

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

2015 JANE CHAMBERS AWARDS

MAIN CONTEST WINNER

LISA LOOMER is the first playwright to win the Jane Chambers Award *twice* — in 2015 for *ROE* and in 1994 for *THE WAITING ROOM*.

ROE (6+w, 3+m, 50 characters) by Lisa Loomer traces the riveting story of the people, politics, and life stakes that shaped Roe v. Wade legislation in 1973 —and since. Moving from the psychedelic seventies to the complex present, *ROE* is framed by two women's very different views: the brilliant prosecutor Sarah Weddington, who achieved landmark legislation for women's rights, and the "accidental plaintiff" Norma McCorvey, a feisty working class Texas lesbian who changes from underemployed hippie to sidelined feminist icon, then from reproductive rights advocate to fundamentalist Christian. Theatrical, funny, incisive and humane, *ROE* also stages real-life figures ranging from Supreme Court justices, leading evangelists, famous news reporters, and McCorvey's longtime life partner to pregnant young women and doctors across the political spectrum. This vivid ensemble play provides a well-researched, nuanced, and surprising reframing of debates on abortion—and America. Commissioned by the Oregon Shakespeare Festival's American Revolutions program, *ROE* will receive its world premiere in Ashland in April 2016. *ROE* rose from 98 plays submitted for this year's Prize. For rights contact beth.blickers@abramsartny.com.

LISA LOOMER is best known as a playwright for *THE WAITING ROOM*, *LIVING OUT*, and *DISTRACTED*, which had world premieres at The Mark Taper Forum and were subsequently produced in New York at The Vineyard Theater, Second Stage, and The Roundabout, respectively. Other plays include *EXPECTING ISABEL*, *TWO THINGS YOU DON'T TALK ABOUT AT DINNER*, *MARIA, MARIA, MARIA, MARIA, MARIA!*; *ACCELERANDO*; *LOOKING FOR ANGELS*, *BOCON!*, *BROKEN HEARTS*, *BIRDS*, and *CAFÉ VIDA*. Her work has been produced at such theaters as Arena Stage, Trinity Rep, The Public Theater, Seattle Repertory, South Coast Repertory, The Denver Center, Los Angeles Theatre Center, Mixed Blood, The Kennedy Center, Seattle's Group Theater, La Jolla Playhouse, Cornerstone, Missouri Repertory, The Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Theater Works, and Williamstown Theater Festival. Her work has also been produced in Mexico, Israel, Egypt and Germany. She's a two-time winner of the American Theatre Critics Award, and has also received awards from the Kennedy Center, the Imagen Foundation, the Jane Chambers Award (twice), and the Susan Smith Blackburn Prize, among others. As a screenwriter, she was part of Sundance's first film lab in Cuba. Film credits include *GIRL*, *INTERRUPTED*. Her newest play, *ROE*, about Roe v Wade, will premiere at The Oregon Shakespeare Festival in 2016. Currently, she is writing the book for a musical for Broadway.

RUNNER-UP

MANHATTA (2W, 5M) by Mary K. Nagle. Featured in the inaugural Public Studio Workshop Series, *MANHATTA* interweaves past and present, connecting a Native American family's gripping displacement by the fur trade of the 1600s with the stock market crash of 2008. Deftly layering people and places to probe our market economy, Nagle writes with knowing humor, complex characters, and heartbreaking stakes. For rights contact Mary.kathryn.nagle@gmail.com.

MARY KATHRYN NAGLE is a citizen of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma, and an honorary member of the Ponca Tribe of Nebraska. She studied theater at Georgetown University, and graduated *summa cum laude* from Tulane Law School as the recipient of the Judge John Minor Wisdom Award. She is an alumna of the Public Theater's Emerging Writers Group, where she wrote *FEMINIST PLAYS BY WOMEN, WITH GREAT ROLES FOR WOMEN (AND SOMETIMES MEN)*

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MANHATTA, featured in the Inaugural PUBLIC STUDIO Workshop Series. Other plays include: *MISS LEAD (59E59)*, *MY FATHER'S EYES*, *SLIVER OF A FULL MOON* (www.sliverofafullmoon.org), *MY FATHER'S BONES* (#BringJimThorpeHome), *FAIRLY TRACEABLE*, and *DIAMONDS . . . ARE A BOY'S BEST FRIEND*.

HONORABLE MENTIONS

WHAT I THOUGHT I KNEW (1W, myriad roles) by Alice Eve Cohen. This darkly comedic, solo play pairs exquisite storytelling with myriad characters to traverse America's broken medical system when a 44- year old "infertile" woman unexpectedly discovers she is six months pregnant. Adapting her award-winning memoir for the stage, performer-playwright Cohen brings wry humor, gripping stakes, and profound humanity to explore not only her own odyssey, but the complexities of "choice" and parenthood today. For rights contact aliceevecohen@gmail.com or her agent at edevlinlit@aol.com.

ALICE EVE COHEN is a playwright, solo theatre artist, and memoirist. Her play, *WHAT I THOUGHT I KNEW*, is based on her acclaimed memoir (*Elle* Magazine Literary Grand Prize for Nonfiction, *Salon* Year's Best Books, *Oprah* magazine Best Books of Summer.) Her new memoir, *THE YEAR MY MOTHER CAME BACK*, was just published by Algonquin. Cohen's plays and solo works have been produced at theatres and festivals internationally. She has written for Nickelodeon, CTW, and CBS, and has received fellowships and grants from the NYS Council on the Arts, NEA, and VCCA. She holds a BA from Princeton and an MFA from The New School, where she teaches playwriting and creative writing. < www.aliceevecohen.com >

THE EGG LAYERS (5W, 3M) by Lauren Feldman. This new work playfully explores coming of age, gender and contemporary love by fusing classical myth and contemporary archetypes, yielding theatrical beauty and moving insights with bold grace. Infused with a striking kinetic imagination and choral intimacy, *THE EGG LAYERS* ties together origin stories and the myth of Leda and the Swan, as a searching, iconic ensemble of women, girls, men, and boys journey, lay eggs, question, turn into eggs, suffer, hatch from eggs, and rebel — to the awe and dismay of their Playwright, who is struggling to make sense of the world, them, and herself, as they spiral together. Developed via a co-commission from New Georges and Barnard College, *THE EGG LAYERS* was also an O'Neill National Conference finalist. For rights contact beth.blickers@abramsartny.com.

LAUREN FELDMAN's plays include *GRACE, OR THE ART OF CLIMBING* (Denver Center Theatre, Nice People Theatre, ATCA/Steinberg New Play Award Nomination, Barrymore Nomination, The Kilroys' "The List 2014"); *ANOTHER KIND OF SILENCE* (Drama League New Directors/New Works Fellowship); *AMANUENSIS* (Northwoods Ramah Theatre Company commission); *THE EGG-LAYERS* (National Playwrights Conference Finalist, New Georges/Barnard College co-commission); *A PEOPLE* (Jewish Plays Project NYC Residency); *FILL OUR MOUTHS* (New Theatre, Carbonell Nomination). A graduate of the Yale School of Drama, Lauren is also a New Georges Affiliated Artist. She is a recent graduate of the New England Center for Circus Arts where she studied to be a creator/performer of theatrical circus. www.laurenfeldman.com

THE TAMING (3W) by Lauren Gunderson. In this new comedy inspired by Shakespeare's *Shrew*, two political opposites end up in a strange hotel room with a beauty queen running the show. How far will they go to defend themselves and their country? A satiric, irreverent, and sometimes campy romp through Americana politics tied to partisan fervor, gender, and Constitutional history. Deftly-crafted and fast-moving, *THE TAMING* invokes—and playfully subverts— stereotypes tied to politics, anti/feminism and pop culture, helping audiences to laugh at our own excesses and even to

FEMINIST PLAYS BY WOMEN, WITH GREAT ROLES FOR WOMEN (AND SOMETIMES MEN)

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reimagine civics. *The Taming* received excellent reviews during its premieres in San Francisco and Seattle and is now published with Playscripts < <https://www.playscripts.com/play/2735>>.

LAUREN GUNDERSON is the 2014 winner of the Steinberg/ATCA New Play Award and finalist for the Susan Smith Blackburn Prize and Helen Hayes Award for *I AND YOU*, also featured in American Theatre Magazine. She has a BA from Emory University, and MFA Dramatic Writing at NYU's Tisch School where she was a Reynolds Fellow in Social Entrepreneurship. Her work has been commissioned, produced and developed at companies across the US including South Coast Rep, The Kennedy Center, The O'Neill, Denver Center, Berkeley Rep, TheatreWorks, Crowded Fire, Marin Theatre, Synchronicity, Olney Theatre, Geva and more. Her work is published at Playscripts, Samuel French, and Dramatists. She is a Playwright in Residence at The Playwrights Foundation, and a proud Dramatists Guild member. <LaurenGunderson.com>

OTHER THAN HONOURABLE (4W, 2M) by Jamie Pachino. This powerful, fast-moving legal thriller centers on a former Army officer (now lawyer) who reluctantly takes on a military sexual assault case, re-opening old wounds, and forcing her to confront her past, along with the real meaning of the military's code of honor. Tackling sexual assault in the military -- and a shocking lack of convictions since Tailhook -- via the story of a survivor-litigator, this multiracial play moves with psychological depth, social scope, and high stakes, deploying realism at its best. Multimedia design possibilities (not required). For rights contact her agent at beth.blickers@abramsartny.com.

JAMIE PACHINO's plays include *SPLITTING INFINITY* (Geva Theatre), *SOME OF THE PEOPLE, ALL OF THE TIME* (workshops at Pasadena Playhouse, Asolo Rep); *Waving Goodbye* (Steppenwolf and Naked Eye Theatre), *THE RETURN TO MORALITY* (InterAct Theatre), *RACE* (Strawdog Theatre), *AURORA'S MOTIVE* (Teatro Vista), and *THEODORA: AN UNAUTHORIZED BIOGRAPHY* (Bailiwick Rep), and have been developed and produced around the country. She has been named the winner of the Kennedy Center Fund for New American Plays production grant, the Laurie Foundation's Visionary Award and Chicago's Joseph Jefferson ("Jeff") Award for Best New Work. She is the only three-time winner of the Ashland New Plays Festival. www.jamiepachino.com

THE 9 FRIDAS (3W, 3M, 3 either) by Kaite O'Reilly is a performance mosaic and ritual that explores ways of looking at the life, work and reception of the world-famous Mexican artist Frida Kahlo. Attuned to disability, love, creativity, gender, passion and politics, the performance uses ensemble—with all 9 actors cast both as Frida and not Frida— to implicate audiences and artists alike in the performance and themes. The *9 FRIDAS* was commissioned by Sherman Cymru Theatre (Wales, UK) and was featured at the Taipei Arts Festival, directed by Phillip Zarilli in 2014, co-produced by Mobius Strip Theatre and Hong Kong Repertory Theater. For rights, contact info@kaiteoreilly.com or her agent Conrad Williams at <www.blakefriedmann.co.uk>

KAITE O'REILLY is a playwright, mentor and dramaturg who works internationally. Based in the UK, she has won many awards for her work including the Peggy Ramsay Award, M.E.N. best play of the year, and the Ted Hughes Award for New Works in Poetry for her version of Aeschylus's *PERSIANS* for National Theatre Wales. In 2012 she received two Cultural Olympiad Commissions for *IN WATER I'M WEIGHTLESS*, produced by National Theatre Wales/South Bank Centre (London) as part of the London Olympics/Paralympics Festival. Kaite is a leading figure in disability arts and culture in the UK, and is a fellow of international research centre 'Interweaving Performance Cultures' at Freie Universitate in Berlin. < www.kaiteoreilly.com >
<www.kaiteoreilly.wordpress.com>. Twitter @kaiteoreilly.

STUDENT CONTEST WINNER

FEMINIST PLAYS BY WOMEN, WITH GREAT ROLES FOR WOMEN (AND SOMETIMES MEN)

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MERELY PLAYERS (3W) by Katherine Gwynn. All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players, but what does it mean to play? Katherine Gwynn's delightful new play, *MERELY PLAYERS* (3 Women), presents a new queer and feminist twist on one of the Western world's best known works. *Merely Players* is a continuation of Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, a trunkshow with a trunk that's more than it seems, a play where the men are played by women, and a chance for Phebe, the shepherd girl who fell in love with Rosalind in drag, to discover what being a player—and freedom—means. For rights, contact gwynnkatherine@gmail.com.

KATHERINE GWYNN graduated this May from the University of Kansas, with Bachelors of Arts in English and Women's Studies. A queer Kansan, she writes "to put women at the forefront." She's also an activist against campus sexual assault who has organized and blogged for Unite for Reproductive and Gender Equity. *MERELY PLAYERS* is her first major play, workshopped and produced by the Jayhawk Initiative for Student Theatre (Kansas University). She plans in the future to pursue an MFA in playwriting. Follow her www.justcallmeshrew.wordpress.com and Twitter @IfTheShrewFits.

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 \$1000 & 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 98 submissions. MER-7/15