

MERIEM BAHRI, COSTUME DESIGNER AND ILLUSTRATOR



Meriem Bahri nurtured an interest for design, sewing and performing arts in parallel to studying biology. After completed a PhD in science (2010, *Université de Lille*, France), she moved to Chicago and embraced her passion for costumes. To facilitate this transition, she enriched her knowledge with world-renowned companies such as the Boston Early Music Festival and the Joffrey Ballet, in the USA. In France, a grant from the ACADÉMIE DESPREZ enabled her to work with Gilbert Blin, who directed and designed costumes, sets, and lights for the Opéra de Nice production of Scarlatti's *Il Tigrane*. Between shows, she also started as an illustrator, producing custom, handmade drawings in a style often inspired by the "Art Nouveau".

In 2011, the Haymarket Opera Company, directed by Craig Trompeter in Chicago, asked Meriem Bahri to create the costumes of their first show, Handel's *Aci, Galatea e Polifemo*. After this first successful collaboration with the artistic team, whose aim is to restore little-known works from the 17th and 18th centuries, she designed the costumes of all following productions. From 2011 to 2016, the company performed ten operas staged by Ellen Hargis or Sarah Edgar, always in the spirit of historical reconstruction.

Since April 2013, Meriem Bahri also regularly assists Boston Early Music Festival's costume designer, Anna Watkins. The operas, staged by Gilbert Blin and musically directed by Stephen Stubbs and Paul O'Dette, are presented in period costumes. Notably, she coordinated the North American tour of Charpentier's *La Descente d'Orphée aux Enfers / La Couronne de Fleurs* in 2013.

Meriem Bahri also brought her ideas and tastes to dance and theater. She designed the costumes of Beethoven's *Creatures of Prometheus*, choreographed by Ted Seymour for the Chicago Beethoven Festival 2012. In 2013, she styled El-Hakim's *Sultan's Dilemma*, for the International Voices Project and stage directors Hassan Amejal and Patrizia Acerra. For the Elements Contemporary Ballet, she mixed contemporary and baroque esthetics to create the costumes for *The Sun King*, an original choreography by Joseph Caruana and presented in 2014 at Chicago's Pritzker Pavilion. She also collaborated twice with New York City based choreographer and solo dancer Carlos Fittante. In 2015, she worked on Tchaikovsky's *Sleeping Beauty* with choreographer Alexei Kremnev for the Joffrey Academy of Dance.

Since 2012, Meriem Bahri is a member of the research group of the ACADÉMIE DESPREZ and since 2014, she is the Secretary of the association.