

ARENA STAGE MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ARENA STAGE AT THE MEAD CENTER FOR AMERICAN THEATER SEEKS APPLICANTS FOR 2015 PLAYWRIGHTS' ARENA

***** Collaborative group of local writers will begin second round in February 2015
with up to five D.C.-area playwrights *****

Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater announces an open call for submissions for the 2015 Playwrights' Arena, a collaborative group of emerging and mid-career local writers dedicated to the support and development of each other's work and practice. Part of the American Voices New Play Institute, Playwrights' Arena will launch its second round in February 2015 with up to five D.C.-area playwrights.

Facilitated by Director of Artistic Programming Robert Barry Fleming, with the participation of the artistic development team and Resident Dramaturg Jocelyn Clarke, the group will meet once a month over the course of the year to investigate and develop their dramaturgical practice as playwrights while creating new work.

Playwrights' Arena activities include convenings with visiting artists, creatives, Arena Stage resident playwrights and staff on topics related and relevant to their playwriting practice. Actors will periodically read their work in private laboratory rehearsals, giving the playwrights a chance to hear and respond to their work. Playwrights will be supported as members of the Arena Stage artistic community and will have access to opening nights and special events.

The group will meet from February to June 2015, with a break from July to September, and then from October 2015 to June 2016. Participants must reside within the D.C. Metro area, within 30 miles of Washington, D.C. Playwrights who are multi-hyphenates (for example, actor/writers, director/writers, filmmakers, screenwriters, documentarians, journalists, etc...) are encouraged to apply, as are previous applicants.

Applications are due by December 12, 2014. For full application requirements and additional information on Playwrights' Arena, visit arenastage.org/artistic-development/new-play-institute/playwrights-arena/. Applications may be submitted to playwrightsarena@arenastage.org or by mail to: Playwrights' Arena, Artistic Development, Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater, 1101 Sixth Street SW, Washington, DC 20024.

Playwrights' Arena launched at Arena Stage in January 2013 with Norman Allen, Randy Baker, Jacqueline E. Lawton, Heather McDonald, Danielle Mohlman and Shawn Northrip. Five of the original playwrights (Allen, Baker, McDonald, Mohlman and Northrip) resumed meeting for a second year in October 2014 and will continue to meet through June 2015.

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Comments from inaugural members of Playwrights' Arena:

"It's the intimacy of Playwrights' Arena that has made it so powerful. We're very different writers but we very quickly learned how to best challenge—and be challenged by—each other. These are rich conversations we're having, and they're conversations that have an immediate impact on my work." - Norman Allen

"It is a rare gift to be in an environment that feels as creatively safe as it is inspirational. Through an examination of process and support of each other's work, Playwrights' Arena has helped me to grow and to better define my practices as a writer." -Randy Baker

"Being a part of Arena Stage's Playwrights' Arena has been an inspiring, rigorous and productive experience. It was empowering to work with everyone at Arena Stage and truly wonderful to be a part of an intimate group of writers." - Jacqueline E. Lawton

"The focus in Playwrights' Arena on practice and the nourishment of the playwright rather than the development of a single play has deeply encouraged me to shove aside, for a time, the rigors of the late-day capitalist marketplace and sit with good questions about why story matters and what stories matter to me now." -Heather McDonald

"I feel like I can take risks with the writing I do with Playwrights' Arena. It's this fantastic support system where I feel safe even when I fear I'm failing miserably." - Danielle Mohlman

"Playwrights' Arena has shifted my focus from product to process; from 'What am I going to write?' to 'How do I write?'" -Shawn Northrip

Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater, under the leadership of Artistic Director Molly Smith and Executive Producer Edgar Dobie, is a national center dedicated to American voices and artists. Arena Stage produces plays of all that is passionate, profound, deep and dangerous in the American spirit, and presents diverse and ground-breaking work from some of the best artists around the country. Arena Stage is committed to commissioning and developing new plays through the American Voices New Play Institute. Arena Stage impacts the lives of thousands of students annually through its work in community engagement. Now in its seventh decade, Arena Stage serves a diverse annual audience of more than 300,000. arenastage.org.

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