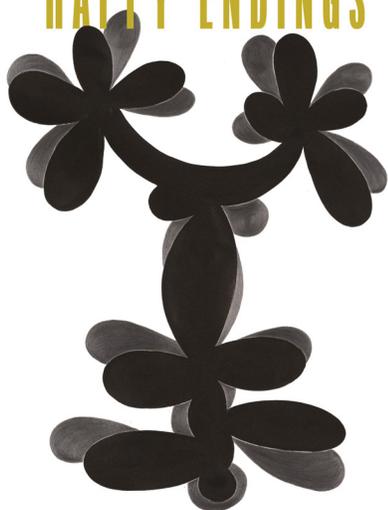


THERE MUST BE HAPPY ENDINGS



ON A THEATER OF OPTIMISM & HONESTY
Megan Sandberg-Zakian

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THERE MUST BE HAPPY ENDINGS

ON A THEATRE OF OPTIMISM & HONESTY
by Megan Sandberg-Zakian

Is it possible—is it even ethical?—to make hopeful art in an unjust and chaotic world? In the tradition of artist-essayists such as James Baldwin, Anne Lamott, and Adrienne Rich, Sandberg-Zakian looks to her own socially-engaged theater-making practice alongside a diverse array of cultural influences (from slave narratives to popular musicals, Batman to “This American Life”), considering how we might reconcile our desire for hope and possibility, connection and transformation, with the necessity of navigating darkness, despair, hate and violence. The coming-of-artistic age journey of a contemporary theater artist in ten essays, *There Must Be Happy Endings* is a smart, engaging and gently humorous contribution to the discussion of how we face art-making—and living—with hope and optimism, and an elegant, accessible, and satisfying companion to practical work in the world.

ADVANCE PRAISE FOR THERE MUST BE HAPPY ENDINGS

There Must Be Happy Endings is a personal odyssey through the American theater landscape. Megan Sandberg-Zakian eloquently and generously shares her experiences, her insights and associations, weaving together perspectives on artistic process with performance theory, history with aesthetics, philosophical and ethical conundrums with lived experience. She merges her own memories with the philosophical and ethical perceptions that she has developed, including meditations on race and ethnicity, family history, ethical enigmas and feminist readings. – Anne Bogart

A deep and thrilling meditation on theater and the subtext of the roles we play both on and off stage. Sandberg-Zakian’s thinking is uncompromisingly idealistic. I recommend this book to anyone who is writing, directing, acting or just plain living in our “chaotic and unjust world.” – Eric Bogosian

This jewel of a book offers a brilliant and insightful exploration of our tendencies toward happy endings. It dares us to contextualize our perspectives to include the nuances of race, gender, and cultural history without fixation or limitation. It opens us to a quality of tenderness that only the intimate embrace of complexity makes possible. A rare voice of embodied multiplicity, Megan Sandberg-Zakian transfigures happy endings to honest endings, even beginnings, that bring us into contact with the creative chaos of “live” life.

– Ruth King, author of *Mindful of Race: Transforming racism from the inside out*

Megan Sandberg-Zakian is a freelance theater director based in Jamaica Plain, MA, and a co-founder of Maia Directors, a consulting group for artists and organizations engaging with stories from the Middle East and beyond. She is a graduate of Brown University and holds an MFA in Interdisciplinary Arts from Goddard College.



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