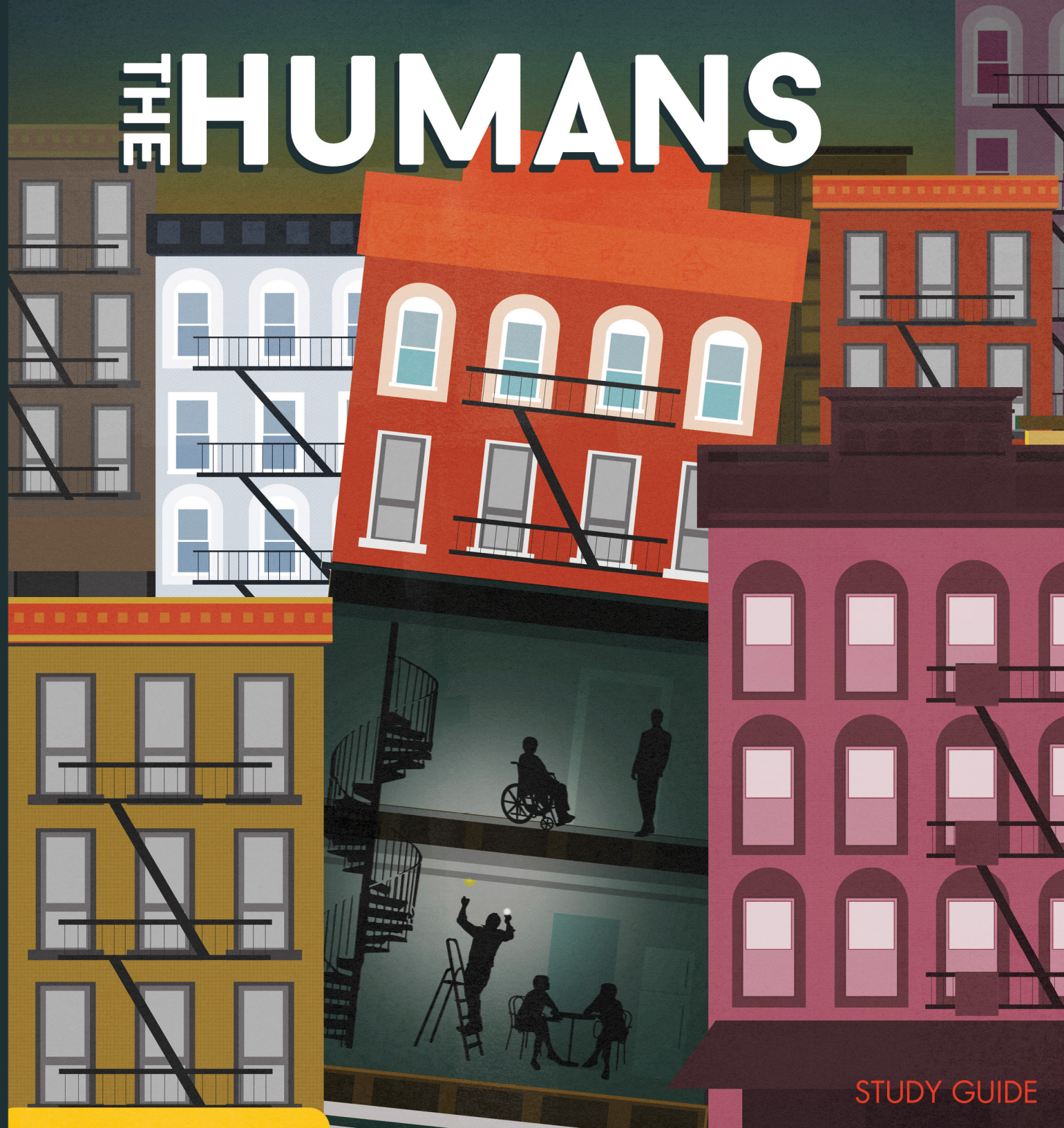


# THE HUMANS



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# THE HUMANS

BY

## Stephen Karam

DIRECTED BY

### Mark Cuddy

SCENIC DESIGNER  
Tim Mackabee

COSTUME DESIGNER  
Christina Selian

LIGHTING DESIGNER  
Josh Epstein

SOUND DESIGNER  
Danny Erdberg

DRAMATURG  
Becca Poccia Hays

STAGE MANAGER  
Laura Jane Collins

ASSISTANT  
STAGE MANAGER  
Stuart Plymesser

CASTING  
Elissa Myers, CSA and  
Paul Fouquet, CSA

*The Original Broadway Production of The Humans was produced by Scott Rudin, Barry Diller, Roundabout Theatre Company, Fox Theatricals, James L. Nederlander, Terry Allen Kramer, Roy Furman, Daryl Roth, Jon B. Platt, Eli Bush, Scott M. Delman, Sonia Friedman, Amanda Lipitz, Peter May, Stephanie P. McClelland, Lauren Stein, and The Shubert Organization; Joey Parnes, Sue Wagner, and John Johnson, executive producers. Commissioned and Originally Produced by Roundabout Theatre Company, New York, NY (Todd Haimes, Artistic Director; Harold Wolpert, Managing Director; Julia C. Levy, Executive Director; Sydney Beers, General Manager). The Humans had its world premiere in November 2014 at American Theater Company, Chicago, Illinois (PJ Paparelli, Artistic Director). The Humans is presented by special arrangement with Dramatists Play Service, Inc., New York.*

April 24 - May 12, 2019

# Welcome!



As you take your students on the exciting journey into the world of live theatre, we hope that you'll take a moment to help prepare them to make the most of their experience. Unlike movies or television, live theatre offers the thrill of unpredictability.

With the actors present on stage, the audience response becomes an integral part of the performance and the overall experience: the more involved and attentive the audience, the better the show. Please remind your students that they play an important part in the success of the performance.

## A FEW REMINDERS...

### audience etiquette

#### BE PROMPT

Give your students plenty of time to arrive, find their seats, and get situated. Have them visit the restrooms before the show begins.

#### RESPECT OTHERS

Please remind your students that their behavior and responses affect the quality of the performance and the enjoyment of the production for the entire audience. Live theatre means the actors and the audience are in the same room, and just as the audience can see and hear the performers, the performers can see and hear the audience. Please ask your students to avoid disturbing those around them. Please no talking or unnecessary or disruptive movement during the performance. Also, please remind students that cell phones should be switched off completely. No texting or tweeting, please. When students give their full attention to the action on the stage, they will be rewarded with the best performance possible.

#### GOOD NOISE, BAD NOISE

Instead of instructing students to remain totally silent, please discuss the difference between appropriate responses (laughter, applause, participation when requested) and inappropriate noise (talking, cell phones, etc).

#### STAY WITH US

Please do not leave or allow students to leave during the performance except in absolute emergencies. Again, reminding them to use the restrooms before the performance will help eliminate unnecessary disruption.



Dear Educator,

The best way of learning is learning while you're having fun.

When you hear something you can forget it, but when you see something it stays with you forever. Live theatre provides the opportunity for us to connect with more than just our own story, it allows us to find ourselves in other people's lives and grow beyond our own boundaries.

We're the only species on the planet who makes stories. It is the stories that we leave behind that define us. Giving students the power to watch stories and create their own is part of our lasting impact on the world.

We invite you and your students to engage with the stories we tell as a starting point for you and them to create their own.

Sincerely,

Joann Yarrow & Kate Laissle  
Community Engagement and Education

---

## 2018/2019 EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH SPONSORS

Syracuse Stage is committed to providing students with rich theatre experiences that explore and examine what it is to be human. Research shows that children who participate in or are exposed to the arts show higher academic achievement, stronger self-esteem, and improved ability to plan and work toward a future goal.

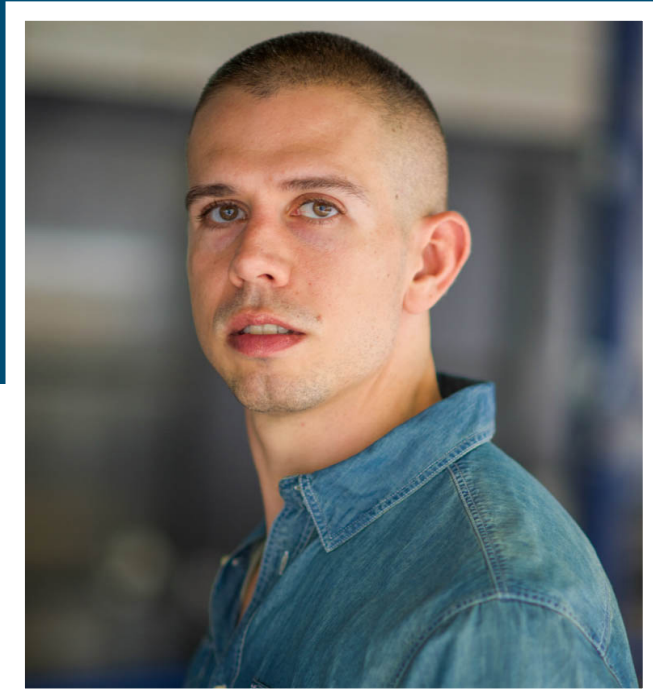
Many students in our community have their first taste of live theatre through Syracuse Stage's outreach programs. Last season more than 15,500 students from across New York State attended or participated in the Bank of America Children's Tour, artsEmerging, the Young Playwrights Festival, Backstory, Young Adult Council, and/or our Student Matinee Program.

We gratefully acknowledge the corporations and foundations who support our commitment to in-depth arts education for our community.



# About the Playwright

## Stephen Karam



Stephen Karam is the Tony Award-winning author of *The Humans*, *Sons of the Prophet* and *Speech & Debate*. For his work he's received two Drama Critics Circle Awards, an OBIE Award and is a two-time Pulitzer Prize finalist. He wrote a film adaptation of Chekhov's *The Seagull* starring Annette Bening, which was released by Sony Picture Classics. His adaptation of Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard* premiered on Broadway as part of Roundabout's 2016 season. Recent honors include the inaugural Horton Foote Playwriting Award, the inaugural Sam Norkin Drama Desk Award, two Outer Critics Circle Awards, a Lucille Lortel Award, Drama League Award, and Hull-Warriner Award. Stephen teaches graduate playwriting at The New School. He is a graduate of Brown University and grew up in Scranton, PA.

-Bio [stephenkaram.com](http://stephenkaram.com)

TheatreTalk interview with *The Humans* cast and playwright Stephen Karam  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6n0Y\\_FtYQDw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6n0Y_FtYQDw)

The Website Literary Hub conducted an interview with Stephen Karam, published March 3, 2017.  
It can be found at <https://lithub.com/stephen-karam-on-pain-despair-and-the-enduring-power-of-great-writing/>

# Synopsis



Photography provided by  
Goat Factory Media Entertainment

Brigid Blake and her boyfriend, Richard have just moved into a very unusual place in New York's Chinatown. Clearly a bargain in the Manhattan rental market, the nearly windowless apartment occupies both a narrow basement and a first floor that are connected by a spiral staircase. As *The Humans* begins the Blake family is gathering for Thanksgiving dinner at Brigid and Richard's new home. At first glance, the Blakes are an average American family. Father Erik and mother Dierdre have come in from Scranton with Erik's elderly mother, Momo, who suffers from dementia. Their daughter, Aimee, arrives from Philadelphia where she works as a lawyer. The festivities begin and nerves are quickly frayed. Unusual noises, flickering lights, and blackouts signal that something is amiss. Brigid is a musician and working as a bartender to pay college loans. Aimee just broke up with her girlfriend, is about to be laid off and has developed intestinal issues. Their parents are distraught that the girls have abandoned their religion and they can't afford to pay for help with Momo. "Don'tcha think it should cost less to be alive?" Erik asks Richard, who is due to come into money from a trust fund. Exploring enduring relationships amid personal mistakes, *The Humans* is almost an x-ray of a family desperately clinging to the middle class, dealing with aging, illness, and a volatile economy.

# The set



*The Humans* takes place in one real-time scene - on a two-level, four-room set - with no blackouts. Life continues in all spaces at all times. While this is difficult to render on the page, the noting of “upstairs” v. “downstairs” is a reminder of the exposed “dollhouse” view the audience has at all times. Throughout the journey, the audience’s focus may wander into whichever room it chooses. - Stephen Karam

Photography provided by  
Goat Factory Media Entertainment



*A turn of the century ground-floor/basement duplex tenement apartment in New York City’s Chinatown. It’s just big enough to not feel small. It’s just small enough to not feel big.*

*The two floors are connected via a spiral staircase. Each floor has its own entrance.*

*The apartment’s pre-war features have been coated in layers of faded off-white paint, rendering the space curiously monotone. The rooms are worn, the floors are warped, but clean and well kept.*

*-The Humans script, Stephen Karam*



# Questions FOR Discussion

- 1.) Why do you think this play takes place during Thanksgiving?
- 2.) Why do you think the play is titled *The Humans*?
3. What does this play say about family dynamics?

# elements of drama

## PLOT

What is the story line? What happened before the play started? What do the characters want? What do they do to achieve their goals? What do they stand to gain/lose?

## THEME

What ideas are wrestled with in the play? What questions does the play pose? Does it present an opinion?

## CHARACTER

Who are the people in the story? What are their relationships? Why do they do what they do? How does age/status/etc. effect them?

## LANGUAGE

What do the characters say? How do they say it? When do they say it?

## MUSIC

How do music and sound help to tell the story?

## SPECTACLE

How do the elements come together to create the whole performance?

*Other Elements: Conflict/Resolution, Action, Improvisation, Non-verbal Communication, Staging, Humor, Realism and other styles, Metaphor, Language, Tone, Pattern and Repetition, Emotion, Point of view.*

Any piece of theatre comprises multiple art forms. As you explore this production with your students, examine the use of:

WRITING  
VISUAL ART/DESIGN  
MUSIC/SOUND  
DANCE/MOVEMENT

## ACTIVITY

At its core, drama is about characters working toward goals and overcoming obstacles. Ask students to use their bodies and voices to create characters who are: very old, very young, very strong, very weak, very tired, very energetic, very cold, very warm. Have their characters interact with others. Give them an objective to fulfill despite environmental obstacles. Later, recap by asking how these obstacles effected their characters and the pursuit of their objectives.

## INQUIRY

How are each of these art forms used in this production? Why are they used? How do they help to tell the story?

# elements of design

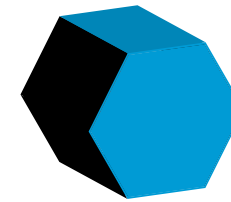
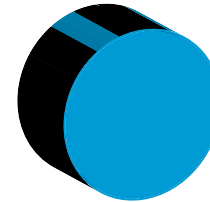
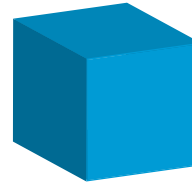
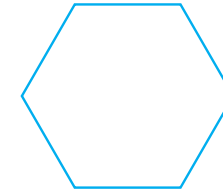
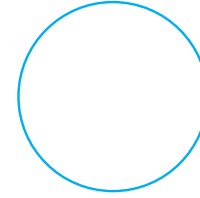
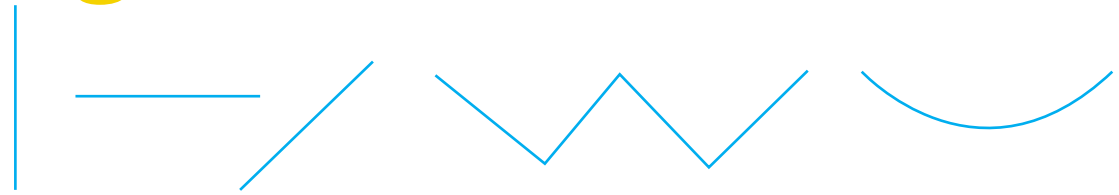
**LINE** can have length, width, texture, direction, and curve. There are five basic varieties: vertical, horizontal, diagonal, curved, and zig-zag.

**SHAPE** is two-dimensional and encloses space. It can be geometric (e.g. squares and circles), man-made, or free-form.

**FORM** is three-dimensional. It encloses space and fills space. It can be geometric (e.g. cubes and cylinders), man-made, or free-form.

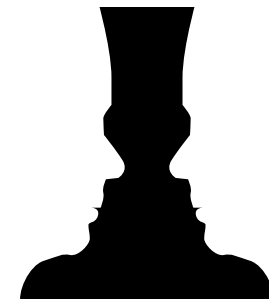
**COLOR** has three basic properties:

**HUE** is the name of the color (e.g. red, blue, green), **INTENSITY** is the strength of the color (bright or dull), **VALUE** is the range of lightness to darkness.

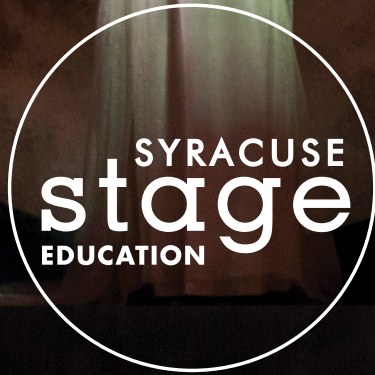


**TEXTURE** refers to the “feel” of an object’s surface. It can be smooth, rough, soft, etc. Textures may be **ACTUAL** (able to be felt) or **IMPLIED** (suggested visually through the artist’s technique).

**SPACE** is defined and determined by shapes and forms. Positive space is enclosed by shapes and forms, while negative space exists around them.



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*Ensemble in Caroline, or Change. Photo: Michael Davis.*