

THEATRE
LiLA
LABORATORY

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Theatre LiLA Announces Ambitious Comeback: Artistic Director Jessica Lanius Reignites Purpose at ART House 360



VERONA, WI – June 3, 2025 – Theatre LiLA, Madison's acclaimed theatre company known for its inventive original works, proudly announces its return under the continued leadership of Artistic Director Jessica Lanius. After a five-year hiatus—navigating the disruptions of COVID, Lanius's personal battle with breast cancer, and a dynamic collaboration with fellow artists to launch the transformative ART House 360—Theatre LiLA is stepping back into the spotlight. Reenergized and reimagined, the company is poised to create bold, original theatrical experiences that meet this urgent moment for community connection and creative renewal.

"This is more than a comeback; it's a recalibration of our purpose," states Jessica Lanius, co-founder of ART House 360 and the driving force behind Theatre LiLA. "The past few years have underscored a profound need for spaces and experiences that genuinely bring people together, bridging divides and celebrating our shared humanity. With ART House 360 now a reality, Theatre LiLA is ready to unleash a new wave of innovative storytelling, designed to

spark dialogue, foster empathy, and build community in our new intimate and vibrant setting."

As a resident company of the newly established ART House 360 in Verona, Theatre LILA is uniquely positioned to grow within this multicultural arts hub. This partnership not only supports the development of inventive new works, but for the first time provides LILA with a dedicated rehearsal space—dramatically expanding its capacity for community engagement and arts education. LILA’s commitment to accessibility and inclusive programming is deeply aligned with the mission of ART House 360. Together, they promise a bold and meaningful future for audiences and local theatre artists alike.

Summer Camps & ARTful Wellness Programs Launching in July

This summer, Theatre LILA’s new studio at ART House 360 will come alive with **summer camps and advanced acting classes** rooted in the company’s signature blend of inventive physical theatre, actor training, and improv. These new offerings invite students of all ages to learn directly from professional actors in a collaborative, inspiring environment. Led by Artistic Director Jessica Lanius and her team, classes draw from a rich and eclectic toolbox of techniques—honed through training with master teachers including Meisner legends William Esper and Maggie Flanigan, and physical theatre pioneers Anne Bogart and Lenard Petit (Michael Chekhov technique). Theatre LILA is proud to provide opportunities for both seasoned performers and curious beginners to grow their confidence, creativity, and stage presence.

In addition to its theatre programming, Theatre LILA is launching the **ARTful Wellness Series**—an intentional blend of movement, breathwork, storytelling, and creativity designed to foster healing, connection, and well-being. Sparked by the mental health challenges witnessed during the pandemic—and by Artistic Director Jessica Lanius’s own journey surviving breast cancer—this new initiative embraces the restorative power of the arts. Housed in a newly designed studio filled with light, warmth, and creative energy—including wood floors generously donated by Floors 360, live plants, a piano, and abundant sunshine—the ARTful Wellness Series invites the community into a space of renewal and growth. This summer’s offerings include **The Connection LAB**, a retreat co-led by yoga and breathwork instructor Manisha Bhargava and Lanius; an **Adaptive Movement** class taught by veteran physical therapist Laura Roberts; and the **Theatre LILA Writer’s LAB** led by Milwaukee’s celebrated poet and storyteller Gina Cornejo.

2025-26 Season Peek

As the world navigates complex social landscapes, Theatre LILA's inventive new productions will serve as vital catalysts for unity, understanding, and the joyous exploration of what it means to be human together. Under Lanius's renewed focus, Theatre LILA will delve into developing bold, unexpected works that challenge perceptions and invite active participation. This return signals a defiant stand against

isolation, offering instead a powerful platform for collective imagination and shared experience.

Lanius and long-time creative partner AJ Juarez are set to launch the first full production and return to Theatre LILA inventions with a **collaborative new work by Barrio Dance & Theatre LILA** set to premiere at ART House 360 on **February 14th, 2026**. Auditions will be held in Fall 2025 for dancers, writers, musicians, and actors for this new multidisciplinary piece, with rehearsals to begin early January 2026.

Stay tuned for upcoming detailed announcements on Theatre LILA's full 2025-2026 season, promising a return to the stage that is as impactful as it is innovative.

About Theatre LILA

[Theatre LILA](#) (lee-LAH) is a non-profit theatre company dedicated to creating inventive new works and bringing plays to life in unexpected ways. Theatre LILA challenges the audience's experience of theatre — in a fusion of drama, dance, music, and sound to create a total performance experience. Embracing a "sense of play," Theatre LILA offers unique theatre classes and laboratory workshops for professionals and students, and collaborates with schools and community-based organizations to develop educational arts programs that foster community building and leadership development. Theatre LILA is a proud co-founder and resident company of ART House 360 in Verona, WI

About Jessica Lanius



Jessica is the Artistic Director of Theatre LILA and a co-founder of ART House 360. Her work is characterized by its inventiveness, physical dynamism, and deep commitment to community engagement and artistic exploration.

Jessica has worked as an actor, both on stage, television, and in commercials in New York City, Los Angeles, Chicago, and now Madison, WI. While in New York, she created and co-founded Theatre LILA, for which she and co-founder Andrea Arden Reese developed an ensemble style of rehearsal process to create and develop new works. In 2014, Jessica transplanted Theatre LILA to Madison, WI, and began producing Theatre LILA at the Overture Center for the Arts. For Theatre LILA, Jessica directed: *No Child...*, *TRASH: a Theatre LILA Invention*, *The Mojo* and *The Sayso* in collaboration with Bronzeville Arts Ensemble, *Big Fish* in collaboration with Four Seasons Theatre, *The BED: a Theatre LILA Invention* with James DeVita, and adaptations of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

She has worked at area theatres, including eight seasons at American Players Theatre, Forward Theater Company, Next Act, Four Seasons, UW-Theatre & Drama Dept, and Children's Theatre of Madison. She is a member of the Screen Actors Guild, Actor's Equity Association, and currently teaches at UW-Madison in the Theatre & Drama Department.

About ART House 360

ART House 360 is a new multicultural, multigenerational community arts center in the newly renovated schoolhouse in downtown Verona. www.ARTHouse360.com

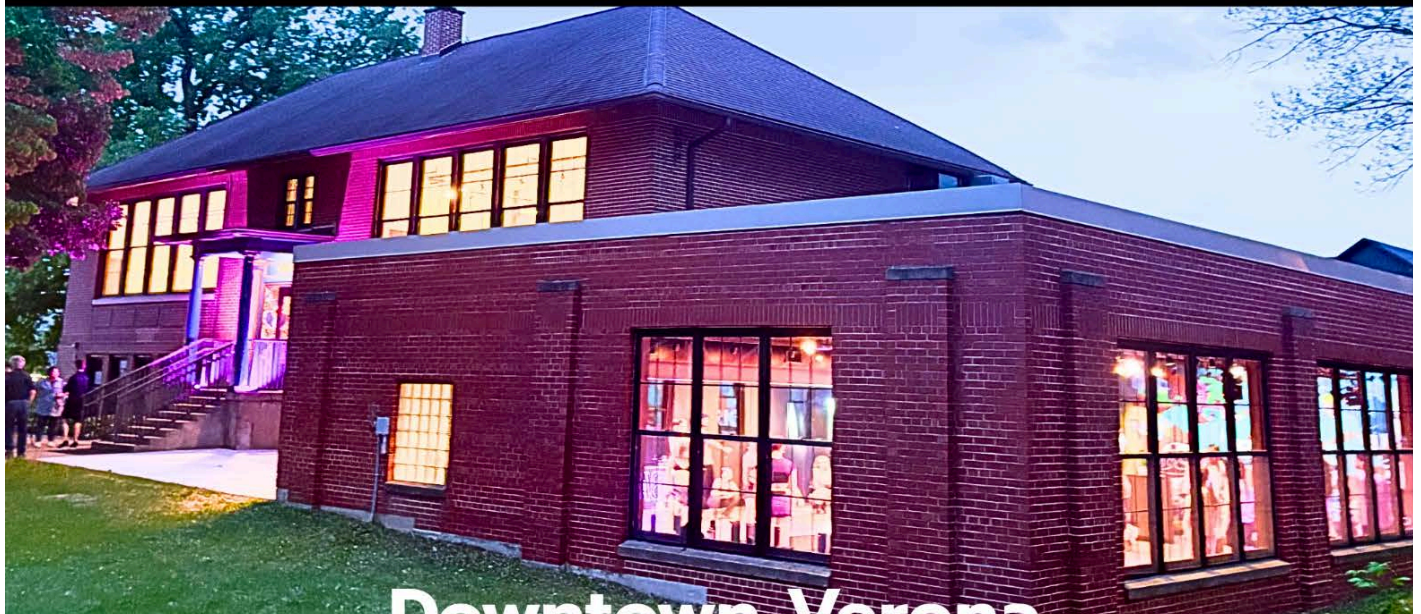
The mission:

- To provide a multicultural space supporting individual artists, teaching artists, and arts organizations.
- To create access and inclusion to arts education and arts programs for our diverse, multigenerational community so more people may experience the transformative power of the arts.

For more information contact: Karisa Johnson at LILACompanyManager@gmail.com

ART HOUSE 360°

Where the ARTS bring us ALL together



Downtown Verona

www.ARTHouse360.com



Theatre LiLA Studio



High School students participated in an all-day Theatre LILA retreat, improv class and workshops in Spring 2025.



ART House 360 Community Lounge