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YPT Announces Recipient of 2017/18 Ada Slaughter Drama in Education Award

TORONTO, ON – Young People’s Theatre (YPT) is delighted to announce **Dennis Gupa** as the second recipient of the [Ada Slaughter Drama in Education Award](#). Gupa is a Ph.D. Candidate studying Sea Rituals, Climate Change and Applied Theatre at the University of Victoria in British Columbia. He will use the award to craft a performance that will involve artists from the Philippines and Canada, as well as Indigenous elders and their seacoast communities, who together will build an ecological framework to understand the relationships between human beings, the ocean and the earth. In this study, Gupa aims to respond to this question specifically: To what extent can applied theatre as an art, facilitate the articulation of indigenous ways of knowing about ecological sustainability and climate change?

“I was a first year MFA Directing student at the University of British Columbia when super typhoon Yolanda struck the Philippines in 2013. As the typhoon’s rage decimated an entire city, leaving the whole Visayan region traumatized due to the magnitude of its destruction, I began to re-think my own work as a diasporic artist. I was homesick and removed from the suffering of my country. Then I met a Filipina scholar in Vancouver who worked directly from the grounds of the destruction. Her stories moved me. I realized that pursuing doctoral work in applied theatre focused on this subject would be a necessary step not only for me to understand the effects of climate change on my home country, but also to make a contribution toward global climate justice.”

– Dennis Gupa

The Award Advisory Committee was once again excited by the breadth and depth of research demonstrated in the pool of applications received this year. YPT will continue to support the 2017/18 applicants as well as other graduate students working in the realm of Drama in Education through a Scholars in Residence program -- an initiative which was piloted last season as a way to continue to support and advance this field of research.

Dennis Gupa will receive a cash award of \$10,000, made possible through the support of **The Slaughter Family Foundation**. In 2015, YPT received an extraordinary gift of \$3 million from the Foundation which resulted in the creation of [The Ada Slaughter Education Centre at YPT](#), celebrating her inspiring commitment to young artists and audiences.

The **Ada Slaughter Drama in Education Award** will next be presented in 2018/19. Application details for the upcoming season will be announced in the spring of 2018.

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For more information, access to photos, or to arrange an interview, please contact **Josée Duranleau** of Duranleau Communications: 416.652.7672, josee@duranleau.com.