



Designer Q&A: Yuki Nakase Link on *Seven Deadly Sins* NYC

Ever wonder what it's like to work on a theatrical production during the early stages following the COVID-19 pandemic? We talked to lighting designer [Yuki Nakase Link](#) to learn more about her work on [Seven Deadly Sins NYC](#), which opened in New York City's Meatpacking District for a strictly limited engagement, June 22, 2021 through July 25, 2021, creating thrilling evenings that merge live theater with performance art, dazzling design, and CDC-mandated regulations.



Q&A:

Shuga Cain welcomes the audience to *Seven Deadly Sins* at Purgatory.
Photography credit: Matthew Murphy (left), Emilio Madrid-Kuser (right).

City Theatrical (CTI): How is *Seven Deadly Sins* NYC different than other shows you've worked on?

Yuki Nakase Link (YNL): Every production is unique. No two shows are the same. However, the most distinguished point of *Seven Deadly Sins* NYC was that it required the methods and theories of all my previous experiences of lighting design in television, theatre, dance, opera and fashion productions. The new plays we put on stage (in storefronts and a shipping container) are theatrical story telling; however, the problems we dealt with are more like location shooting for film productions factoring with the sunlight or fashion runway shows in raw warehouses and creating lighting positions from nothing.

CTI: What was your process like designing this immersive, open air show in the Meat Packing District?

YNL: Researching and analyzing the sun direction in June and July in New York City was the first task. The first show starts at 8pm, while the sun is still up, and second and third shows start at 9pm and 10pm, which are after sunset. For the 8pm show, the bright sun streams into the venues, and the reflections on the windows of the storefronts are very noticeable.

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- Yuki Nakase Link, Lighting Designer, *Seven Deadly Sins* NYC

However, we cannot just throw additional footcandles of light. We also need theatrical dimming and color changing abilities for the theatrical live experience. Selecting appropriate lighting instruments to help us tell the stories and finding ways to create lighting positions which will fit the scenic designs and our budget were my next step.

CTI: What is the experience like for audiences now?

YNL: I am happy with the final results, which has a fine balance between flashy and sublime moments in lighting.

CTI: Did you also work on this production when it was in Miami?

YNL: Yes, but they are different productions. The Miami show was produced by Miami New Drama. The New York show is produced by Tectonic Theater Project and Madison Wells Media. Almost totally new plays at both locations yet different playwrights.



Tricia Alexandro, left, and Eric Ulloa in Moisés Kaufman's Greed-themed play *Watch*. Photo by Matthew Murphy.

CTI: How did lighting play a role in differentiating between the seven short plays in New York?

YNL: The lighting designs for each play are purely the reflections of the scripts, scenery, movements and directions. The seven plays, scenic designs and directions are all very unique; therefore, the lighting designs are all different naturally.

CTI: Do you have a favorite lighting moment?

YNL: Yes, every time actors and performers find their light and glow on stage, they are my favorite lighting moments.

CTI: What was it like designing the show during the COVID-19 pandemic?

YNL: It took a little bit of time to make myself get back on track from the government mandated shutdown. I felt my lighting memory returned once I got on site for scouting the venues, focusing, cueing, etc. The best part was working with real human beings without having a computer interface between me and the reality. Even though we had certain challenging moments during the process, going to the venues every morning was such a joy because it was time for collaborations in person, which I missed for a long time ever since March 2020.

CTI: How did you use [QolorFLEX® NuNeon](#) in the show?

YNL: David Rockwell, FAIA (Scenic/Site Designer) chose to have an illuminating sign and decorations using flexible neon for one of the venues, called *Purgatory*. Lighting equipment was to be specified by LD, so I picked QolorFLEX NuNeon RGB as a superior product, especially its extreme flexibility and high intensity.

CTI: What was it like working with it?

YNL: The extreme flexibility of QolorFLEX NuNeon RGB is the best in the industry. It was the only flexible neon for the lettering in my opinion. I also must note that the brightness catches the audience eye even under the sunlight, and the half-cylindrical shape gave us three-dimensional quality. I loved it.

CTI: Any shout outs to team members who helped make it all happen?

YNL: Moisés Kaufman (Director/Playwright: Greed), thank you very much for giving me this opportunity to work with you on *Seven Deadly Sins* NYC. Evan Bernardin (General Manager), there were no lights I was given to create the lighting design without you and your help. David Rockwell, FAIA (Scenic/Site Designer), Christopher and Justin Swader (Scenic Designers - GREED), Dede Ayite (Costume Designer), J. Jared Janas (Hair, Wig and Makeup Designer), Tyler Kieffer (Sound Designer), Gavin Price (Video Designer), I appreciate having the chance to collaborate with all of you. And Megan Smith (Production Stage Manager), I have not enough words to express my huge gratitude toward your help with lighting design.

For more information on *Seven Deadly Sins* NYC, visit: <https://www.sevendeadlysinsnyc.com/>