
THE SHED Press Release

THE **BLOOMBERG** BUILDING
545 West 30th Street
New York, NY 10001

For more information, please contact:

Christina Riley
christina.riley@theshed.org
press@theshed.org



**THE SHED AND PUNCHDRUNK PRESENT THE NORTH AMERICAN
PREMIERE OF *VIOLA'S ROOM***

***Viola's Room* marks the first new production by the internationally
acclaimed company in New York City since *Sleep No More***

**Directed and conceived by Punchdrunk's founder and artistic director
Felix Barrett, written by Daisy Johnson, and narrated by Helena
Bonham Carter**

18 weeks only, June 17 to October 19 in The Shed's Level 4 Gallery

Tickets on sale to members April 9, general public April 17

NEW YORK, NY, March 27, 2025 – The Shed and Punchdrunk proudly announce the North American premiere of *Viola's Room*, a critically acclaimed immersive experience conceived and directed by Punchdrunk founder **Felix Barrett**. Narrated by award-winning actor Helena Bonham Carter, *Viola's Room* invites audience members into an intimate, audio-driven adventure. This production marks Punchdrunk's highly anticipated return to New York City following their groundbreaking, long-running *Sleep No More*. The experience begins June 17 at The Shed (545 West 30th Street) through October 19.

“*Viola’s Room* is Punchdrunk’s first new production in New York since their smash hit *Sleep No More* boldly changed what theater can be and how we interact with it,” said **Alex Poots**, The Shed’s artistic director. “Having collaborated with Felix Barrett for nearly two decades on several projects, it’s an honor to work with such a visionary talent again and to now co-produce and premiere *Viola’s Room*—a mesmerizing, wondrous experience—at The Shed.”

Written by Booker Prize–shortlisted author **Daisy Johnson**, *Viola’s Room* reimagines Barry Pain’s 1901 gothic short story “The Moon-Slave” for a modern audience. The production, with its combination of visual art, storytelling, and audience interaction, delivers a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

“Ever since we opened *Sleep No More* back in 2011, New York has been our second home, so I’m elated that *Viola’s Room* will have its international premiere at The Shed this year,” said Felix Barrett, Punchdrunk’s founder and artistic director. “It’s the most intimate and distilled form of a Punchdrunk experience we’ve created: an invitation to step inside a teenage daydream and surrender to the unknown. In a non-stop world of screens and tech this is an invitation to succumb to a live, tactile and fully sensory journey. I’m so excited that New York audiences will soon be able to immerse themselves within the labyrinth of *Viola’s Room*.”

Audience members walk barefoot through the maze-like installation in The Shed’s Level 4 Gallery, in groups of up to six people. Each audience member receives headphones to be guided by the enchanting voice of an unseen narrator, voiced by Helena Bonham Carter, on a surreal, 50-minute sensory journey.

“The Shed was designed for the future of art making, embracing flexibility and scale to offer both intimate and monumental experiences with interdisciplinarity at its core,” said **Meredith “Max” Hodges**, The Shed’s CEO. “We’ve seen audiences crave the immersive and inventive, as with the art carnival *Luna Luna*, Tomás Saraceno’s aerial installation, and Ryuichi Sakamoto in Tin Drum’s mixed-reality concert *Kagami*. Punchdrunk’s *Viola’s Room* perfectly embodies this, offering an enchanting experience that blurs the lines between audience and art. It’s exactly the kind of production The Shed is built to deliver.”

Viola’s Room was originally produced in London by Punchdrunk at their Woolwich location and ran May through December 2024.

The official headphone partner of *Viola’s Room* is Bowers & Wilkins.

TICKETS

Tickets for *Viola's Room* go on sale on April 17 (Shed member presale begins on April 9, Mastercard presale begins April 15). For tickets and additional information about the production and memberships for presale access, visit [TheShed.org](https://www.theshed.org).

CREATIVE TEAM

Viola's Room is conceived, directed, and designed by Punchdrunk's artistic director Felix Barrett, with co-direction by associate director Hector Harkness (*One Night, Long Ago; The Third Day*) and design by Casey Jay Andrews, who was part of the design team on *The Burnt City*. Working with Punchdrunk for the first time are lighting designer Simon Wilkinson (Disney's *Bedknobs and Broomsticks*, Vanishing Point's *Metamorphosis*) and sound designer Gareth Fry (Complicité's *The Encounter*; V&A's *David Bowie Is*, *Alice: Curiouser and Curiouser*, and *Diva* exhibitions).

PUNCHDRUNK

Founded in 2000 by Felix Barrett, Punchdrunk has pioneered a game-changing form of theatre which places the audience at the very heart of the action. Recently listed amongst the 50 most influential artists of the last 50 years (*Sky Arts, 2022*) alongside Bowie, Sir Steve McQueen and Vivienne Westwood, Punchdrunk disrupts the theatrical norm, creating worlds in which audiences can rediscover the childlike excitement of exploring the unknown.

Its iconic "mask" shows, which redefined the genre of immersive experiences, have been cited amongst the 40 creative moments that changed culture (*Creative Review*), and have found phenomenal success across the globe, with record-breaking productions established in the US, UK and China. *Sleep No More* in New York played to sell out audiences for 14 years from 2011, and in Shanghai the show has been running since 2016, making it the longest running show in the city's history. *The Drowned Man: A Hollywood Fable* broke the National Theatre's box office records when it went on sale in 2013.

Punchdrunk's 2022 London production, *The Burnt City*, became the company's longest-running show in its home city, coinciding with the opening of its first permanent venue at 1 Cartridge Place in Woolwich.

In 2024, *Viola's Room* debuted in Woolwich, marking a bold shift from Punchdrunk's signature mask performances. This intimate, barefoot sensory experience distilled two decades of the company's immersive expertise, using binaural sound to create a deeply personal journey.

Alongside these landmark live theatrical experiences, Punchdrunk has taken its ground-breaking approach to cross-cultural collaborations in music, tech, fashion and TV: from projects with Rihanna to Jack White,

Louis Vuitton to Alexander McQueen, and HBO to Brad Pitt's Plan B Studios – most recently with TV series *The Third Day*, starring Jude Law, Naomie Harris, Katherine Waterston, Emily Watson and Paddy Considine which included the Bafta-nominated live event: *The Third Day: Autumn: a 12-hour live episode*, filmed in one continuous take.

Punchdrunk's past theatrical works include: *The Drowned Man: A Hollywood Fable* (with the National Theatre), *The Crash of the Elysium* (Manchester International Festival), *The Duchess of Malfi* (with ENO), *Sleep No More* (with the American Repertory Theatre, Boston, Mass.), *It Felt Like A Kiss* (with Adam Curtis and Damon Albarn, Manchester International Festival), *Tunnel 228* (in collaboration with The Old Vic), *The Masque of the Red Death* (with Battersea Arts Centre), *Faust* (in collaboration with the National Theatre), and *The Burnt City*.

UPCOMING at THE SHED

[Open Call](#)

Opening Summer 2025

This summer, 12 visual and performance artists/collectives will unveil their new work in a free group exhibition in The Shed's Level 2 Gallery and on the outdoor Plaza. The new works range from painting and film to sculpture and performance are presented by emerging artists, all living or working within the five boroughs.

The artists/collectives presenting new work include Zain Alam, AYDO, Mel Corchado, Marwa Eltahir, Patricia Encarnación, Laurena Finéus, Lily Honglei, Tyson Houseman, Jarrett Key, Chelsea Odufu, Victor "MARKA27" Quiñonez, and Yelaine Rodriguez and Luis Vasquez La Roche.

Launched as part of The Shed's inaugural-year program, Open Call is a large-scale commissioning program for early-career, NYC-based artists.

SUPPORT

The creation of new work at The Shed is generously supported by the Lizzie and Jonathan Tisch Commissioning Fund and the Shed Commissioners. Major support for live productions at The Shed is provided by the Charina Endowment Fund, with additional support from the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature.

For information about sponsorship opportunities, please contact corporate.support@theshed.org

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The Shed

Under the leadership of CEO Meredith “Max” Hodges and founding Artistic Director Alex Poots, The Shed is a cultural institution of and for the 21st century. We produce and welcome innovative art and ideas, across all forms of creativity, to build a shared understanding of our rapidly changing world and a more equitable society. In our highly adaptable building on Manhattan’s west side, The Shed brings together established and emerging artists to create new work in fields ranging from pop to classical music, painting to digital media, theater to literature, and sculpture to dance. We seek opportunities to collaborate with cultural peers and community organizations, work with like-minded partners, and provide unique spaces for private events. As an independent nonprofit that values invention, equity, and generosity, we are committed to advancing art forms, addressing the urgent issues of our time, and making our work impactful, sustainable, and relevant to the local community, the cultural sector, New York City, and beyond.

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