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**MAGIC  
IN ROUGH SPACES**  
NEW PLAY LAB @RORSCHACHDC

**Announcing the 2023 Finalists  
for Rorschach Theatre's annual  
Magic in Rough Spaces New Play Lab**

**The final three plays will be announced March 10  
and public readings of those finalists will be on April 2 & 3, 2023.**



**HOW TO LIVE FOREVER by Brandy N. Carie**

*A 1590s midwife and a modern wellness guru connect across time to protect their daughters, but it's the daughters' rage that ignites the world. As mothers and daughters each search for answers, time begins to loop: can they find a way to change the past, remember the future, and forge a new path forward? HOW TO LIVE FOREVER is a spell: a eulogy for lost stories, a scream for present fury, and a dream of brighter days to come.*

**Brandy N. Carie** is a playwright, screenwriter, and librettist originally from Minnesota, whose work explores gender, Americana, and what happens when nice girls get mad.

Carie was a winner of the 2019 SLOAN/CMU Screenwriting Competition for her feature *Love, Genome* and a finalist for the 2020 SLOAN/CMU award for her feature *RECTIFIED*. She received the 2019 Kennedy Center ACTF Steinberg Playwriting Award for *TOMORROW GAME*, the penultimate work in her seven-play *Bunker Cycle* which was also a finalist for the 2018 Princess Grace Award. Carie received a 2021 commission from Alter Ego Chamber Opera with her collaborator, composer Ramin Akhavan; her short opera *THE BEGINNING OF EVERYTHING: A LOVE STORY*, was released as an animated short film with New Opera West in 2022. Carie has received residencies at SPACE on Ryder Farm, the Edward Albee Foundation, the National Winter Playwrights Retreat, and Soaring Garden Artists' Retreat where, with collaborator D.T. Burns, she created *ABRUPTLY, AUSTEN*, a video adaptation of Jane Austen's oeuvre using puppets, which will be out in summer

2023. Theatres that have supported Carie's work include Barter Theatre, Mildred's Umbrella Theatre, Actors Theatre of Louisville, The Kennedy Center, Northlight Theatre, and Pittsburgh's City Theatre. Carie recently wrote and directed her first short film, THE COUPLE, forthcoming in spring 2023. MFA, Carnegie Mellon University. [brandyncarie.com](http://brandyncarie.com).



## **AMERICAN DREAM by Trish Cole**

*Five high school cheerleaders attempt to navigate purity and over-sexualization as Adam and Eve revisit their origin story and Joan of Arc battles not only the English, but the high school principal, gender roles, and rape culture as well. At the intersection of these stories is Bubbe, an intergalactic prophet and Jewish grandmother, traversing time and space to weave the narratives together, revealing the connections among generations and generations of women, including the women in her own family who left Odessa for America in hopes of finding their own Garden of Paradise...or, the American Dream.*

**Trish Cole** is a playwright whose work often explores the intersect of social construct, gender, identity, resistance, and resiliency. Her plays have been produced in New York, Chicago, Seattle, San Francisco, Asheville, and regionally in Maryland. Trish is a Samuel French finalist, a Bakeless Literary Prize finalist, and is the recipient of three Maryland Community Theatre Festival Association script awards, including the 2023 Outstanding Achievement in Playwriting. Trish earned her M.A. in Sociocultural Feminist Criticism from the University of Northern Colorado and a post-graduate certification in Library Media from the Notre Dame of Maryland University. Trish lives in Southern Maryland where she works as a public high-school librarian.



## **HUMAN MUSEUM by Miyoko Conley**

*HUMAN MUSEUM begins on the centenary of human extinction and follows three robots who run the Human Museum on Earth: the Director, who founded the museum; 65, the curmudgeonly head of digital data; and 237, a sensitive robot who works with physical artifacts. At the start of the play, the robots are putting the finishing touches on their largest exhibition yet, about humanity's final days on Earth. Delivery Bot, a curious robot searching for something more in life, delivers a package to the museum and decides to stay until the exhibition opening. The robots then receive a startling radio call that upends everything they thought they knew about the last days of humanity.*

**Miyoko Conley** is an Asian American playwright, games writer, and scholar. Her plays have been presented in the Bay Area and New York City, including at UC Berkeley; UCLA; Second Generation (2g); The Tank; The Wild Project; and New York University. Works include HUMAN MUSEUM (developed at the 2021 Bay Area Playwrights Festival); STARSHIP DANCE PARTY (developed with the New Play Reading series at UC Berkeley); END OF THE WORLD PLACE (2015 semi-finalist Bay Area Playwrights Festival); UNTITLED FANTASY (part of 2g's Jumpstart Commissions); and INTERCHANGEABLE PARTS (part of 2g's Free Range Commissions). She has also received screenwriting commissions from the Oklahoma City University MFA Screen Acting Program in Los Angeles. Miyoko holds a BFA in Theatre from New York University's Tisch School of the Arts, an MA from NYU's Gallatin School of Individualized Study in Playwriting and Japanese Popular Culture, and a PhD in Performance Studies and New Media from the University of California, Berkeley. [www.miyokoconley.com](http://www.miyokoconley.com)



## **FLUFF by Sigrid Gilmer**

*Seven strangers sit in the reception room of a normal office building, waiting to attend to the business of their lives. Each carries their own burdens and baggage. Some are looking for love, some for money, others for justice. More than a few are broken-hearted. As they wait, they strike up friendships, find love, and cross swords with enemies. But when a deadly and inexplicable danger invades, they must band*

*together to make it out alive.*

**Sigrid Gilmer** makes black comedies that are historically bent, totally perverse, joyfully irreverent and deal with issues of identity, pop culture and contemporary American society. Sigrid's HARRY AND THE THIEF - an action film/historical/time travel play about a thief who is blackmailed into traveling back in time to deliver a cache of arms to Harriet Tubman - has been produced across the country, including Pavement Group (Chicago), the Know Theatre (Cincinnati), and the Skylight Theatre (LA). Additional plays include: SLAVEY (Clubbed Thumb), SEED: A WEIRD ACT OF FAITH, IT'S ALL BUENO (Cornerstone Theater Company), MAMA METAL (IAMA Theatre Co.). Sigrid is a USA Artist Fellow. Her TV work includes: A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS (Netflix), CLAWS (TNT) and GOSSIP GIRL (HBO Max). Sigrid has an MFA in Writing for Performance from Cal Arts and lives in Los Angeles.



## **THERE SHE GOES by Steven Goldman**

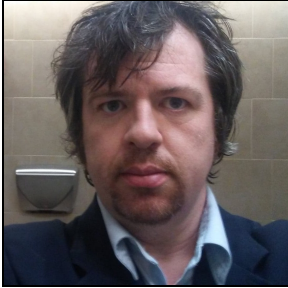
*Roommates Sibyl and Ivy prepare to welcome Ivy's boyfriend Mark home from war--but that reunion turns explosive when the two lovers have to come to terms with the fact that they've both been dead for 30 years. A tempest in an attic, this Brooklyn "story with ghosts" runs headlong into the forces that keep us together and that keep us from moving on.*

**Steven Goldman's** career is a confluence of disparate fields: a policy wonk who worked for both federal agencies and nonprofits on climate change, energy and urbanism issues; a marketing and communications professional in the cleantech and sustainability sectors; and a writer carrying much of that experience and expertise into comics, plays and scripted fiction podcasts. He created and wrote the comic series STYX TAXI, the play THERE SHE GOES, short plays for 24-Hour Plays events in Atlanta and NYC, as well as Washington DC's Theater Alliance Hothouse Play Development series. In addition, Steven co-wrote the graphic novel EVERYMAN: BE THE PEOPLE and an audio short, Extreme Ornithology, for Hubris: A 24-Hour Podcasting Project. He is currently developing several scripted fiction podcast series, including the climate fiction audio series HIGH ABOVE YOU.



## **MIDNITE by Reina Hardy & Rory Leahy**

*In this horror comedy based on Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream, a group of college film majors ventures into the woods to make an ill-advised horror movie about a murderous donkey. The scriptwriter's in love with the DP, the DP is in love with the star, the actor playing the donkey is starved for attention, and the director... well, they're just trying to make some real art, ok? But the hormonal nonsense of the cast and crew is the least of auteur-in-the-making Quillian's problems, because these woods are full of feuding spirits, shape-shifting monsters and real danger. It's love vs. art vs. madness... who will survive the night?*



**Reina Hardy's** plays, which usually contain magic and sometimes contain science, have been produced across the U.S. and in London, Australia and Greece. They include ANNIE JUMP AND THE LIBRARY OF HEAVEN (four-theatre rolling world premiere including Rorschach Theatre), GLASSHEART (Rorschach Theatre, The Shrewds, Everyday Inferno, The Know), CHANGELINGS (The Vortex), FANATICAL (The Stable), STARGAZERS (Brighton Theatre Company, Theatre Nova), and THE OTHER FELIX (Echo Theatre). Honors include: Michener Fellowship, Kilroy's List, National New Play Network New Play Showcase, Source Festival, Kennedy Center MFA Playwrights Workshop, Interact 20/20 Commission, Kennedy Center ACTF TYA PRIZE. Recently in 2022: the world premiere of the Greek translation of THE AFTERPARTY in Thessaloniki. Out now: ANNIE JUMP AND THE LIBRARY OF HEAVEN from Broadway Play Publishing and GLASSHEART from TRW Plays. MFA: UT Austin Michener Fellow.

**Rory Leahy** is a playwright, actor, producer, screenwriter among other things. He is the founder of the American Demigods theatre company in Chicago. He is a 2017 graduate of the MFA Playwriting program at Southern Illinois University Carbondale where he was a three time recipient of the Christian H. Moe playwriting award, his work has been published by Smith and Kraus as well as Applause Theatre And Books, and performed throughout the U.S. and abroad. He has co-written features and shorts for Soft Cage Films. Due to a hilarious misunderstanding, he is currently teaching physical education for Chicago Public Schools.



## **THE LAZARUS CLUB by Donna Hoke**

*After Charlotte "dies" alone, she seeks other Near Death Experiencers to determine if she can trust what happened--and make sure it doesn't happen again. As the little group struggles to find meaning in these experiences, they realize that no matter their beliefs, they are all in this together.*

**Donna Hoke's** work has been seen in 48 states and on five continents, including at Barrington Stage, Barrow Group, Celebration Theatre, Gulfshore Theatre, Queens Theatre, Lake Dillon Theatre Company, Theatre Aspen, The Road, Phoenix Theatre, Atlantic Stage, Purple Rose, Skylight, Pride Films and Plays, New Jersey Rep, Hens and Chickens (London), The Galway Fringe Festival, and Actors Repertory Theatre of Luxembourg. Plays include BRILLIANT WORKS OF ART (Kilroy's List), ELEVATOR GIRL (O'Neill, Princess Grace, and Austin Film Festival finalist), SAFE (winner of the Todd McNerney, Naatak, and Great Gay Play and Musical Contests), and TEACH (Gulfshore New Works, O'Neill semifinalist). She has been nominated for the Primus, Blackburn, and Laura Pels prizes, and is a three-time winner of the Emanuel Fried Award for Outstanding New Play (SEEDS, SONS & LOVERS, ONCE IN MY LIFETIME). She has also received an Individual Artist Award from the New York State Council on the Arts to develop HEARTS OF STONE, and, in its final three years, *Artvoice* named her Buffalo's Best Writer—the only woman to ever receive the designation.



## **PAPER DREAM by Lyra Nalan**

*1937, on the break of the Sino-Japanese war, a Chinese woman from a declining aristocratic family, Lee On, brought her stepdaughter Ying-Ying with her to America to reunite with her husband. However, they were detained at the Angel Island immigration center. While there, On conjured a ghostly creature hoping to rebuild the connection with her biological daughter (Dai-Moi) whom she believed had been buried in her hometown.*

**Lyra Nalan** is a multilingual Chinese writer based in New York. She is the Judith Royer Award-winning playwright for the play *Paper Dream* and has been nominated for the Susan Blackburn Smith Prize and the Smith Prize for Political Theatre. She has received the Horticultural Playwrights Workshop Fellowship and Miranda Theatre Playwrights Grant. She was a finalist for the New Harmony Project, Playwrights' Center Core Apprenticeship, ReImagine TYA competition, and semi-finalist for O'Neill National Playwrights Conference. Her work has been showcased at the Kennedy Center, Cherry Lane Theatre, Round House Theatre, Spooky Action Theatre, Miranda Theatre, Adventure Theatre, Avant Bard Theatre, Tradewind Arts Asian American Artists, Strand Theatre, Three Cats Productions, and more. Lyra is currently a commissioned playwright for Silk Road Rising Theatre's *Roadless Travel*. Lyra received her MFA in Writing for the Screen and Stage from Northwestern University. WEBSITE: [Lyranalán.com](http://Lyranalán.com).



## **YUCHEWAHKENH (BITTER) by Vicky Ramirez**

*Myra's little sister Ellie is missing. Ellie, a firebrand who works professionally as an activist, disappeared after she was seen fighting with her boyfriend. Myra tries to involve the police but encounters racism, misogyny, erasure, and victim blaming. As Ellie zeroes in on a new suspect, she meets Bad Mind (aka The Mischievous One) who is the embodiment of The Creator's brother on earth. Bad Mind forces Myra to face her own biases and generational trauma as they try to solve Ellie's disappearance.*

**Vickie Ramirez (Tuscarora)** is a playwright, director, theater-maker, and educator based in New York City. A founding member of ChukaLokoli Native Theatre Ensemble and resident playwright at New Dramatists, her plays include, *YUCHÉWAHKENH*, *APPLE*, *SMOKE*, *ASHES*, *PURE NATIVE*, *STANDOFF AT HIGHWAY #37*, *SNOOKY IS A TERRORIST*, and *GLENBURN 12 WP*.



## MISS AMERICA PRETTY by Irais Ann Reilly

*Cristina Morales is a blackjack dealer working at a casino on the brink of closing in Atlantic City in 2016, when the ghosts of Miss America past offer to turn her into a pageant queen. Little does she know, the queens have their own malevolent agenda. Can Cristina become Miss America without rejecting her community and the people she loves the most?*

**Irais Ann Reilly** (She/Ella) is a writer, performer, and educator who is half Cuban, half Irish, and whole New Jersey. Irais Ann's work is bilingual and often examines the "American experience" because she still isn't sure what that phrase means. Select full-length plays include GOOD CUBAN GIRLS (Teatro del Sol, at The Arden Theatre), THE JERSEY DEVIL IS A PAPI CHULO (Sol Fest 2022, Yale Drama Series Shortlist 2022, Finalist Leah Ryan Prize, KCACTF) SATURDAY MOURNING CARTOONS (Winner, Bay Area Playwright's Festival 2022, Finalist Goldberg Playwriting Prize, 2022, Semifinalist Blue Ink Award 2023). Her work has been developed with Theatre Exile, The New Harmony Project, The Chain Theatre, The Workshop Theatre, NYU Production Lab's Development Studio and the Latinx Playwright's Circle. Her play HOUSE BILL 3979: AMENDMENT #10: THE LIFE AND WORKS OF DR. HECTOR P. GARCIA was commissioned and produced by Texas A&M-University-Corpus Christi in 2022. She is currently under commission with the Arden Theatre Company in Philadelphia and Michigan State University, and is a member of the Art House INKubator for 2022-23 in Jersey City. As a screenwriter, her screenplay LA REINA DEL BRONX won best screenplay at Fusion Film Festival and was a semifinalist for the Vail Screenwriting Competition. Irais Ann is an Adjunct professor of Dramatic Writing at NYU Tisch. She holds an MFA in Dramatic Writing from NYU, B.A. in Theatre and English from the University of Notre Dame. [iraisaannreilly.com](http://iraisaannreilly.com)



## EVEN WHEN THE WORLD BURNS I AM STILL WITH YOU by Elizabeth Shannon

*A play with poetry intertwined, EVEN WHEN THE WORLD BURNS I AM STILL WITH YOU tells the tragic love story of Freja and Noor, two high schoolers from wildly different backgrounds and life outlooks who meet and fall in love. As they struggle to overcome obstacles in their relationship and mental health issues, the climate change and forest fires in Paradise, CA threaten to destroy their lives.*

**Elizabeth Shannon** is an actor, playwright, and director. She is a sophomore at Marymount Manhattan College, working to obtain her BFA Acting and BA Writing for the Stage degrees. Her play, WHAT ARE YOU HIDING?, which she co-wrote with Morgan Southwell, was a winner of Baltimore Centerstage's Young Playwright's Festival, and a finalist in The Secret Theatre's Act One: One Act Festival, Her play, NUCLEAR, was a winner of The Blank Theatre's 28th Annual Young Playwrights Festival, received an honorable mention in the 43rd Annual Marilyn Bianchi Kids' Playwriting Festival with Dobama Theatre, and was produced with The Trailblazers Collective. Her play TO BE DETERMINED, received a staged reading with Rapid Lemon Productions' Variations on Vision and is the high school winner for the Northern Arizona Playwriting Showcase. Her play, LOAD, was a winner of #Enough: Plays to End Gun Violence, a project comprised of 7 plays by young women addressing gun violence. Its world premiere was with South Coast Repertory and is published in an anthology with Playscripts. Her play, MAMA BUSHWICK IS DEAD, was a winner of The Blank Theatre's 29th Annual Young Playwrights Festival, and had a year-long residency with Young Playwrights Theatre in Washington, DC. Her play, HERE'S TO ALL THE BROKEN GIRLS was a winner of The Blank Theatre's 30th Annual Young Playwrights Festival.



## **DELILAH REVISITED: A MORALITIES PLAY** **by Jared Strange**

*Delilah appears to be living her dream. She's heading up a new Bible show for children, touring all over Texas, and pursuing her vision alongside her co-creator and (unrequited) college sweetheart. However, she's also a lot more "woke" than she used to be, and the old-school worldview her mother drilled into her just isn't going to cut it anymore. Unfortunately, the rest of the team is not onboard with her new, progressive vision and her frank assessment of the Good Book.*

*Fissures start to form as Delilah pursues a complete overhaul, setting up a knockdown, drag out fight over the fate of the show. Fantasy, heart, and light audience participation run through this comedy about fighting for what you believe in, even if what you believe isn't always clear.*

**Jared Strange** is a PhD Candidate and Mary Savage Snouffer Fellow at the University of Maryland, as well as a writer, dramaturg, educator, and critic based in Washington, DC. He holds an MFA in Playwriting from Texas Tech University. His scholarship and reviews can be found in *Theatre Research International*, *Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism*, *Comparative Drama*, *Theatre Journal*, *TDR*, the *Washington City Paper*, *DC Theatre Arts* and a series of historical websites for The National Theatre. His plays have been produced and developed across the United States and in Europe, including at the MeetFactory in Prague, DC Source Festival, Rorschach Theatre Company, WildWind Performance Lab, Bath Fringe Festival, Dayton Playhouse FutureFest, William Inge Theatre Festival, the Lubbock Community Theatre, Florida Atlantic University Theatre Lab, Texas Tech University, and the University of Maryland. As a dramaturg, Jared specializes in new play development, audience engagement, and educational materials.



## **BECOMING!!, OR, THE MAKING OF THE MUSICAL SENSATION OF 2279 AND ALL THAT FOLLOWED** **by Josiah Thomas Turner**

*Tasked with adapting BECOMING by Michelle Obama, a small corps of actors in a post-apocalyptic colony undertake tech week. But with a revolution on the horizon, the cast must decide on which side their loyalties lie; with the pompous "Echelon" or the "dirty" outcasts on the verge of overthrowing Canaan. Viola is thrust into the role of Michelle Obama, suddenly a part of a society that would never have accepted her otherwise. But the playwright, Uriah, manically*

*desperate for a brilliant opening, pushes her and the rest of the cast too far, too fast. Meanwhile Atticus, a smoldering revolutionary, shares a secret plan that may upend all of BECOMING!! before opening night can even arrive!*

**Josiah Thomas Turner** is writer and musician based out of Washington Heights, New York. Turner received his undergraduate degree in Drama from the University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point before earning an M.F.A. in Playwriting from The University of Texas at Austin. Born and raised in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Turner trained as a multi-instrumentalist from a young age and spent much of his early years creating and performing music. Josiah's current interests include animation, video-games and French-Canadian prog-rock.



## **THE GREAT IMPRESARIO BORIS LERMONTOV WOULD LIKE TO INVITE YOU TO DINNER** by **Tristan B. Willis**

*Two actors meet onstage and flip a coin to decide who plays which character in this performance. One takes on the role of Boris Lermontov, the boisterous and boastful impresario of a popular ballet company, while the other plays his employee Noa, an unappreciated dancer who's been tasked with serving dinner to Lermontov and his guest (the audience). The façade of the dinner party quickly starts to crumble as tensions rise between impresario and dancer, revealing the faulty hierarchical structures inherent to such working relationships. As the actor playing Lermontov tries to show how the impacts of such power imbalances can be solved with the "Right Person" in the role of impresario, they fall further and further into a trap they've created for themselves.*

**Tristan B Willis** (They/Them) is a DC-based playwright and game creator interested in trans and queer work and the intersection of theatre and games - including making meaningful, interactive experiences for audiences. As a former resident of the Orchard Project's Liveness Lab and CultureHub's Writing for Electronic Formats, Tristan discussed and cultivated new ways of presenting theatrical work in digital and distanced spaces. In early 2023, Tristan wrote, performed, and streamed "in a way that matters," developed as part of The Kennedy Center's Local Theatre Residency at the REACH. Tristan coordinates the Theatre Washington Mentoring Program for DC-area theatre practitioners and works with Young Playwrights' Theater. You can learn more about Tristan and their work at [tristanbwillis.com](http://tristanbwillis.com).



## **STROKE** by **TJ Young**

Trip, a once-great painter finds herself relegated to making educational art videos instead of the art she wishes to make. When Trip's ex-girlfriend, Meredith, shows up wanting to truly move on from their relationship, Trip comes up with a plan to keep Meredith around - even if just for a little bit longer. As Trip slips back into her old destructive habits, she is confronted by her muse who has also been trying to reach her, but for her own purposes. What is the cost of creativity? How can creation lead to destruction? Is any of it worth it?

**TJ Young** is a Texas-born playwright and dramaturg based in Pittsburgh, where he serves as co-representative for the Dramatists Guild - Pittsburgh region. His plays include *THE INSEPARABLES* (Pittsburgh Public Theatre commission), *ISLE OF NOISES* (James Madison University Commission), *NO. 6* (2017 Harold and Mimi Steinberg Award Winner – KCACTF, Indiana Rep), *LYON'S DEN* (2018 Harold and Mimi Steinberg Distinguished Achievement awardee), *RUBY'S BABY BLUE* (2016 John Cauble Short Play Award Regional Finalist- KCACTF), *Hell is Empty* (2017 John Cauble Short Play Award Regional Finalist - KCACTF), and *Sperm Donor Wanted* (2023 L. Arnold Weissberger New Play Award Finalist). He is the recipient of the 2017 Ken Ludwig Playwriting Scholarship. He was the 2019 Spotlight Artist of Throughline Theatre Company in Pittsburgh, PA. He received his MFA in Dramatic Writing from Texas State University. He is also the NPP Chair for Region 2 of the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival, where he also aids with the Playwriting Intensive and teaches workshops both at the regional and national levels. He is currently an Associate Professor of Dramaturgy at Carnegie Mellon University.