

GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DOWNLOAD IMAGES [HERE](#)

GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE SELECTS SIX PLAYWRIGHTS FOR 2020/2021 CYCLE OF “THE WRITERS’ ROOM”

Initiative Develops New Work by Local Writers

LOS ANGELES (August 3, 2020) – Geffen Playhouse today announced its selection of six local writers to participate in the third cycle of The Writers’ Room, a forum for engagement and collaboration between Los Angeles playwrights. The participants for 2020/2021 are **Meghan Brown, Diana Burbano, Donald Jolly, Matthew Paul Olmos, T.Tara Turk-Haynes** and **Ali Viterbi**.

The Writers’ Room was founded in 2018 by Artistic Director Matt Shakman, whose vision for Geffen Playhouse emphasizes world premiere productions and the development of bold, relevant work by the diverse local artistic community. He is supported in realizing this vision by Manager of New Play Development Rachel Wiegardt-Egel, who will facilitate the one-year residency beginning in September of 2020.

In addition to the feedback of their fellow writers, members will receive dramaturgical support from the Geffen’s artistic staff and the opportunity to further develop their work with directors and actors, culminating in a reading series that may be open to the public. The 2020/2021 cycle of The Writers’ Room will commence virtually, with plans for participants to also collaborate in person when possible, in accordance with local government health and safety guidelines.

Playwrights who have developed work as part of The Writers' Room include: Juan José Alfonso, Boni B. Alvarez, Angelica Chéri, Inda Craig-Galván, Dipika Guha, Chloé Hung, Chelsea Marcantel, Ramiz Monsef, Brian Otaño, Liza Powel O'Brien, Matt Schatz, and Ruby Rae Spiegel.

The Writers’ Room was originally launched through the generous support of Patricia Kiernan Applegate.

ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHTS

Meghan Brown

Meghan Brown writes about dangerous women. Winner of the Ovation Award for Playwriting of an Original Play for *The Pliant Girls* (Fugitive Kind Theater), her work has been performed at Lincoln Center (*Untuned Ears Hear Nothing but Discord*), Victory Gardens Theater (*The Tasters*, Ignition festival of New Plays), Portland Center Stage (*The Tasters*, JAW: A Playwrights Festival), the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (*I Killed A Tiger*), and the Getty Villa (*Cowboy Elektra*, with Rogue Artists Ensemble). Other theatrical projects include *These Girls Have Demons* (music by Sarah Taylor Ellis, developed with Pittsburgh CLO); *What Happened While Hero Was Dead* (developed at Moving Arts MADlab, Great Plains

Theater Conference 2021); *The Tasters* (Rivendell Theater, Milwaukee Rep 2021); *Shine Darkly, Illyria* (Fugitive Kind Theater); *The Discord Altar* (OperaWorks); *The Kill-or-Dies* (Electric Footlights + Moving Arts, Max K. Lerner fellowship winner); and *This Is Happening Now* (available through Montag Press). www.MeghanBrown.net

Diana Burbano

Diana Burbano, a Colombian immigrant, is a playwright and a teaching artist at South Coast Repertory and Breath of Fire Latina Theatre Ensemble. Diana's *Ghosts of Bogotá* won the Rella Lossy Award, as well as the Nu Voices festival at Actors Theatre of Charlotte. *Ghosts* was commissioned and debuted at Alter Theater, San Rafael in Feb. 2020. *Sapience* was performed in June at Playground's Zoom fest and will be seen at San Diego Repertory's Latinx Theatre Festival in Aug. 2020. *Fabulous Monsters* is on the 2020 Kilroys List and in Steppenwolf's "the Mix." She is currently under commission by San Diego Repertory and Center Theatre Group. Diana is a Dramatists Guild ambassador, as well as the Literary Director for Breath of Fire Latina Theatre Ensemble. She is the recipient of grants from the Adams/Reisch Foundation, Theatre Bay Area and the Long Beach Arts Council.

Donald Jolly

Originally from the District of Columbia, writer/theater Artist/diva worshipper Donald Jolly is the author of the acclaimed historical drama *bonded* (nominated for LA Stage Alliance Ovation and GLAAD Media Awards, and the 2013 winner of the Arch and Bruce Brown Playwright Award for LGBT Historical Plays). In association with the Watts Village Theatre Company, D. Jolly wrote *Riot/Rebellion*, an immersive ensemble-driven docudrama that was staged in 2013 and 2015 in commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the 1965 Watts Uprising (GO! LA Weekly). In 2018, Jolly's play *Baby Eyes* had its world premiere at Playwright's Arena (Stage Raw recommended). D. Jolly is a proud member of the Dramatists Guild of America, an Associate Artist with Playwright's Arena, and a graduate of Dartmouth College (A.B., English) and University of Southern California (M.F.A., Dramatic Writing).

Matthew Paul Olmos

Three-time Sundance Institute Fellowship/Residency recipient, New Dramatists Resident, Center Theatre Group LA Workshop Playwright, Oregon Shakespeare Festival Black Swan Playwright, Princess Grace Awardee, National Latinx Playwright Award (Arizona Theatre Company), selected by Taylor Mac for Cherry Lane's Mentor Project, and was La MaMa's Ellen Stewart Emerging Playwright as selected by Sam Shepard. Spent two years as a Mabou Mines/SUITE Resident Artist (mentored by Ruth Maleczek); former New York Theatre Workshop Fellow, Baryshnikov Arts Center Resident, Dramatists Guild Fellow, Primary Stages Playwright, INTAR H.P.R.L; is an Ensemble Studio Theater lifetime member, Echo Resident Playwright, and Kilroys nominator. His work is produced internationally, nationally, published by Samuel French and NoPassport, taught in university. Currently developing *American Nationalism Project*—in part through New York Theatre Workshop's Adelphi Residency—a 3-play cycle about our tumultuous relationship to U.S. Presidents, in part through New Dramatists. Currently developing a feature with Andrew Lauren Productions. www.matthewpaulolmos.com.

T.Tara Turk-Haynes

t.tara turk-haynes is a writer whose work has appeared at the Hip Hop Theater Festival, the Actor's Studio, EST, and the Kennedy Center. She graduated from Eugene Lang at The New School for her BA and Sarah Lawrence with her M.F.A., receiving the Lipkin Playwrighting Award, was a Van Lier Fellow at New York Theatre Workshop, completed the Cosby Screenwriting Program and the Producers Guild Diversity Workshop. She was an emerging playwright at The Underwood Theater reading series, along with Julia Cho, Theresa Rebeck, and Rinne Groff. She won Best Screenplay at African American Women in Cinema and was an Urbanworld Screenplay Finalist. She co-produced the webseries "Dinner at Lola,"

featuring Tracie Thoms, Yvette Nicole Brown, Bryan Fuller and Nelson Ellis among others. She was published in *Obsidian* Call & Response: Experiments in Joy. Her fiction has appeared in the international anthology "X:24", African Voices and Stress magazine. She has just finished a novel and a TV pilot on the Harlem Renaissance. She is a founding member of the producing playwrights' collective The Temblors.

Ali Viterbi

Ali Viterbi is a playwright, television writer, and educator from San Diego. Her play *In Every Generation* will receive its world premiere at Victory Gardens Theater in 2021. Ali's work has been developed, produced, or commissioned by The Kennedy Center/National New Play Network, La Jolla Playhouse, Round House Theatre, San Diego Repertory Theatre, HERE Arts Center, Jewish Plays Project, Last Frontier Theatre Conference, The Barrow Group, Owl and Cat Theatre in Australia, North Coast Repertory Theatre, and Horizon Theater Company, among others. She won the 2019 National Jewish Playwriting Contest and has been a finalist for the O'Neill National Playwrights Conference and the Bay Area Playwrights Festival. Ali is currently developing a TV project with Anonymous Content producing, and she is the producer of the annual Lipinsky San Diego Jewish Arts Festival. Ali received her B.A. from Yale University and her M.F.A. in Playwriting from UC San Diego.

ABOUT GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE

Geffen Playhouse has been a hub of the Los Angeles theater scene since opening its doors in 1995. Noted for its intimacy and celebrated for its world-renowned mix of classic and contemporary plays, provocative new works and second productions, the not-for-profit organization continues to present a body of work that has garnered national recognition. Named in honor of entertainment mogul and philanthropist David Geffen, who made the initial donation to the theater, the company was founded by Gilbert Cates and is currently helmed by Executive Director Gil Cates, Jr., Artistic Director Matt Shakman and Board Chair Howard Tenenbaum. Proudly associated with UCLA, the Geffen welcomes an audience of more than 130,000 each year, and maintains extensive education and community engagement programs, designed to involve underserved young people and the community at large in the arts.

www.geffenplayhouse.org

###

MEDIA CONTACT

Zenon Dmytryk

Geffen Playhouse

zenond@geffenplayhouse.org

310.966.2405