

SPONSORED BY THE WOMEN AND THEATRE PROGRAM &
THE ASSOCIATION OF THEATRE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

2014 JANE CHAMBERS AWARDS

MAIN CONTEST WINNER

FEMMES (8W) by Gina Young, is a contemporary lesbian tragicomedy in two acts, which dazzlingly reconceives Clare Luce Boothe's 1936 *The Women*. When a community organizer's polyamorous girlfriend drops her overnight for a hot bartender, her friends—an activist, an academic and a party promoter—are thrown into a girl/girl competition despite their best intentions and are ultimately forced to parse the ways in which butch/femme relationships do or don't replicate heterosexual stereotypes. Judges were struck with how the play's sly wit, savvy exploration of lesbian identity, and theatrical vitality (exemplified by a deconstructed burlesque-within-the-play) pushes boundaries both in style and subject matter. *Femmes* premiered at *Highways*, where it was hailed as “slyly riotous” by LA Press. For rights, contact the playwright at <gina@ginayoung.com>.

GINA YOUNG is a Los Angeles-based playwright, director and performer whose work centers around lesbian and queer protagonists. Her plays include *Femmes: A Tragedy*; Asuncion Playwrights Project Semi-Finalist *Tales of a Fourth Grade Lesbo*; Time Out New York Critic's Pick *she cuts herself / she likes to write*; and BAX Grant Recipient *God in a Girl*. Gina's theatrical work has appeared at REDCAT, Highways, WOW Cafe Theatre, HERE Arts Center, The Lyric-Hyperion Theatre, The Carrie Hamilton Theatre at The Pasadena Playhouse, The BRIC Studio Theater, The FUSE Festival curated by Dixon Place, BAX/The Brooklyn Arts Exchange, Live Girls! in Seattle, Washington, The Baltimore Playwrights Festival and the Page to Stage Festival at the Kennedy Center. As performer, she has appeared in Wynne Greenwood's *Sister Taking Nap* at On the Boards and Sheila Callaghan's *Dead City* at New Georges. She has also toured the US and Europe extensively with original performance work, including via the performance art pop duo TeamGina, whose video *Butch/Femme* screened at LGBT film festivals worldwide, won multiple awards and garnered over 250,000 hits on YouTube. Gina studied drama at NYU's Tisch School of the Arts. A collection of her plays is forthcoming from Topside Press. See her website at <http://www.ginayoung.com>.

RUNNER-UP

SEAMLESS (3F, 2M) by Dorinne Kondo presents a complex, theatrically-engaging view of contemporary Japanese American identities and history, refracted through gender, generation, work, and family. Stylistically shifting from comedic to poignant in a beat, the play centers on Diane Kubota, a successful Japanese American corporate attorney, who leads a seamlessly perfect life—or so it seems. Yet when a Japanese-American Harvard psychologist interviews Diane about her parents' internment, the questions launch a quest to discover the most profound and basic aspects of herself, her family, and her culture. A play about memory and history, the afterlife of trauma, and the (im)possibility of knowing the people you love the most. *Seamless* was a Finalist for the Lark New Play Festival, and has received readings at the Lark, the New York Theatre Workshop, East West Players, Moving Arts Theatre, and Odyssey Theater. For rights contact the playwright at <dorinne.kondo@icloud.com>.

DORINNE KONDO is Professor of Anthropology and American Studies at the University of Southern California. She served as a dramaturg for three of Anna Deavere Smith's plays: the world premieres of *Twilight: Los Angeles 1992*, *House Arrest*, and *Let Me Down Easy*. Kondo's first play (*Dis*)graceful(l) *Conduct* won the “We Don't Need No Stinking Dramas” National Comedy Playwriting Award from Mixed Blood Theatre. *But Can He Dance?* premiered at Asian American Repertory Theatre in San Diego. As a scholar, she won the Asian American Studies Cultural and Literary Studies Book Award for *About Face: Performing Race in Fashion and Theater*. Her upcoming scholarly book is *Creative Difference(s): Race and the Politics of Aesthetics in American Theater*.

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HONORABLE MENTIONS

BABY STRIKE! (6F, 5M) by Liza Case is a ninety-minute civic satire about the perilous climate for reproductive rights. Staged in an America of the near-future where *Roe v. Wade* has been overturned and a woman dies in childbirth in Jackson, Mississippi, giving birth to twins she was advised she wouldn't be able to carry to term, this audacious play fuses family, feminist and political themes, seared through class. Lysa Stratton, the play's protagonist and woman's surviving sister, leads a one-woman war against the local congresswoman who introduced the legislation prohibiting abortion, urging women across the country to join a sex strike and stop having babies until women's rights to control their own bodies and destinies are restored....Will the powers that be stop at nothing to prevent them? An absurdist fable that strikes eerily familiar, the play gains impact through its allusions to *Lysistrata* as well as its highly contemporary stakes for America. For rights, contact the author at lizacase@gmail.com.

LIZA CASE has written four full-length plays including *The Unspoken Ones*, which won the Jane Chambers Student Playwriting Award (2010) and the Stark Award for Drama. She has written the screenplays for several short films, including *Destiny*, which played on the Emmy-award-winning PBS show *The Short List* and IFC. Her short plays *Online Education* and *Ten Miles From the Georgia Line* were recently read by Food For Thought at The Players. Liza received her B.A. in Creative Writing from CUNY and her MFA in Dramatic Writing from NYU. She teaches developmental writing at Bronx Community College.

GODDESS OF MERCY (3F, 2M) by Jenny Connell Davis is a fast-moving play—smart and sexy at first, ultimately reflective and transformative—about a set of New Yorkers and a Peace Corps volunteer enmeshed in gentrification and global capitalism. This play moves from realism to expressionism to query how personal choices have consequences at home and abroad, imperiling indigenous rights—and, unexpectedly, one of their own family members, kidnapped. Highly contemporary, *Goddess of Mercy* builds a dynamic sense of character, stakes, and space. *Goddess Of Mercy* was presented at the Ruth Easton Lab at the Playwrights Center, received a workshop for Asolo Rep's Unplugged New Works Festival (Sarasota), and was named a finalist for the 2014 O'Neill National Playwrights Conference. For rights, contact the author at <Jennyconnelldavis@gmail.com>. For an interview about the play, see <<http://pwcenter.tumblr.com/post/72787185309/an-interview-with-jenny-connell-davis>>

JENNY CONNELL DAVIS'S work has been developed with The Playwrights Center, New York Stage and Film, Ars Nova, Asolo Rep, The Gift Theatre, Shrewd Productions, Austin Scriptworks, Theater MITU, and NAATCO. She has been a finalist or semi-finalist for the O'Neill, BAPF, the Heideman, PlayPenn, and the Nicholl Fellowship, among others. Jenny is a proud Core Member of the Playwrights Center, and The Gift Theatre, the 2014-2015 Hot Seat Playwright-in-Residence at Baltimore's Center Stage, and an alumna of NYC's Ars Nova, Austin's ScriptWorks, and The University of Chicago. She received her MFA from UT Austin. For more information on Jenny and her work, please visit: www.jennyconnelldavis.com.

EXILE IS MY HOME (5F, 5M, 5 unspecified) by Domnica Radulescu is a compelling ensemble play that follows two creative refugee lovers/mothers as they traverse a post-apocalyptic fairytale galaxy filled with refugees, displaced artists, utopic impulses, border police and an evil witch. Moving, epic, feminist, and comedic, this highly theatrical play evokes the human, social, and political complexities of exile with depth, humor, and adaptive re-invention. Yearning for home and constantly remaking it on their nomadic journey, the two protagonists discover shocking revelations about their past that enable new visions of home. This eighty-minute new work reverberates in profound, sometimes playful, ways with our disaporic world as it explores exilic lives, loves, and losses, as well as their prospective transformations. For rights, contact the author at radulescud@wlu.edu.

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DOMNICA RADULESCU immigrated to the US in 1983 after escaping from her native Romania into Italy. The Edwin A. Morris Professor of French & Italian literature at Washington and Lee University, she has written two best-selling novels: *Black Sea Twilight* (Doubleday 2010 & 2011) and the award-winning *Train to Trieste* (Knopf 2008 & 2009). Radulescu's play *The Town with Very Nice People: A Strident Operetta* won recognition as a runner up for the 2013 Jane Chambers Award. Her other plays include: *The Virgins of Seville*, translated into Spanish for a staged reading at the University of Alicante (2014); *Naturalized Woman* (2012) and *Nora's Playhouse* (2010). She has also authored, edited and co-edited several scholarly books on theater, exile and representations of women. Her most recent— *Theater of War and Exile*— is forthcoming from McFarland. Radulescu received the 2011 Outstanding Faculty Award from the Virginia State Council of Higher Education. A Fulbright scholar, she is completing her third novel *Country of Red Azaleas*.

WINNER OF STUDENT JANE CHAMBERS CONTEST

FUCK LA VIE D'ARTISTE (2W, 1M) by Georgette Kelly is a visceral full-length play that feels both ethereal and rooted in tangibles – colors, paint, walls. Oscillating between the real and imagined, this compelling story follows Zenab a young, aspiring artist who is stuck giving tours of the room where Vincent Van Gogh died in France. When Vincent's ghost speaks to her, she becomes tangled in a passionate triangle, torn between artistic inspiration and a chance for love with Avery, an American woman. The situation worsens when race riots explode around Paris, and the characters ask the question: Can rioting—or art—make a difference in urban poverty and racial politics? Experimental in its use of language, the play eloquently explores xenophobia, the artist's struggle, and how our pasts, desires, and dreams can haunt us. First produced through the Hunter College MFA Thesis Festival (NY). For rights contact the author at Georgette.V.Kelly@gmail.com.

GEORGETTE KELLY holds a B.A. in Performance Studies from Northwestern University and an M.F.A in Playwriting from Hunter College. Her play *Ballast* was a finalist in the 2015 Alliance/Kendeda National Graduate Playwriting Competition, and was nominated for The Kilroys List 2014. Georgette's other plays include: *F*ck la vie d'artiste*, *The Jonah Play*, *How to Hero*, *I Carry Your Heart*, and *Lighthousekeeping*. Her work has been developed at The Kennedy Center, The National New Play Network, The Lark Play Development Center, The Alliance Theatre, and The City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs. See more about her work at GeorgetteKelly.com.

STUDENT CONTEST RUNNER UP

RUST ON BONE (2-3W, 1M) by Bianca Sams. This inventive new drama poses a psychological cat and mouse game to explore complex issues of PTSD, abuse, therapy, healing, and community, refracted through gender. Suspenseful and high stakes, *Rust on Bone* stages a tense encounter between psychologist Dr. Devra Mendoza and the stranger who locks her in an office to demand therapy, seeking answers to his troubled life. The play experiments with form and its portrayal of sensory experiences to theatricalize EMDR therapy, subtly excavating the personal costs of war and the ripple effects of mental illness on the loved ones of Military Veterans. This trauma narrative consistently reverses, subverts, and breaks audience expectations, reframing the gendered lines that often frame our thinking on war and relationships. For rights contact the author at [<biancasams.writer.actor@gmail.com>](mailto:biancasams.writer.actor@gmail.com).

BIANCA SAMS is an Actor/Writer hailing from the San Francisco Bay Area. Her plays provide lyrical investigations of found stories from today's headlines or the pages of history, compelling audiences to face their own complex love affair with misery. Sams recently finished her MFA in Playwriting at Ohio University. She received her BFA from New York University's Tisch School, where she earned the distinction of being Tisch's first ever Triple Major (Acting, Dramatic Writing, Africana Studies). Sams' *Battle Cry* received last year's (2013) Jane Chambers Student Playwrighting recognition, as well. Other

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Awards and honors include the KCACTF Lorraine Hansberry Award (2nd Place), Rosa Parks Award (2nd Place), Kennedy Center/Eugene O'Neill New Play Conference fellow, Scott McPherson Award, The Playwright Center Core Apprentice (2014), Playwright Foundation BAPF (finalist), Eugene O'Neill NPC (semi-finalist), Gulf Shore Playhouse New Works Festival, TRI Research Fellowship at Ohio State University, and the T. S. Eliot Acting Fellowship. For more information and samples of her work please go to www.biancasams.com or check out her food blog at www.fingerlickinkitchen.com

THE JANE CHAMBERS AWARD recognizes plays & performance texts by women that present a feminist perspective & which contain significant opportunities for female performers. We welcome experimentations in form as well as representations of women's experiences that are underrepresented in performance. 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 Award is recognized at ATHE's annual conference, where the winner is presented with \$1,000 & a reading of the winning play presented to theater scholars and artists. Guidelines for submission—and our archive of recent winners—can be viewed at <www.athe.org/wtp/>. This year's Main Jane Chambers Winner —FEMMES by Gina Young—rose from 114 submissions. The Student Winner —FUCK LA VIE D'ARTISTE by Georgette Kelly—rose from a pool by playwrights representing top MFA programs from across the US. We encourage theatres and universities to produce these works, so diverse in themes and production visions. We also welcome private donations, which make the prizes for Main and Student divisions possible. (Please contact mer46@georgetown.edu for giving opportunities or use the donation link on our website.)

Commit to staging distinctive, theatrically vital work by women playwrights today.

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