

Calling All Theater Groups!  
August 11 – 16, 2025



# Participant Information



# Step into the Spotlight!

Ithra is rolling out the red carpet for Theater Groups to apply for the Ithra Short Play Contest, taking place between August 11 - 16, 2025. Over six action-packed days, 10 dazzling plays will light up the Ithra Theater stage, giving theater groups a chance to develop their talents while entertaining audiences.

## Table of Contents

What is the Ithra Short Play Contest? .....	3
How to Apply .....	4
Contest Phases & Timeline .....	5
What You'll Gain, Prizes & Awards .....	6
Meet the Jury & Judging Information .....	7
Contest Rules .....	10
FAQs & Contac.....	12

# What is the Ithra Short Play Contest?



Since 2021, the Ithra Short Play Contest has showcased new and original scripts as engaging, contemporary short-form theater performances that inspire and entertain.

Our mission is to nurture a thriving theater community in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia, supporting Theater Groups in producing high-quality dramas that stand out on an international stage. Since its inception, the Contest has made a significant impact on the Saudi theater scene by supporting new and original works from emerging artists. Many participants have used this platform to launch successful professional careers.

## Successful applicants have access to:

- Workshops
- Training
- Industry mentors
- Performances
- Expert judging talent
- Networking opportunities

## Things to remember:

- Entries close April 10, 2025.
- 10 Theater Groups will be selected from the received submissions.
- The shortlisted groups will be announced no later than April 24, 2025.





# How To Apply

**Applications must be submitted online no later than April 10, 2025**  
**Submit your application via the online entry portal**

## **Submission Requirements and Eligibility:**

- Submissions close on April 10, 2025.
- Theater groups may propose one or two scripts. Both Arabic and English scripts are accepted.
- Both original and established plays are eligible.
- Each play should have a run time of approx. 25-30 minutes (15-page script for a 25-30 minute performance).
- Diverse theater genres are welcomed.
- Open to theater groups based in Saudi Arabia.
- All participants must be at least 18 years of age.
- Participants may not apply to partake in the competition in more than one theater group.
- Participants must be available for all key dates and in-person commitments.
- Please refer to the Contest Rules for more information.

## **Required Materials:**

- **Script:** A completed script, 15 pages in length for a 25-30 minutes performance
- **Synopsis:** A brief summary of the play, outlining the plot, themes, and key elements
- **Director's Vision or Artistic Proposal:** An explanation of how the director plans to interpret the script, including thematic emphasis, stylistic choices, and staging concepts
- **Cast and Crew Information:** A list of proposed actors and crew members, along with their biographies and roles
- **Production Design Proposal:** Initial ideas for set design, costumes, lighting, and sound to showcase the overall aesthetic and mood
- **Group or Team Information:** Background information on the Theater Group or individual participants, including experience and past work

# The Road to Success Contest Phases

Submissions open  
January, 10 2025 &  
close April 10, 2025

01

Shortlisted groups will be  
announced by April 24, 2025

02

Onsite: Workshops (June),  
Rehearsals (June-August),  
Technical Rehearsals July 26

03

Live on stage at Ithra,  
August 11-16, 2025

04

## Phase 1: Script Submission & Registration, *Deadline: April 10, 2025*

- Theater Groups must register by completing the online registration form and submitting their scripts no later than April 10, 2025.
- Only complete submissions will be considered for the contest. Make sure to provide all required materials and details in the registration form

## Phase 3: Workshops and rehearsals, *May-August 2025*

- Selected teams will take part in a series of workshops covering a variety of theater related topics.
- Rehearsals will begin in June with technical rehearsals running from July to August 10, 2025 at the Ithra Theater.

## Phase 2: Shortlisting and Group Approval, *April 24, 2025*

- All scripts will be reviewed by the contest coordinators who will select 12 groups to participate.
- Shortlisted groups will be announced by April 24, 2025 by email or phone call.
- Selected groups must confirm participation and ensure approvals from playwrights and all team members.
- Each director will manage casting and rehearsal preparation for their group.

## Phase 4: Performances and Judging, *August 11-16, 2025*

- The 10 selected plays will be performed at Ithra's Theater from August 11-16, 2025
- Judges will evaluate performances based on set criteria, and winners will be announced at the end of the contest

# What You'll Gain

## Unleash Your Potential



### Participants will receive: guidance by experts

- Training & Mentorship by industry leading professionals in variety of theater related subjects.
- Technical & Design Support for sets, costumes, lighting, sound
- Networking with industry professionals and experts
- Exposure to Local & International Professionals and opportunity to showcase your talent in front of industry leading figures Rehearsal Space & Facilities In a premier world-class venue
- Contest Program & promotional material

### 9 Prizes & Awards Celebrating Excellence

- Best Play
- Best Direction
- Best Actor
- Best Actress
- Best Production & Design
- Best New Script
- Best Script Adaptation
- Jury Choice Award
- Audience Selection Award





***“The competition aims to create a competitive atmosphere among playwrights in general and expand the scope of reception by the community, in addition to developing Saudi talents in light of the vision and interest in arts.” By Dr. Sami Aljumaan***

## **Jury Composition:**

- Scriptwriting Expert: A professional playwright or literary critic with experience in short-form theater.
- Directing Expert: An experienced director with a portfolio of successful theater productions.
- Acting Coach or Veteran Actor: An acting mentor or seasoned actor with a theater background.
- Ithra Theater Representatives: Two theater experts from the Ithra Theater team.

## **How Winners Are Selected:**

- Each judge will score performances on a scale (e.g., 1-10) for each category (script, directing, acting, technical elements).
- The average score from all jury members determines ranking.
- Judges deliberate on high-scoring entries to identify strengths and areas of improvements.
- The play with the highest combined score across all categories will be awarded Best Play.
- Additional awards (e.g., Best Actor, Best Direction) will be based on individual category scores.
- A special Jury's Choice Award can be given to a performance that shows exceptional promise or innovation, even if it did not score the highest.
- An Audience Selection Award will be given to a performance that is picked by audiences attending the plays.



# Judging Information

## Setting the Stage for Success

### Best Script

#### Original Script

- **Characterization:** Are the characters well-developed, unique and integral to the story?
- **Dramatic Structure:** Does the play have a clear beginning, middle and end? Is the pacing appropriate for the narrative?
- **Originality and Creativity:** Does the script offer a fresh perspective or innovative storytelling technique?
- **Dialogue:** Is the dialogue natural, engaging and purposeful? Does it reveal character traits and advance the plot?
- **Theme and Message:** How effectively does the play convey its theme or message?

### Best Direction

#### 1. Directing:

- **Vision and Interpretation:** How creatively has the director interpreted the script and brought the playwright's vision to life?
- **Blocking and Movement:** Are the movements purposeful and do they enhance the story and the characters' relationships?
- **Pacing and Rhythm:** Is the flow of the performance smooth, with appropriate energy shifts?
- **Use of Space:** How effectively has the stage been utilized to create dynamic scenes and emphasize key moments?
- **Integration of Technical Elements:** How well are lighting, sound and set design used to support the direction and enhance the play.



## **Best Actor / Best Actress**

### **2. Acting:**

- **Characterization and Authenticity:** Do the actors convincingly embody their characters?
- **Emotional Range and Expression:** Is there a clear portrayal of emotions and character motivations?
- **Ensemble Work:** Is there strong chemistry and coordination between cast members?
- **Vocal and Physical Performance:** Are the actors' vocal delivery and physical actions effective and appropriate for their roles?
- **Blocking and Movements:** Are the movements purposeful and do they enhance the story and the character's relationships?

## **Best Production & Design**

### **3. Technical Elements:**

- **Sound Design:** How well does the sound complement the play's atmosphere, transitions and key moments?
- **Lighting Design:** Does the lighting enhance the mood, emphasize important scenes and contribute to visual storytelling?
- **Set Design:** How creatively and effectively is the set used to establish location and context?
- **Costumes and Makeup:** Are the costumes and makeup suitable for the characters and narrative style?
- **Overall Technical Coordination:** How seamlessly do all technical elements integrate with the performance?

## **Best Script Adaptation**

- Reinterpreting the original narrative and its characters while also considering the visual and auditory elements unique to storytelling on stage. Creating a new balance between staying true to the original material and making necessary change for pacing, characters development and audience engagement.

## **Jury Choice Award**

- An outstanding performance that is not part of any criteria already mentioned above.

## **Audience Selection Award**

- An Audience Selection Award will be given to a performance that is picked by audiences attending the plays.



# Contest Rules

## Contest General Rules 01

- Theater groups may propose original scripts(s) for approval by Ithra or select from a pre-approved script list of which can be found at:
- Both Arabic and English scripts are accepted.
- Approved scripts must adhere to the cultural norms and sensitivities of the Kingdom.
- Each play performance time should not exceed 25 to 30 minutes.
- Each theater group should not exceed 6 actors or actresses.

## Eligibility 02

- Open to all genres, provided they align with the contest's guidelines.
- Participants must be 18 years or older.
- Theater groups must be based in KSA, and the competition is open to people of all nationalities.
- Individuals can not apply to participate in more than one theater group.

## Responsibilities of the Theater Group 03

- Each group is responsible for selecting and preparing their scripts, including finalizing a creative proposal, casting actors, leading rehearsals, and managing technical rehearsals
- Groups are responsible for their own behavior, group cohesion and managing any conflicts that may arise within the group or with other groups
- Scripts cannot be altered without prior approval from Ithra representatives

## **Logistics 04**

- Ithra will not bear housing and transportation cost.
- Selected groups must be able to attend all scheduled workshops and rehearsals at Ithra.

## **Key Dates & Commitments 05**

- Shortlisted groups will participate in workshops leading up to the contest and must be available for key dates and commitments.
- Rehearsals will take place starting from May 2025 followed by technical rehearsals from July 26 to August 10, 2025.
- The final performances will be held at the Ithra Theater from August 11-16, 2025

## **Membership Recommendation 06**

- It is also recommended (though not mandatory) for participants to join the Ithra Theater Society by completing the membership form

## **General Rules and Regulations**

- Teams may choose to enter an excerpt or abridgement of an established play of Ithra's choosing as their selection.
- Teams may choose to enter an original script for consideration.
- Each team may make two submissions only.
- Ithra's design team will be responsible for the design of sets, props, costumes and make-up, however a design representative from each group will work with the Ithra design team to achieve its goals.
- Each production shall have a duration of no more than 25 minutes.
- Productions should have a maximum of six actors.
- Each team should be available for and take part in all workshops and designated rehearsal times in the weeks leading up to the competition.
- Groups understand that they will receive no payment for their involvement in the Ithra Short Play Contest, but will be eligible for prizes and professional development opportunities. By submitting and/or presenting your work to the Ithra Short Play Contest, the writer/creator of an original script thereby gives permission for the organizers to present the work at the Contest.
- If an individual or group is no longer able to attend due to a commitment, workshop or performance, it will notify the Festival Director and any other relevant team members with as much notice as possible.
- Groups will abide by venue-specific regulations and understand that professional conduct is required at all times.





# Frequently Asked Questions

## What is the Ithra Short Play Contest?

The Ithra Short Play Contest showcases short-form theater, with the aim of empowering Saudi talent. We welcome theater groups of any nationality who reside in Saudi Arabia to apply and share their talents and creativity before a live audience in the Ithra Theater in August 2025.

## How does it work?

### Stage 1:

- Playwrights will submit one or two original play scripts or a selected, established play script suggested by Ithra with a running time of 25 to 30 minutes (roughly 15 pages).
- Groups will register by completing and submitting the Group Registration Form no later than April 10, 2024.

### Stage 2:

- Scripts and groups will be reviewed by the contest coordinators and shortlisted.
- The shortlisted groups will be announced.
- Coordinators will contact the nominated theater groups to obtain approvals from the teams to produce the play and approval from the playwrights.
- Each director will be responsible for casting actors and running rehearsals.
- Production designers will be provided to work alongside the group's scenic artist and designers.

### Stage 3:

- Playwrights, directors, actors and production designers will participate in a three to four-week workshop program in the weeks leading up to the contest.
- Rehearsals will take place throughout the months of May 5 to 25 July, 2025.
- Technical rehearsals will begin 26 July to August 10, 2025 in the Ithra Theater.

### Stage 4:

- The 12 selected plays will be performed at the Ithra's Theater from August 11-16, 2025.

## **Will the plays be in Arabic or English?**

- We are accepting plays in both Arabic and English

## **What genre should the play be?**

- The contest is open to all genres, but the content must adhere to the cultural norms and sensitivities of the Kingdom.

## **Who can participate?**

- To be eligible to participate as a theater group, all group members must be at least 18 years old.

## **Is the contest only for Saudi nationals?**

- No, participation is open to all residing in Saudi Arabia.

## **Where should I reside to be able to participate?**

- Groups can participate from anywhere in Saudi Arabia. Theater groups need to be able to travel to Ithra for the workshops. Dates will be announced for workshops once the participants have been selected, but will be held within the weeks leading up to the contest.

## **Will Ithra bear the housing and transportation costs for participants?**

- Ithra does not bear the costs of housing and transportation for participants

## **What will the participants receive?**

- Workshops in acting and directing and production and design.
- Rehearsal space.
- Designers responsible for creating the sets, costumes and posters for each group.
- A technical support team.
- Venue for final training (technical and dress rehearsal) and venue for contest live performance.
- Contest program and promotional material.

## **How many works can I submit to participate?**

- Theater groups can submit a maximum of two scripts and two directorial visions.

# **Theater Team Responsibilities**

## **How do I know if I have been chosen to direct the play?**

- You will be contacted and informed on March 20, 2025, and accepted teams will be invited to participate during an open day.
- What is the role of the theater group?
- The theater group defines its artistic vision for the play.
- Selection of actors and crew.

- Attending training workshops.
- Collaboration with designers.
- Preparing the theatrical movement drawing.
- Rehearsal management
- Monitor the pace of production.
- Supervising final technical exercises.
- Presentation of the work in the ithra's Theater.

### **How much time does each group have to present the play?**

The training will continue from May 5 to August 10, 2025. So the duration is about 12 weeks/three months.

### **When will technical rehearsals take place?**

- Participants are expected to attend technical rehearsals from August 1-11, 2024.

### **When will the contest take place?**

- The contest will take place from August 11-16, 2025.

### **How many award winners are there?**

- Best Play.
- Best Direction.
- Best Actor
- Best Actress
- Best Production & Design
- Best New Script.
- Audiences Selection Award
- Jury Special Award
- Best Script Adaptation

### **Who can register as a theater group?**

- Anyone who has a background in the field of theater and short plays, and has an interest in the field.

### **How can I apply to participate as a theater group?**

- When applying as a theater group, registration must be completed through the theater group registration form by March 10, 2025, at the latest.

### **How are the winners decided?**

- The winners will be based on the judges' votes. The contest coordinators will form a specialized panel to evaluate the plays and determine the winners.



مسابقة إثناء  
للمسرحيات  
القصيرة

Ithra Short Play Contest

**Still Need Help?**

Please Contact Us

**Please Contact Us**

📞 **800 122 1224**

✉ **info@ithra.com**

**We can't wait to see  
you shine on stage!**

**Thank You**