

# Moscow's NET Festival Pushes the Boundaries of Contemporary Theater

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"Vangelo" NET Theater Festival

NET, which stands for New European Theater, is a festival that was conceived 18 years ago to celebrate the best new performances by European directors. Over the years the festival has evolved from its original concept and now Russian directors take part in the program as well — after all, Russia is at least partly European. Due to a lack of funding from the Ministry of Culture, this year's edition of NET will feature half Russian productions and half of imports from abroad.

Famous for its experimental performances, this season's productions continue to push the boundaries of contemporary theater. 2016's headliner is Italian Pippo Delbono, known for his radical productions. He will show his production "Vangelo" (Gospel) — a performance about refugees, religion and divisions between different ethnic groups. The play was created with 10 Croatian actors who had all suffered war trauma and a number of actors in

the performance have mental disabilities.

Another production, led by Boris Yukhananov of Electrotheater, is based on Apuleius' novel "Metamorphosis or The Golden Ass" and called "Opening Up the Work Space: The Golden Ass." The project is devised as an "open-circuit" workshop, with daytime "modules" and evening "compositions" over a period of five days. The basis of each of the "compositions" are intertwining texts from Apuleius' novel.

Experimental theater also means unusual venues for performances, and one of the premieres will be held in an old mansion in the center of Moscow. Based on Henrik Ibsen's Ghosts, "The Returned" was produced by an American company, Journey Lab, who are pioneers of immersive performance. Other performances of note include "Karina and Drone" by Dmitry Volkostrelov, where regular teenagers from Kazan play themselves, and "10 10 10," a video installation that includes stories by Kafka, Dostoevsky, Nabokov and others.

*NET festival runs through December 6. You can find the full schedule at [netfest.ru](http://netfest.ru)*

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