), today announced **Director Arpita Mukherjee** has been chosen as this season's SDCF Denham Fellow for her upcoming production of *Raisins Not Virgins* by Sharbari Zohra Ahmed. *Raisins Not Virgins* will be presented by Hypokrit Theatre Company at Next Door NYTW from June 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020 to June 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020. The Denham Fellowship comes with a \$10,000 stipend. Mukherjee was unanimously selected for this honor by a panel comprised of Susan Booth (Alliance Theater), Desdemona Chiang (freelance director), Elizabeth Diamond (Yale University), KJ Sanchez (University of Texas, Austin), and Hana Sharif (Repertory Theatre of St. Louis).

"I am honored and humbled to receive the Denham Fellowship, which celebrates a director's artistic and entrepreneurial spirit. After years of being told I could only be one thing, being recognized for not waiting for opportunities and making my own work, is extraordinary. What makes it doubly special is that it is for *Raisins Not Virgins* by Sharbari Zohra Ahmed - a seminal work that broke barriers, marked several firsts, and inspired a young girl to pursue the theatre," says Mukherjee.

### **About Raisins Not Virgins**

Written after the events of September 11th in an attempt by Ahmed to explore her Muslim identity, *Raisins Not Virgins* is a story of spiritual and political upheaval combined with the backdrop of New York City dating angst. It tells the story of Sahar Salam, a Muslim American New Yorker approaching 30 and feeling the cultural pressure from her Bangladeshi mother to settle down. *Raisins Not Virgins* is a romantic comedy about a Muslim American woman choosing to practice her religion on her terms and re-interpreting Islam in the process.

### **About Arpita Mukherjee**

Arpita Mukherjee (she/her/hers) is the artistic director and co-founder of Hypokrit Theatre Company and the Festival Chair for Tamasha. Recent: *Jump* by Charly Evon Simpson (APAC), *One Way* by Ben Bonnema and Christopher Staskel (NAMT), *The Golden Threshold* by Cheeyang Ng and Eric Sorrels (Live & In Color), *Strange Men* by Will Snider (PlayPenn 2019), *Citizen Scientist* by CQ (Barrington Stage Company Playworks Weekend), *Anon(ymous)* by Naomi Iizuka (Iowa State University), *Vietgone* by Qui Nguyen (reading Song Collective), *Eh Dah? Questions For My Father* by Aya Aziz (Next Door @NYTW), and *Elements of Change* by Divya Mangwani (Rattlestick Playwrights Theater, UNICEF). Upcoming:

*House of Joy* by Madhuri Shekar (San Diego Rep), *Tobias* by CQ (WP Theater Pipeline Festival), and *Raisins Not Virgins* by Sharbari Ahmed (Next Door @NYTW). She is a 2018 - 2020 Women's Project Lab Member, 2018 Eugene O'Neill National Directing Fellow, alumni of the Lincoln Center Directors Lab, and 2019 Mabou Mines Resident Artist. Arpita is currently the book writer for *Monsoon Wedding* musical, opening in London summer 2020.

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### **About the Denham Fellowship**

Established by Mary Orr Denham in 2006 with a bequest to SDCF in honor of her late husband, Reginald H. F. Denham, the Denham Fellowship is awarded annually to female-identifying directors to supplement their pay on a full-length play or musical. Past recipients include May Adrales, Tea Alagic, Rachel Alderman, Kathleen Amshoff, Jessi D. Hill, Joanie Schultz, Bridget Leak, Hannah Ryan, Diane Rodriguez, and Shirley Jo Finney.

### **About SDCF**

Founded in 1965, **Stage Directors and Choreographers Foundation (SDCF)** exists to foster, promote, and develop the creativity and craft of stage directors and choreographers. SDCF's mission is to create access to the field, to connect artists to each other and to the public, and to honor these artists' theatrical legacies. The centrality of directors and choreographers in theatre and the impact they have on other artists' careers—from playwrights to designers to actors—makes SDCF's services essential to the wider theatre industry's continued health and vitality.

Through its dynamic educational programming, including Observerships, Fellowships, public panels, and day-long symposia, SDCF serves the needs of directors and choreographers at every stage of career.

[www.sdcfoundation.org](http://www.sdcfoundation.org)

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