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2011 JANE CHAMBERS AWARDS

MAIN CONTEST WINNER

MUD OFFERINGS (1w: 25 minutes), by Natalie Marlena Goodnow, is a solo play about a Chicanita who has it out with the Virgen de Guadalupe. Set at a bedside altar, this exquisitely theatrical solo play features poetic interludes that unravel the culturally complicated truths, lies, and mythologies of Chicana spirituality and sexuality in the contexts of violence and betrayal, evoking deep cultural histories and complex lives with wit and great storytelling. *MUD OFFERINGS* has been performed at varied venues in Texas since 2009, including Teatro Q, The Austin Project and the Frontera Fest Short Fringe, as well as at the Woman at Work Festival in NYC. For rights or booking go to <<http://www.nataliegoodnow.com/>>.

NATALIE MARLENA GOODNOW is a teatrista, teaching artist, and cultural activist from Austin, Texas. She specializes in creating original works for the stage as a solo performer and in collaboration with other performers and playwrights. Natalie explores the relationships between people and places, exploring relationships to community, to the Earth, and to our own bodies. She brings 16 years experience working in theatre in various capacities—as actor, director, playwright, technician, designer, and producer. She toured her first solo autobiographical play *MUNTU: a word that means both tree and person*, to theatres, arts festivals, and community centers in Texas in 2008-09, garnering significant community response for its exploration of both urban deforestation and gentrification in Austin, leading to her residency at the *Alma de Mujer* Center for Social Change. She has also created devised theatre in partnership with teenage youth at the Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center's Teen Arts Puentes Project (2007-08), with the Theatre Action Project, and with UT-Austin's Living Newspaper. After receiving her B.A. in theater and feminist studies from Southwestern University, she studied independently with the Yuyachkani theater collective in Peru.

HONORABLE MENTIONS

EXQUISITE CORPSE (4F, 4M: 70 minutes) by Mia Chung. This full-length experimental play explores the fractured experience of a Korean immigrant who must decode the linguistic and cultural puzzles of her American life with her GI husband and their young son. Miju's efforts to learn English as a second language and build a life in New Jersey—from making friends to understanding everyday interactions in the US—literally splits her into pieces; a chorus of Mijus (some performed by women, some by men) turn against each other as her family relationships collapse, creating a theatrically-distinctive and cautionary play. For information on rights, contact the author at tellmianow@gmail.com.

MIA CHUNG is a member of the inaugural Civilians' R&D Group, Ma-Yi's Writers Lab, and, most recently, New Dramatists. She was awarded a 2011 TCG Global Connections grant to collaborate with a Korean musical theatre artist. The 2011 Icicle Creek Theatre Festival will include her play *You for Me for You* (with a subsequent reading at Seattle's ACT); Inkwell will present this play at the Kennedy Center's 2011 Page to Stage Festival. Her work has also been developed by the Magic Theatre and the Bay Area Playwrights Festival; she has also received a Sloan commission for a play about science fraud and had a residency at the Millay Colony for the Arts. She received her MFA from Brown University.

CAN'T COMPLAIN (3F, 1M: 90 minutes) by Christine Evans. In this richly-woven chamber play, seventy-year old Rita hates being confined in a hospital, where her overworked daughter Maureen places her for assessment after a mild stroke. Rita plots her escape with the help of her Irish

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roommate Iris, her granddaughter Jansis, and her cat's new best friend, the Devil. Alternately arch and vulnerable, Rita resists her present situation until a riotous party with Iris and the Devil foils her escape, bringing her face to face with the remains of her past. With an exquisite sense of language, character, and aging that erupt in alternately real and surreal dimensions, this cross-generational play plumbs family dynamics as well as mortality with psychological depth, cultural complexity and wry wit. For rights, contact the Peregrine Whittlesey Agency at pwwagy@aol.com.

CHRISTINE EVANS' plays have been produced in Australia, the U.K. and the U.S., and published by Samuel French, Smith and Kraus and Theatre Forum. Honors include the 2007 Jane Chambers Playwriting Award (*Trojan Barbie*), a Fulbright Award, the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts (RISCA) Playwriting Fellowship, two MacDowell Colony Fellowships, a Rockefeller Center Bellagio Residency, an Australia Council for the Arts New Work Award and the "Plays for the 21st Century Award." Evans is a Resident Artist at HERE Arts, where she is developing *You Are Dead. You Are Here* (a ghost story for the digital war age) <<http://here.org/resident-artists/project/you-are-dead.-you-are-here/>>. Her website is: <www.christine-evans-playwright.com>.

MARYAM'S PREGNANCY (4F, 1M: 90 minutes) by Ezzat Goushegir. In this audacious nine-scene play, an adult Maryam and the "actress" who present her vie over the best way to represent the seventeen year old Maryam's traumatic journey of unwanted, out-of-wedlock pregnancy, attempted abortion, and hiding during the escalating fear and terror of the Iran-Iraq War. The play revisions the Rapunzel fairytale and evokes Pirandello's metatheater pierced by a poetics of cruelty as it stages the seventeen year-old's struggle for agency amid dire gender prohibitions, dramatically-loaded circumstance, and a love-hate journey with her mother, who both condemns and helps to preserve her. For bold audiences. Contact the playwright at goushegir@yahoo.com for rights.

EZZAT GOUSHEGIR, a playwright, author and poet, has published four books in Farsi. Her plays are anthologized in English and produced by a variety of theater companies including *Medea Was Born in Fallujah*, *Maryam's Pregnancy* and *Behind the Curtains*, which won two awards. The former co-director and dramaturge of a reading series at New Federal Theatre in N.Y, she is now the founder of "Theatre with Accent" a nonprofit theatre group dedicated to the promotion of immigrant and exiled playwrights. In March 2011 she performed her one-woman play *My Name is Inanna* in China. Currently she teaches at DePaul University in Chicago.

IMPENETRABLE (4F, 2M: 75 minutes) by Mia McCullough. This compelling ensemble play features a female model of Middle Eastern descent, an upper middle class mother, her daughter, the Arab man who owns the local suburban spa, a young photographer, an overweight barista at the Starbucks where they all converge, and a billboard. The spa's very large billboard of the beautiful model—presented with arrows pointing to all parts of her anatomy and detailing improvements possible—causes a community uproar and human toll that unfolds in new layers across the play. Inspired by actual events, IMPENETRABLE explores these six very different peoples' reactions to the public display, structured in monologuic vignettes that fuse into longer scenes. The play reflects on body image issues in America, wearing the veil, and cross-cultural misunderstandings—with a powerful reveal toward play's end. For rights contact the playwright at brazenhussy@comcast.net.

MIA McCULLOUGH's plays have been produced in Chicago at Stage Left Theatre, Steppenwolf, and Chicago Dramatists in Chicago, as well as at many theatres around the country, including the Old Globe in San Diego, Actor's Express in Atlanta and InterAct in Philadelphia. Her break-through play *Chagrin Falls* garnered the American Theatre Critics Association Osborn Award, first prize in the Julie Harris Playwriting Competition, and a Joseph Jefferson Citation. *Since Africa*, commissioned by the Cincinnati Shakespeare Festival, was a finalist for the Susan Smith Blackburn Prize. Her work

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has been published by Broadway Play Publishing, Smith & Kraus, and is included in the Chicago Dramatists anthology *New Plays from Chicago*. Mia also teaches playwriting and screenwriting at Northwestern University as well as playwriting in Chicago Public High Schools.

LOVE ALONE (4F, 2M:110 minutes) by Deborah Salem Smith. This moving two-act drama navigates the human and ethical ruptures that unfold after a routine medical procedure goes tragically wrong—transforming the lives of both the patient’s family and the doctor charged with her care. This well-crafted realist play is propelled by an array of complex characters, as they interact with the medical system, a lesbian family’s legal rights, and, most of all, grief. A lovingly drawn portrait of how we grieve and how we heal, this work invites emotional payoff and human compassion, both. For rights, contact the Susan Schulman Literary Agency at schulman@aol.com or 212-713-1633.

DEBORAH SALEM SMITH is the playwright-in-residence at Trinity Repertory Company, where The Boston Globe called her recent Trinity Rep premiere of *Some Things Are Private* "luminous, intelligent, provocative, and deeply moving." Her new play *Love Alone* received an Edgerton Foundation New American Play Award to support its premiere at Trinity Rep during the 2011-2012 season. Her previous awards include an Emerging American Artist Fulbright for playwriting in Dublin, Ireland, where she worked with the Abbey Theatre, Ireland’s national theater, and served as a Visiting Academic at the Trinity College School of Drama. Her work has also been recognized by a National Mellon Fellowship in the Humanities, a MacDowell Fellowship, a Colby Fellowship, a Major Hopwood Award, as well as Princeton University and the University of Michigan, where she received her M.F.A. Her other plays include: *Boots on the Ground*, *Good Business*, and *Caviar*.

STUDENT CONTEST WINNER

the friendship of her thighs (4W, 3M: 100 minutes) by Martyna Majok (Yale School of Drama). A woman known only as Lady transforms her secluded, cliff-side house into a shelter for formerly abused women. Behind locked doors and windows, the young women of the house rehearse unique versions of burlesques to reclaim their sexual identities. But, recently, Lady has been having nightmares and sleeping in the kitchen with a knife at her side. This year, the locks break and someone unexpected walks inside. Expressionistic and riveting, *the friendship of her thighs* is a dangerous new play about a multigenerational family of women who can no longer keep the world at bay. *The friendship of her thighs* was workshopped by the National New Plays Network after being featured in the 2010-11 Yale Drama Studio Series. In May 2011, it was featured in the The Claque’s Quick and Dirty Series at the Tank (NYC).

MARTYNA MAJOK was born in Poland and grew up in Chicago. She has written plays in Polish, Spanish and English, and has collaborated with numerous American theaters, including the Satori Group in Seattle, Boston Actors' Theater, Victory Gardens in Chicago and the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. She is currently pursuing her M.F.A. at Yale School of Drama and she holds a BA from the University of Chicago.

STUDENT CONTEST RUNNER-UP

She Said/She Said (3 women, 4 men). In this moving play, a mother renounces her homosexuality and attempts to keep her ex-wife from seeing their child. Flashing between the courtroom, conflicting memories of the marriage, and an evangelical church, *She Said/She Said* asks us to redraw the boundaries of faith, justice, and love. Inspired by true events, this work was produced at The Catholic University of America in 2011.

REBECCA GINGRICH-JONES resides in the Washington, DC area, where her plays have been

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produced at the Capital Fringe Festival and Active Cultures Theatre, and developed at the Kennedy Center Page-to-Stage Festival, Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival, Theater J, and Young Playwrights, Inc. Her play *Asshole* was voted best of Theater Roulette 2004 at MadLab Theater in her hometown of Columbus, Ohio. Other plays include *The Teacher's Lounge*, *Accidental Activist*, *The Furies*, *Unforgivable*, and book and lyrics for *Singing Eggs and Spermless Babies*. She has been a finalist for WordBRIDGE Playwrights Laboratory, and is a member of the Dramatists Guild and The Playwrights' Center. She received an M.F.A. in Playwriting from the Catholic University of America, and a B.A. in English from Oberlin College.

THE JANE CHAMBERS AWARD recognizes plays & performance texts by women that present a feminist perspective & contain significant opportunities for female performers. This annual award is given in memory of lesbian playwright Jane Chambers who, through her plays *A Late Snow*, *Last Summer at Bluefish Cove*, *My Blue Heaven*, *Kudzu*, & *The Quintessential Image*, became a major feminist voice in American theatre. Sponsored by the Women and Theatre Program with the Association for Theater in Higher Education, the Jane Chambers winner receives \$500 & a reading of the winning play at ATHE. Guidelines for submission—and our archive of recent winners—can be viewed at www.athe.org/wtp/. We welcome private donations. This year's winner rose from 115 submissions. MER-6/11