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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**BERKELEY REP'S THE GROUND FLOOR RETURNS THIS MONTH WITH
INNOVATIVE THEATRE PROJECTS FROM 29 BAY AREA ARTISTS****Research and development facility for theatre invites artists for ninth Summer Residency Lab**

August 9, 2021 – This morning, Berkeley Rep's Artistic Director Johanna Pfaelzer announced the return of **The Ground Floor: Berkeley Rep's Center for the Creation and Development of New Work**. Thirteen projects from 29 talented artists across the Bay Area have been selected for its **Summer Residency Lab**. As part of an extraordinary laboratory for collaboration, some of the Bay Area's most prominent and promising theatre makers will unite at the Theatre's Harrison Street campus and virtually over an intense four-week period to exchange ideas, incubate new theatrical work, and build artistic community.

Residencies have been awarded to **Debórah Eliezer** in collaboration with **Vidhu Singh, Noor Adabachi**, and **Cynthia Ling Lee** (*Burning Wild*); **Bennett Fisher** (*Cry Havoc*); **Denmo Ibrahim** and **Kate Bergstrom** (*Beyond the Ocean's Edge*); **Josh Kornbluth** (*The Bottomless Bowl*); **Jeffrey Lo** (*Delano Love Song*); **Leigh M. Marshall** (*The Rosaline Play*); **Ashley Smiley, Margo Hall, Sean San José**, and **Joan Osato** (*Dirty White Teslas Make Me Sad*); **Ari'el Stachel** and **Tony Taccone** (*Untitled*); **Madison Wetzell** and **Ciera Eis** (*Untitled: Faust on 4Chan*); **Dawn L. Troupe, Jeff Liu**, and **Adrienne Shamszad** (*Riding the Light*); **Erika Chong Shuch, Ryan Tacata**, and **Rowena Richie** (*The Welcoming*); **Chris Steele, Sean Owens, NJ Bice**, and **Nic Candito** (*Gaslit: A Trans Drag Parody*); and **Molly Van Der Molen** (*Never Sink River*).

"Theatre isn't meant to be made in isolation," says Madeleine Oldham, director of The Ground Floor. "Connecting with our local artistic community feels not only right, but essential after such a long period where we couldn't be together. The Bay Area has such a vibrant creative pulse, and we are so excited that The Ground Floor can play a small role in getting our collective blood flowing again."

Artists and projects selected for the ninth annual Summer Residency Lab:

- **Debórah Eliezer, Vidhu Singh, Noor Adabachi**, and **Cynthia Ling Lee** – ***Burning Wild***: How does climate disaster affect our sense of belonging? *Burning Wild*, created by Debórah Eliezer in collaboration with Vidhu Singh, Noor Adabachi, and Cynthia Ling Lee, is a devised performance, incorporating physical theatre and dance, created in response to the California wildfires of 2020. It began as a community-gathering circle to support Northern Californians affected by the wildfires. Recent 2020 fire survivors themselves, Debórah and Noor draw from their lived experience using personal stories of their relationship to home and placemaking from the Middle East to the Bay Area told through devised text, song, movement, documentary video, and puppetry to tell a collaged docu-myth about the land, displacement, trauma, and renewal, offering

artists and audiences an opportunity for resilience, hope, and community healing in a time when a prolonged megafire season is an annual occurrence.

- **Bennett Fisher – *Cry Havoc*** is a dark comedy inspired by the attempted kidnapping of Michigan governor Gretchen Whitmer. A hybrid of live and digital performance, the play unfolds across a series of platforms – Zoom meetings, phone calls, texts, chat boards, social media posts, video, and more – following a group of conspirators in far over their heads. With unexpected humor and biting satire, *Cry Havoc* explores the allure of conspiracy theories, the rise of far-right extremist groups, and the sense of desperation created by the pandemic.
- **Denmo Ibrahim and Kate Bergstrom – *Beyond the Ocean's Edge***: May Ziadeh, an influential feminist of the 1920s, was a prolific writer, translator, and critic of Palestinian-Lebanese descent. Fluent in nine languages, her work paved the way for the Arab Renaissance. But May suffered a deep sense of isolation during her life. An advocate for women's rights and a leading intellectual of her time, she was often undermined by her peers, being praised for her beauty alone. In love, she had many suitors but rejected them all for a man she never met. Her greatest love was with the Lebanese poet, Khalil Gibran – a relationship in letters maintained over 19 years and until his death.
- **Josh Kornbluth – *The Bottomless Bowl***: The Zen Hospice Project of San Francisco was a remarkable institution – providing expert, loving comfort to people at death's door. For several years Josh Kornbluth – haunted by his father's death – spent countless hours at the hospice, first as an artist-in-residence and later as a volunteer. His experiences with numerous "residents" (as they were called), nurses, and volunteers transformed his attitudes toward both death and life.
- **Jeffrey Lo – *Delano Love Song***: Set against the backdrop of the 1960's Delano grape strike and the formation of the United Farm Workers, *Delano Love Song* is a sweeping romance about Lester, a migrant farmworker and one of the early Filipino-American immigrants, and Kathy, the daughter of one of the farm owners pushing back against the mounting protests led by Dolores Huerta, César Chávez, and Larry Itliong.
- **Leigh M. Marshall – *The Rosaline Play***: Rosaline Velasco, an A&R executive at a major music label, strikes platinum when she discovers a pair of young trap hitmakers who spin yarns about self-destruction – but when she uncovers true danger underlying the lyrics, she battles against a system that profits off of martyrdom to save her artists from themselves.
- **Ashley Smiley, Margo Hall, Sean San José, and Joan Osato – *Dirty White Teslas Make Me Sad*** is a statement and a deep-dive emotional state for the Black and Brown San Franciscans watching their home be overrun by silent harbingers of doom and sleek reflections of otherness.
- **Ari'el Stachel and Tony Taccone – *Untitled*** is a semi-autobiographical solo show about Ari'el's pursuit to understand his lifelong battle with anxiety after winning a Tony Award. It examines his identity and the years he spent hiding his Yemenite Israeli American Jewish heritage in the aftermath of 9/11.
- **Madison Wetzell and Ciera Eis – *Untitled Faust on 4Chan***: A loose adaptation of *Faust*, in which jokes are very serious, things get out of hand, and the internet is a demonic Greek chorus. A young man in his Nietzsche phase makes an anonymous online joke that accidentally spawns a conspiracy theory. A YouTuber of questionable politics offers him fame, fortune, and endless entertainment to keep the conspiracy going – as a joke, of course. When his girlfriend's graduate school roommate threatens to expose him, he sends his bloodthirsty following after them.
- **Dawn L. Troupe, Jeff Liu, and Adrienne Shamszad – *Riding the Light*** is a musical about a brilliant young Afro-German prodigy whose love of astronomy and astrophysics offers her a deep spiritual connection to her ancestors, the universe, and ultimately her greatest self.

- **Erika Chong Shuch, Ryan Tacata, and Rowena Richie – *The Welcoming*** is devised in collaboration with 12 elders and performed live for small audiences at sites throughout San Francisco specific to each elder. A shared theme of “returning” runs through each performance and recurring motif: for example, one character’s “welcoming gestures” are performed as neo-folk dances. *The Welcoming* serves as a theatricalized greeting ceremony that places those most vulnerable at the center of our creative embrace.
- **Chris Steele, Sean Owens, NJ Bice, and Nic Candito – *Gaslit: A Trans Drag Parody*** is an intentionally queer, trans, and feminist takedown of an accidentally impactful theatre classic: *Angel Street*. This immersive solo performance is told through the eyes of the unwitting ghost of Bella Manlyhands, formerly Bella D'Balle. It's a full-length solo adventure that features drag lip sync, storytelling parlour games, murderous intrigue, and edible soap.
- **Molly Van Der Molen's** currently untitled “Van Der Molen Project” captures the relentless, tragic, and fervently loving story of her grandparents through a series of “episodes” that culminate in an epic using non-linear narrative, American folk music, and mixed media.

ARTIST BIOS

Noor Adabachi, environmental and community designer, is a graduate of the California Institute of the Arts (CalArts), where he studied set and costume design. Designs for foolsFURY include *(dis)Place[d]*, directed by Ben Yalom; *The Unheard of World*, directed by Michelle Haner; and *Faulted*, directed by Evren Odcikin. After working on theatre and dance productions in Los Angeles in the early '80s he concentrated on custom furniture design and fabrication, creating work for Milton Katselas, Oprah Winfrey, Catherine Bell, Guy Laliberté (founder of Cirque du Soleil), and many others. His work has been featured in architectural magazines and on *E The Entertainment Channel*. Since 2016 Adabachi has co-stewarded Venado Arts and Farm center, an educational center for arts and farming in Sonoma County, California. A recent fire survivor of the LNU Sonoma County fires in 2020, Adabachi is currently rebuilding Venado and working on sculptural elements for a new project about his experience in the California wildfires entitled *Burning Wild*.

Kate Bergstrom, a west-midwest, queerdo/they/she human (non-binary femme presenting), is an intermedia artist who functionally considers them/herself a director, mostly for theatre, but also for video/immersive/film/TV narrative work. They/she is also a passionate supporter of great artists of all kinds – a dramaturg, creative producer, new play whisperer, and audio-making fiend. Now residing in NYC, their work has been seen regionally at Trinity Rep (*A Christmas Carol*), Marin Theatre Company (*Noura* by Heather Raffo), Cleveland Play House (Workshop *Galilee 34* by Eleanor Burgess), LATC X We The Women (*Fill Fill Fill Fill Fill Fill Fill* by Steph Del Rosso), Opera San Diego (OSB), Music Academy of the West (*The Shakespeare Salon*), REDCAT (*Wholed*), LACMA, and more. In NYC, she has directed work at Ars Nova (*Hotbox*), The Bushwick Starr (Workshop: *On the Y-Axis*), Rattlestick Theater (Workshop: *Red Bike*), New Dramatists (Workshop: *Orange Balloon* by Erin Courtney), JACK (*h0t club FISHXSEAFOOD*), Dixon Place (*Anne Frank Live at the Plaza* by Evan Horwitz) + Access Theatre (Workshop: *These Walls*). They are a proud member of SDC, New Georges Affiliated Artist, and member of the intermedia performance group, h0t club. They've whispered new plays everywhere from Playwrights Center to Curious Theatre Company (Denver) to Ojai Playwrights Conference. Central Coast BroadwayWorld.com's 2016 Person to Watch + 2017 Best Director. Founding Artistic Director of On The Verge Summer Repertory Company in Santa Barbara & *Explosions From the Other Canon @ Brown*. MFA, Brown/Trinity. Kate is also critic at Rhode Island School of Design and co-teaches Performing the Internet at NYU + The New School. They currently hold a guest lectureship appointment at UC Santa Barbara and UC Los Angeles and help develop strategic anti-racist action plans for a number of companies. Her directorial work, described as “haunting, intimate and provocative” by Brian Mertes, focuses on queering brittle gaze, making the impossible possible, and supporting visionary playwrights and actors. Women in crisis, dark humor, audio terror, radical joy + rupturing the status quo are a few of the ingredients you may find in her concoctions. She is on the hunt to be together better.

Nathaniel J. Bice is a scenic designer, fine artist, and craftsperson based in the San Francisco Bay Area. He has worked all around the Bay as a props artisan, scenic painter, and as an assistant to award-winning set designer, Nina Ball. He is originally from Albuquerque, New Mexico, and moved to Seattle in 2014, where he graduated from Cornish College of the Arts summa cum laude. As a visual artist, he takes inspiration from his surroundings and makes gouache paintings on site exploring the architecture and environments of the Bay Area. His work is derived from the understanding that the human eye sees differently than a camera, and the time spent physically in a space imbues the work with an irreplaceable sense of place. The city is filled with human intent: every brick was laid by someone and every inch of sidewalk has been trod hundreds of times in a single hour. In sitting to paint, NJ is given the opportunity to absorb and appreciate that investment, and to add some of his own. His work can be viewed at njbice.com.

Nicolas Candito (he/him) is an award-winning lighting designer currently working in the Bay Area. Local credits include Kat Robichaud's *Misfit Cabaret* at the Alcazar Theatre, *The Supers* at Z Space, and *Atomic Clown* at Potrero Stage (directed by Sean Owens). He is a longtime collaborator with Big Idea Theatre in Sacramento and has also designed for Stockton Civic Theatre. *Gaslit* is Nicolas' third time working with Poltergeist Theatre Project, having designed the company's previous two productions: *Cabaret Cressida* and *The Julie Cycle*, both of which were adapted and written by Chris Steele. When not designing for stage, Nic is often found running lights and sound for various nightlife and drag events throughout San Francisco.

Ciera Eis (she/her) is a San Francisco-based director and producer. She is passionate about developing sociopolitical new work and has aided in play development at American Conservatory Theater, Magic Theatre, Shotgun Players, Custom Made, and Playground. Recent directing credits include three commissioned media projects through Shotgun Players, *Every Brilliant Thing* (Saint Mary's), *In the Dark* (Playground-LA), *You Had Me at Hello* (FaultLine), and *The Official Unicorn Hunter's Guide* (winner of Short Lived VIII). She is the co-artistic director of FaultLine Theatre, the new works producer of Custom Made Theatre, the creative producer of Pint Sized Plays, and the manager of individual giving at Magic Theatre. She graduated from University of California, Santa Cruz with a double in Directing and Psychology. Learn more about her upcoming projects at cieraeis.com.

Debórah Eliezer is a mixed identity white/MENA theatre maker, social activist, community designer, and California fire survivor living and working on the unceded territory of the Ramaytush Ohlone. She is the artistic director of foolsFURY Theater, an associate artist with Golden Thread, an artEquity arts facilitator alumna, and serves on the MENA Alliance of Theatre Makers steering committee (MENATMA) and the board of the Alliance of Jewish Theatre. Passionate about the power of human transformation, her work focuses on disrupting assumptions about art, human values, and society. She has devised and performed in numerous world premieres, working with playwrights Katie Pearl, Kate Tarker, Yusef el Guindi, Denmo Ibrahim, Torange Yeghiazarian, Fabrice Melquiot, Angela Santillo, Sheila Callaghan, Doug Dorst, Ben Yalom, and Dan Chumley. With foolsFURY, Eliezer wrote and performed *(dis)Place[d]*, which toured the FURY Factory, Ko Fest, Olivia Cruises, and Limmud UK in 2019 and is featured in Michael Malek Najjar's book, *Middle Eastern American Theatre: Communities, Cultures and Artists*. She holds a BA cum laude from SFSU and a certificate in Sound, Voice Music Healing from CIIS. Eliezer is the associate director of Kids on Camera. She is a professional voiceover artist, and you may have heard her voice in over 25 Leapfrog Toys, Sims 2, 3 and 4 video games, or numerous radio ads. She teaches throughout the Bay Area and maintains a private coaching practice.

Bennett Fisher is a member of Campo Santo, the Playwright's Foundation's Resident Playwright Initiative, People of Interest, as well as a former artistic associate and Shank Fellowship Playwright in Residence at Victory Gardens Theater in Chicago. His plays include *Shelter*, *Candlestick*, *Damascus* (Samuel Goldwyn Award, O'Neill Conference finalist), *Borealis* (Alliance/Kendeda Prize finalist), *Don't Be Evil*, *Campo Maldito*, and the dialogue for the immersive theatre experience *The Speakeasy*. His work has been presented and produced by the House Theater of Chicago, Strawdog Theater Company, Kansas City Repertory, Bay Area Playwrights Festival, La Jolla Playhouse's WOW Festival, Oregon Contemporary Theater, the Alliance Theater, the Kennedy Center MFA Playwrights Workshop, Florida

Repertory Theater, the Martin E. Segel Center, Burbage Theater Company, People of Interest, Campo Santo, Ubuntu Theater Project, Theater Emory, the Unicorn Theater, Sleepwalkers Theater, New Conservatory, the Cutting Ball Theater, Custom Made Theatre Company, and others. He has created immersive performance content for First Person Travel and the “Unreal Garden” at the 2019 E3 Conference. His screenplay version of *Damascus* was optioned by Bill Mechanic and Pandemonium, and he is currently developing TV projects with Gosh Films and Constantin Films. He received his MFA from UC San Diego. More at bennettfisher.net

Margo Hall An award-winning actor, director, playwright, and educator, Hall has been a leading presence in national and local theatre communities for more than 30 years. The first female artistic director of our theatre named for the trailblazing Black female playwright of *A Raisin in the Sun*, Hall takes the helm at a moment where artists of color demand representation and change in the American theatre. With a career dedicated to bringing the stories of people of color to life, Hall is committed to creating a safe space for fostering Black artists, particularly Black female and nonbinary artists who continue to be deeply underrepresented, as well as increasing society’s exposure to diverse perspectives.

Denmo Ibrahim Hailed by the *San Francisco Chronicle* as “a tower of strength in the Bay Area theatre scene,” Denmo is an American actor, playwright, educator, and entrepreneur of Egyptian descent. *Forbes* described her work as “gorgeous... the kind of full-immersive experience that you get in some of the world’s most innovative museums.” A Sundance Theatre Lab and Rainin Fellowship finalist, her work has toured to international festivals in Cairo, Berlin, and Loire Valley, as well as throughout the U.S. She has received awards from the National Endowment for the Arts, Zellerbach Family Foundation, Wallace Gerbode Foundation, Radius of Arab American Writers (RAWI), and Theatre Bay Area. She is the recipient of four SFBATCC Awards and two TBA awards, as well as numerous nominations. In addition to writing and performing, Denmo is also the founder and CEO of Earthbody, named “Top 25 Spas to Watch” by *Day Spa Magazine*, Omcali Sacred Skincare, Alchemy of Being, and The People’s Meditation. She is a resident artist of Golden Thread and a member of the steering committee of MENA Theatre Makers Alliance. She holds an MFA in Lecoq-based Actor Created Physical Theater from Naropa University and a BFA in Acting from Boston University. Her next writing project is a historical drama for Audible. denmoibrahim.com

Josh Kornbluth For over three decades Josh Kornbluth has been performing his autobiographical monologues for theatre audiences all over the U.S., and in other countries as well. His show *Red Diaper Baby* ran Off Broadway at the Second Stage Theater, was selected for the *Best American Plays of 1992* collection, was nominated for a Drama Desk Award, and was made into a performance film for the Sundance Channel. His monologue *The Mathematics of Change* was also made into a performance film, directed by his brother Jacob Kornbluth. His shows *Haiku Tunnel* and *Love & Taxes* have both been adapted into feature films by Josh and brother Jacob. Josh has collaborated with director David Dower on five shows: *Ben Franklin: Unplugged*, *Love & Taxes*, *Citizen Josh*, *Andy Warhol: Good for the Jews?* (originally commissioned by the Contemporary Jewish Museum), and (for the Shotgun Players) *Sea of Reeds*. His most recent monologue, *Citizen Brain* (also for the Shotgun Players), was a collaboration with director Casey Stangl and dramaturg Aaron Loeb. For two years he hosted an interview program on public TV station KQED, cleverly titled *The Josh Kornbluth Show*. He was also artist-in-residence at the Zen Hospice Project in San Francisco. Josh is an Atlantic Fellow at the Global Brain Health Institute, where he produces the video series “Citizen Brain” (citizenbrain.org). Josh is over the moon that he’ll get to do a second stint at The Ground Floor to continue developing his work-in-progress, *The Bottomless Bowl*, which is also a collaboration with Stangl and Loeb.

Cynthia Ling Lee Choreographer and scholar, Cynthia Ling Lee instigates postcolonial, queer, and feminist-of-color interventions in the field of experimental performance. Trained in U.S. postmodern dance and North Indian classical kathak, she is committed to intimate collaborative relationships, ethical intercultural exchange, and foregrounding marginalized voices and aesthetics. Cynthia is a member of the *Post Natyam Collective*, a transnational, web-based coalition of artists of color trained in South Asian dance whose work triangulates between art-making, activism, and theory. Her recent works include *Lost Chinatowns*, which explores the destruction, lost vibrancy, and historical erasure of Santa Cruz’s Chinatowns from 1860-1955, and *Back to the Beautiful (Water Memories)*, a site-adaptive interactive

installation about borders, beauty, water, and memory. She is a member of foolsFURY's *The Library Project* ensemble. Cynthia was the recipient of a Thomas J. Watson Fellowship for the study of religious dance in Thailand, India, and Brazil. Other honors include a Hellman Fellowship, Asia-Pacific Performing Arts Exchange Fellowship, Taipei Artist Village Residency, NET/TEN grant, CounterPulse Performing Diaspora residency, two Santa Monica Individual Artist Fellowships, and two Artists' Resource for Completion grants. Influential teachers and mentors include Simone Forti, Eiko & Koma, Judy Mitoma, Pallabi Chakravorty, Bandana Sen, Kumudini Lakhia, Anjani Ambegaokar, and the contact improvisation community. She was a longtime board member of the Network of Ensemble Theaters and is an associate professor of dance in the Department of Performance, Play, and Design at the University of California at Santa Cruz. www.cynthialinglee.com

Jeff Liu is a writer and director for theatre, film, and web, was the former literary manager for East West Players, and is a member of the O'Neill National Directing Fellowship cohort of 2016. He is currently a resident dramaturg for the Ojai Playwrights Conference. His productions include the LA premiere of *Chinglish* by David Henry Hwang, as well as the world premieres of *Paletas de Coco* by Franky D. Gonzalez (Ars Nova ANTfest, June 2021), *The Brothers Paranormal* by Prince Gomolvilas, *Two Mile Hollow* by Leah Nanako Winkler, *Mexican Day* and *The Chinese Massacre (Annotated)* by Tom Jacobson, *Texas* and *Solve For X* by Judy Soo Hoo, *Murderabilia* and *Terminus Americana* (Ovation Award nominee for Best World Premiere) by Matt Pelfrey, and *The Golden Hour* and *Grace Kim and the Spiders From Mars* by Philip W. Chung. He also adapted and directed the Pulitzer-nominated play *Yellow Face* by David Henry Hwang for the YOMYOMF Network on YouTube, where it's still available to watch for free.

Jeffrey Lo (He/Him/His) is a Filipino-American playwright and director based in the Bay Area. He is the recipient of the Leigh Weimers Emerging Artist Award, the Emerging Artist Laureate by Arts Council Silicon Valley, and Theatre Bay Area Director's TITAN Award. Selected directing credits include *The Language Archive* and *The Santaland Diaries* at TheatreWorks Silicon Valley; *Vietgone* at Capital Stage; *A Doll's House, Part 2* and *Eurydice* at Palo Alto Players (TBA Awards finalist for Best Direction); *Peter and the Starcatcher* and *Noises Off* at Hillbarn Theatre; *The Grapes of Wrath*, *The Crucible*, and *Yellow Face* at Los Altos Stage Company; and *Uncle Vanya* at the Pear Theatre (BATCC award for Best Production). As a playwright, his plays have been produced and workshopped at TheatreWorks Silicon Valley, The BindleStiff Studio, City Lights Theatre Company, and Custom Made Theatre Company. His play *Writing Fragments Home* was a finalist for the Bay Area Playwright's Conference and a semi-finalist for the O'Neill Playwright's Conference. Jeffrey has also worked with the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, The Asian American International Film Festival, and San Jose Repertory, and is a company member of Ferocious Lotus Theatre Company and SF Playground. In addition to his work in theatre, he works as an educator and advocate for issues of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion and has served as a grant panelist for the Zellerbach Family Foundation, Silicon Valley Creates, and Theatre Bay Area. He is the director community partnerships and casting director at the Tony Award-winning TheatreWorks Silicon Valley, a graduate of the Multicultural Arts Leadership Institute, and a proud alumnus of the UC Irvine Drama Department.

Leigh M. Marshall is a multi-disciplinary writer and performer. Plays include *Marat's Dead* (winner, GPSG Research Award; finalist, Bay Area Playwrights Festival); *Spells for Going Forth by Daylight* (recipient, Felton Fund Grant; semifinalist, National Playwrights Conference at the O'Neill, the Jerome/Many Voices Fellowship, Lila Acheson Wallace Fellowship at Juilliard, the Corkscrew Festival); *Laterality* (official selection, the Examined Life Conference at Carver College of Medicine; semifinalist, Bay Area Playwrights Festival); and *Fame Heaux* (semifinalist, the O'Neill). In an artistic development capacity, she has worked at Arena Stage, New Dramatists, and the International Writing Program. Currently, she is co-creator/lead writer of MEDIA CLOWN, a multi-modal devised theatrical experience that premiered at the Prague Quadrennial and was awarded the Epic Mega Grant from UnReal Engine for a physical-digital performance run in fall 2021. BA: Stanford University. MFA: Iowa Playwrights Workshop.

Joan Osato has played a pivotal role in local and national theatre for over a decade and has been an indispensable part of Youth Speaks / The Living Word Project since 2001. She has brought her multiplicity of producing and design talents to LWP Repertory works such as *The Break/s*, *Word Becomes*

Flesh, Scourge, Tree City Legends, and *Mirrors in Every Corner*, and plays for Campo Santo including *The River* by Richard Montoya, and *Alleluia* by Luis Alfaro, directed by Jonathan Moscone. In 2014 she is producing plays *Chasing Mehserle* by Chinaka Hodge, *Spiritrials* by Dahlak Brathwaite, both directed by Marc Bamuthi Joseph, and *Nogales* by Richard Montoya and Sean San José. Her current projects include a state-wide community engagement project called *Califas* (recipient of the Rockefeller MAPFund), *Reflections of Healing* with muralist Brett Cook, and *Life is Living*, a project in neglected parks in urban centers around the country.

Sean Owens has been a playwright and performer in the Bay Area for 30 years. They have created solo shows, full musicals, genderfluid comedies, and countless short plays— earning them two Bay Area Critics' Circle Awards, and "Best Comic Playwright" from the SF Weekly. They currently write, teach and direct for *Killing My Lobster*, and have recently directed Toby Moore's "Atomic Clown" at Potrero Stage, as well as their developmental workshop for "WunderWorld 2.0," and a reading of Chris Steele's "Zagriate" for PlayGround. They are slated to direct "Gaslit" for Poltergeist Theater the minute the world reopens.

Rowena Richie has created programs for movement and self-expression with vulnerable populations including older people with diverse physical and cognitive abilities. She is a Senior Atlantic Fellow for Equity in Brain Health at the Global Brain Health Institute (GBHI), at the University of California, San Francisco. Rowena is involved in a number of projects that promote positive aging. These include co-developing a video series of older women artists at work and a pilot program for dementia caregivers and their loved ones.

Sean San José, the newly appointed artistic director of the Magic Theatre, is a writer, director, performer, and co-founder of Campo Santo, a new performances company for people of color in San Francisco. Founded in 1996, Campo Santo is an award-winning group committed to developing new performance and to nurturing people of color centered new audiences and has premiered nearly 100 new pieces. For 15 years he was the program director of performance for Intersection for the Arts, San Francisco's oldest alternative arts space. He co-created Alma Delfina Group-Teatro Contra el SIDA and "Pieces of the Quilt," a collection of 50+ short plays on AIDS. His writing commissions and productions include *Play On!* for Oregon Shakespeare Festival, American Conservatory Theater, Ictus Productions, Kronos Quartet, Kularts, and others. In his multi-genre work, San José has developed and directed the first performance pieces and plays with Jimmy Baca, Junot Diaz, Star Finch, Chinaka Hodge, Denis Johnson, Luis Saguar, Vendela Vida, and more and has enjoyed ongoing collaborations with creators Luis Alfaro, Jessica Hagedorn, Richard Montoya, and others. San José is a proud part of Colman Domingo's new production company Edith Productions. He frequently teaches in the Theater, Dance and Performance Studies Department at University of California at Berkeley. Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram @camposantof.

Adrienne Shamszad is a musician, vocalist, and composer who sings revolutionary anthems, prayerful power ballads, blues, lullabies, and love songs in English and in Farsi. Her strong and soulful voice and bold performance style have made her a popular West Coast performer for over a decade. Adrienne's poetry is intimate and genuine, inspired by the mystic Poets of Iran as much as the folk poet-songwriters of the '60s and '70s. Her mixed cultural background, international travels, and deep love of people reside in her music. It can open listeners' hearts to the unfamiliar and, in doing so, invite more understanding, courage, and curiosity into this world. Since beginning formal training in Traditional Iranian vocal arts and music in 2016, Adrienne's music has expanded to a genre of its own as she brings the messages of her ancestors into the present moment. In 2018, Adrienne won the Living Cultures grant through the Alliance for California Traditional Arts (ACTA) to deepen her study of Persian Classical singing with master teacher and vocalist Mahsa Vahdat. She showcased her bi-lingual repertoire on the Freight & Salvage stage in August of 2019 to a full house. Adrienne has performed with renowned artists such as Kitka, David Wilcox, SOVOSO, Coleman Barks, and Mahsa Vahdat. She has performed in productions by Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Golden Thread Productions, and Diaspora Arts Connection and is a two-time winner of the Alliance for California Traditional Art's Master-Apprenticeship grant.

Erika Chong Shuch is a performance maker, choreographer, and director interested in expanding ideas around how performance is created and shared. Shuch received the Creative Capital Award in 2016 to develop *For You*. Shuch's performance works have been supported and commissioned by Gerbode

Foundation, Creative Work Fund, SF Arts Commission, Berkeley Rep's Ground Floor, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, Liz Lerman's Dance Exchange/Corcoran Gallery/DC and in Korea: Daejeon Metropolitan Company, Chang Mu Company, Mullae Art Space and more. Directing credits include *Lily's Revenge*, *the Love Act* by Taylor Mac at the Magic Theatre in San Francisco, and co-creating/directing *Iron Shoes* with Kitka Women's Vocal Ensemble. As a choreographer for theatre, Shuch is a full member of the Choreographer and Stage Directors Union, and works for regional theatre companies across the country. Shuch is currently a lecturer at UC Berkeley and a Grenada Artist-in-Residence at UC Davis.

Dr Vidhu Singh Vidhu Singh's pioneering efforts as dramaturg, director, and scholar have promoted the visibility of South Asian theatre in the American theatre. She holds a Master's degree in Dramatic Art from UC Santa Barbara and a doctorate from UH Manoa's Asian Theatre program. Her research on India's regional experimental 1990s theatre movement has provided a vital contextual foundation to the life of Indian theatre today. Vidhu is a resident artist at Brava Theater, a core member of Theatre without Borders, a graduate of the Lincoln Center Theater Directors' Lab, a founding member of World Wide Lab, and the founder of RasaNova Theater. Vidhu's passion for dramaturgy emerged from the need for culturally conscious dramaturgy for new plays, including South Asian plays translated from regional languages. Vidhu's fluency in a variety of cultural and aesthetic forms, her dramaturgy training, her scholarship, and her passion for theatre have made her contribution to the American theatre truly unique. Cal Shakes recognized this uniqueness by honoring Vidhu with the 2020 Luminary Award in dramaturgy. Recent highlights include *Third Eye Moonwalk* by Jon Bernson with Playwrights Foundation, BUILD From Here: the Future of Ensemble Theaters 2020 with foolsFURY Theater Company, *House of Joy* by Madhuri Shekar with Cal Shakes in 2019 and Bay Area Playwrights Festival in 2018, and Golden Thread Productions' ReOrient 2017 Festival of Short Plays.

Ashley Smiley aka Smiley is a San Francisco born and raised poet and playwright with a professional background in production and stage management. Currently, Smiley is the program manager for the Bayview Opera House, which sits at the core of the African American Arts and Cultural District. Smiley is also a core member of the Campo Santo performance collective, an inaugural member of the JANGA's House collective led by Dr. Ayodele Nzinga and Cat Brooks, and a proud board member for The Living Earth Show. This summer, Smiley is acting as the director of theatre production for the 2021 BAMDBFEST, where her piece *I'll Love You Down by the Sea* will be presented as an audioplay, and this fall Smiley will be co-curating the Life is Living Theatre Stage and beginning her pursuit of her PhD in Historical and Cultural Studies in Religion with a concentration in Art and Religion at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, CA.

Ari'el Stachel can currently be seen in the critically acclaimed A24 feature *Zola*, directed by Janicza Bravo and opposite Taylour Paige, Riley Keough, and Colman Domingo. Ari'el will next be seen in a supporting role in Olivia Wilde's upcoming feature *Don't Worry Darling* opposite Florence Pugh, Harry Styles, and Chris Pine. He previously recurred on NBC's *Law & Order: SVU* and guest starred on Showtime's *Billions*, Netflix's *Jessica Jones*, and CBS' *Blue Bloods*. Ari's work in *The Band's Visit* on Broadway won him the 2018 Tony Award for best Featured Actor in a Musical. His previous performance of this role at The Atlantic Theatre Company also garnered him 2017 Lucille Lortel and Drama Desk Award nominations for Outstanding Featured Actor in a Musical. Ari also starred as one of the leads in the scripted podcast *The Two Princes*, produced by Gimlet Media. He will next be seen starring in *The Visitor* at The Public Theater opposite David Hyde Pierce.

Chris Steele (they/them) is a queer trans nonbinary performance artist, writer, and activist. Their work centers on highlighting queer narratives throughout history and combating bigotry and white supremacy. As an actor, they have performed with companies across the Bay including We Players, NCTC, Cutting Ball, SF Shakespeare Festival, and SF Playwrights Festival. As a writer they premiered adaptations of *Miss Julie*, *Troilus and Cressida*, and *Dracula* with queer collective Poltergeist Theatre Project; had short plays produced by The Pear, PlayGround, and Cutting Ball; and were commissioned by Custom Made to adapt *The Tempest*. Their award-winning drag personas Polly Amber Ross and Peter Pansexual can be found on instagram @pollyandpeter, where they've been creating politically subversive video performance art throughout the Covid pandemic.

Ryan Tacata is a performance maker, scholar, and core member of For You. His recent work includes a *minor repair*. (2019), an archive-based response commissioned by the City of Chicago for the exhibition goat island archive — we have discovered the performance by making it; *Lolas* (2017), a performance installation in honor of Filipino grandmothers (Asian Art Museum, SF); and dancing in *Doggie Hamlet* (2015–) by Ann Carlson, a site-specific dance with four human performers, sheep-herding dogs, and 30+ sheep. His academic research plays critical intimacy in the key of everyday life, and he is writing on the occasion of art with an emphasis on social ceremony, art history, and occasional literature. He is currently assistant professor of performance at the School for the Contemporary Arts, Simon Fraser University.

Tony Taccone was the Michael Leibert Artistic Director of Berkeley Rep for over 30 years. During Taccone's tenure as artistic director of Berkeley Rep, the Tony Award-winning nonprofit earned a reputation as an international leader in innovative theatre. In those years, Berkeley Rep presented more than 70 world, American, and West Coast premieres and sent 24 shows to New York, two to London, and one to Hong Kong. Taccone has staged more than 40 plays in Berkeley, including new work from Julia Cho, John Leguizamo, Daniel Handler, Culture Clash, Rinde Eckert, David Edgar, Danny Hoch, Geoff Hoyle, and Itamar Moses. He directed the shows that transferred to London, *Continental Divide* and *Tiny Kushner*, and three that landed on *Broadway: Bridge & Tunnel*, *Wishful Drinking*, and *Latin History for Morons*. Prior to working at Berkeley Rep, Taccone served as artistic director of Eureka Theatre, which produced the American premieres of plays by Dario Fo, Caryl Churchill, and David Edgar before focusing on a new generation of American writers. While at the Eureka, Taccone commissioned Tony Kushner's legendary *Angels in America* and co-directed its world premiere. He has collaborated with Kushner on eight plays at Berkeley Rep, including *The Intelligent Homosexual's Guide to Capitalism and Socialism with a Key to the Scriptures*. Taccone's regional credits include Actors Theatre of Louisville, Arena Stage, Center Theatre Group, the Eureka Theatre, the Guthrie Theater, the Huntington Theatre Company, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, The Public Theater, and Seattle Repertory Theatre. As a playwright, he debuted *Ghost Light*, *Rita Moreno: Life Without Makeup*, *Game On*, written with Dan Hoyle, and *It Can't Happen Here*, written with Bennett S. Cohen. In 2012, Taccone received the Margo Jones Award for "demonstrating a significant impact, understanding, and affirmation of playwriting, with a commitment to the living theatre." In 2018 he directed the revival of *Angels in America* at Berkeley Rep. In 2019 he directed and co-wrote (with John Leguizamo) the world premiere of *Kiss My Aztec!* at Berkeley Rep.

Dawn L. Troupe is an artist who has graced the stage, film, television, and the classroom with aplomb. She grew up in the Bay Area (b. Berkeley, raised in Oakland) amongst great musicians, thought leaders, and practitioners across multiple art forms, which influences everything she creates. Dawn began writing as a youth, fell in love with the poetry of the written word, and continues to explore worlds via her writing. She has written and produced plays for youth, shorts for screen and stage, has a few television scripts in the works, and uses the demands of the human experience to inform all of her work. Her greatest writing influences have been Octavia E. Butler, the poetry of Langston Hughes, Marcus Gardley, Gwendolyn Brooks, and Isabel Wilkerson, to name a few. This will be Dawn's first time at Ground Floor as a playwright, but not her first time in the Ground Floor experience since she's had several acting opportunities via Ground Floor over the years. Her most recent experience in 2017 was working with Rachel Chavkin and Dave Malloy (*Great Comet* team) on the workshop of *Moby Dick*, which premiered at A.R.T. end of 2019-2020. Other noted productions she's been a part of include *Black Odyssey* and *Spunk* (Cal Shakes); *Brothers Paranormal* (Theater Row NY); *Anne of Green Gables* (Fingerlakes Theater); *Death of a Salesman* and *Gospel of Loving Kindness* (Oakland Theater Project); *As Much As I Can* (The Public); *Memphis*, *Once on This Island*, *Big River*, and *Caroline, or Change* (TheatreWorks); *Aida* (Willows); and *Ragtime* (Broadway by the Bay).

Molly Van Der Molen (she/her) is an emerging playwright, director, and creative producer based in New York City and the Bay Area. She's a resident director with Breaking & Entering Theatre Collective, an ad-hoc employee with New Dramatists, and is currently collaborating on a lyrical performance piece titled *My Body is Falling Apart* by Bubeck. Recent collaborations include *Um...*, co-written with Alexandra Fortin, which virtually premiered at the Greenwich Odeum earlier this year, and *GIRLHOOD* with The Tank, NYC. Molly is most thrilled to facilitate big ensemble pieces that paint honest portrayals of women,

explore queerness, and unearth the ever-evolving definitions of family. She's a graduate of Marymount Manhattan College.

Madison Wetzell (she/her) is a playwright based in the Bay Area. Her work includes *Mediocre Heterosexual Sex* (Staged reading: Z Space Problematic Play Festival; Finalist, Bay Area Playwrights Festival; Semi-Finalist, O'Neill Theatre National Playwrights Conference) and *The Lost Ballad of Our Mechanical Ancestor* (2022 Champagne Reading Series, Shotgun Players). Her short play, *The Official Unicorn Hunter's Guide*, was the winner of ShortLived VIII at PianoFight. Her immersive show, *Two Coins for the Ferryman*, co-written with Akaina Ghosh, was a twice-recipient of 3Girls Theater's Innovators Grant and was a part of their New Works Festival in early 2020. Other past work includes a site-specific adaptation of *The Bacchae* performed in Tilden Regional Park. She is a member of the SF PlayGround writers' pool.

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ABOUT THE GROUND FLOOR: BERKELEY REP'S CENTER FOR THE CREATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF NEW WORK

The Ground Floor: Berkeley Rep's Center for the Creation and Development of New Work seeks to enhance and expand the processes by which Berkeley Rep makes theatre. We strive to offer the most flexible environment possible for artists to come together and share ideas in person, to receive customized support on each individual project and to work together across disciplines. We will maintain an ongoing conversation with our audience and community about the work we are creating, and we will champion the spirit of innovation so inherent to Berkeley and the Bay Area.

INTERACTING WITH THE SUMMER RESIDENCY LAB

Our Summer Residency Lab brings artists to Berkeley to work on projects in one- to four-week residencies. Artists are selected based on a combination of existing relationships with Berkeley Rep and an application process. Interaction with other artists, staff, board and, when appropriate, the public are highly encouraged. There is no final presentation required at the end of the lab. If a project is in a stage where a reading or an audience would be useful, then that will be arranged. But there is no expectation of any kind of public showing. The purpose is to identify where the project is in its development path, and to move it to the next stage, whatever that stage may be.

ABOUT BERKELEY REP

Berkeley Repertory Theatre has grown from a storefront stage to an international leader in innovative theatre. Known for its ambition, relevance, and excellence, as well as its adventurous audience, the nonprofit has provided a welcoming home for emerging and established artists since 1968. Over 5.5 million people have enjoyed nearly 500 shows at Berkeley Rep, which have gone on to win six Tony Awards, seven Obie Awards, nine Drama Desk Awards, one Grammy Award, one Pulitzer Prize, and many other honors. Berkeley Rep received the Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre in 1997. To formalize, enhance, and expand the processes by which Berkeley Rep makes theatre, The Ground Floor: Berkeley Rep's Center for the Creation and Development of New Work was launched in 2012. The Berkeley Rep School of Theatre engages and educates some 20,000 people a year and helps build the audiences of tomorrow with its nationally recognized teen programs. Berkeley Rep's bustling facilities — which also include the 400-seat Peet's Theatre, the 600-seat Roda Theatre, and a spacious campus in West Berkeley — are helping revitalize a renowned city. Learn more at [berkeleyrep.org](https://www.berkeleyrep.org)

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