

Shop Front Theatre

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Encouraged to explore, transform and reimagine yourself

My journey with Shop Front Theatre started with a phone call and an invite to tea. I still remember experiencing the space for the first time – it's a sense of familiarity (especially for those of us over a certain age) and also a sense of wonderment; because for me, the space never stayed the same and with each realignment brought new experiences and for me luckily new memories.

It's the people that make the space and somehow snuggled into the comfy reading chair near the window, Julia and Chris made the place safe warm, inviting - even as the world goes by.

My first memory is the play for Peace Week, where Theatre Absolute gently encouraged me to write my own piece and explore my voice as a writer. When illness struck, a gentle message from them encouraged me back to a space where I would re discover my love of writing.

I sent a shy email to them with my first ever poem (a form I had never thought I would explore). Their encouragement and championing of my poem gave me the courage to explore this new form, one I did with them again for *Humanistan*.

Like the space, Theatre Absolute encouraged you to explore, transform and reimagine yourself creatively. All under the guidance and safety of two amazing people. Theatre Absolute not only transformed the theatre space of this city, but also that of this writer. Thank you for the memories, friendship and for being two of the greatest this city.

Shahnaz Akhter