



For Immediate Release

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**Stage Left Theatre announces
Downstage Left Residency recipients for Season 35.**

Chicago, September 1, 2016 – Stage Left Theatre announces the recipients of the Downstage Left Playwright Residencies for Season 35. Residencies are designed to help playwrights take a project from the conceptual stage all the way to a production-ready script. Playwrights work closely with ensemble directors and members of the literary team to design a process tailored for the particular needs of their project.

Over 200 applications were submitted, a record high, each of which was evaluated by at least two members of the selection committee. These written evaluations were used to create a list of 14 semi-finalists, which were read by the entire committee, then narrowed to a list of 6 finalists through a vote, after which the two projects were chosen by Stage Left's leadership. The two Residency projects, which will be developed during the 2016-17 season, are *The Sitayana*, by Lavina Jadhvani, and *PIG.GOV Part 2* by Alex Lubischer.

***The Sitayana* by Lavina Jadhvani**

In *The Sitayana*—a new perspective on the Sanskrit epic poem the Ramayana—the young princess Sita follows her new husband Ram to his kingdom in Ayodhya - only to learn that he has been banished to the forest! Refusing to abandon her partner, she joins him in exile, but finds her loyalty tested to surprising lengths. A solo piece written for a South Asian woman, *The Sitayana* is part Hindu epic, part coming of age story, and, ultimately, a break up play.

The development process for *The Sitayana* will be led by guest director Nathan Singh, with dramaturg to be announced.

Lavina Jadhvani is a Chicago-based director and adaptor. Her adaptations include *The Sitayana*, *VANYA or "That's Life!"* (full production with Rasaka Theatre Company in January 2017), and *Shakuntala: an East-Meets-West love story*. Lavina maintains relationships with Lifeline Theatre (Casting Director), Oregon Shakespeare Festival (Phil Killian Directing Fellow), and Silk Road Rising (Artistic Associate). She is the founder and curator of the Diverse Directors Database and The Mildly Rehearsed Players, a student-run troupe at DePaul University that performs Shakespeare based on original practices. Graduate of The

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Theatre School at DePaul University (MFA, Directing) and Carnegie Mellon University (BFA, Scenic Design; Masters, Arts Management). www.lavinajadhvani.com

***PIG.GOV Part 2* by Alex Lubischer**

Grace Pollock, the CEO of a hog factory farm empire, will stop at nothing to become governor of Nebraska. But to realize her destiny and oust the incumbent governor—former Cornhusker football coach Tom White—she must first cover up a quarter century of scandals while running the best damn campaign Our Country. Has. Ever. SEEN! *PIG.GOV Part 2* picks up where *Part 1* left off: with a campaign in shambles and a family dynasty on the brink of oblivion. This Shakespearean epic casts women, LGBT, nonwhite, and characters with disabilities as the main players, zeroing in on the intersection of misogyny and power in 2016 America.

The development process for *PIG.GOV, Part 2* will be led by guest director Sheryl Kaller, with dramaturg Zev Valancy, Stage Left's Literary Manager.

Alex Lubischer is an MFA candidate in the Playwriting Program at the Yale School of Drama. Prior to pursuing his MFA, he spent several years in Chicago, followed by a short time in New York as a member of the Page 73 Writers Group. His play *Bobbie Clearly* will open Steep Theatre Company's 2016/17 season. Other plays include *Ogallala*, *Giving Is Sexy: a gay/bi scifi*, *PIG.GOV Part 1*, *The Xylophone West*, *Acts of Contrition*, *Weird Kids*, and *Survey No. 5*. In Chicago, his scripts have been produced by Haven Theatre, The Fine Print Theatre Company, Collaboraction, and Tympanic Theatre Company, among others. He has developed new work at Steep Theatre Company, Victory Gardens Theater, The House Theatre, Route 66 Theatre Company, Interrobang Theatre Project, the Great Plains Theatre Conference, and Actors Theatre of Louisville. Alex has been a semifinalist for the P73 Playwriting Fellowship, a two-time finalist for the O'Neill National Playwrights Conference, and a resident playwright at the Kimmel Harding Nelson Center for the Arts. He received his B.A. from the University of Southern California and is a proud alumnus of the National Theater Institute. Alex grew up on a farm in Nebraska. www.alexlubischer.com

The other finalists were *The Other Instinct*, by Sam Chanse, *The Puppet Show*, by Reina Hardy, *Opposition* by John Luzar, and *Continuity*, by Joe Zarrow. Semifinalists included *Honor Killing*, by Sarah Bierstock, *People for the Ethical Treatment of the Undead*, by Isabella D'Esposito, *Faith In a Fallen World*, by Georgette Kelly, *The Rocket Play*, by Josh Nordmark, *The American Dream*, by Juan Ramirez, *America, V. 2.1*, by Stacey Rose, *The Unsalable Thing*, by Mark Tjarks, and *Mail*, by Bridgette Wimberly.

Stage Left's new play programming is supported by a generous grant from the Cedars Legacy Fund.

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About Stage Left

Founded in 1982, Stage Left Theatre is committed to nurturing voices for the American theatre by developing and producing plays that raise debate and challenge perspectives on political and social issues. Through a full subscription season and Downstage Left, one of Chicago's most prolific new play development programs, Stage Left strives to ask provocative social and political questions by producing a mix of new works, regional premieres and timeless classics.

Up Next

October 15 – November 20, 2016 -- *The Bottle Tree* by Beth Kander explores American gun culture through the story of a small-town girl with a dark family legacy. Allison Mason is being interviewed for a documentary about school shootings, which brings her back to her long-buried high school years in Mississippi, where she was the struggling, smart-mouthed sister of a school shooter. In therapy, in school, at home, teenage Alley struggled with forgiveness and moving forward. Answers prove no easier an adult—just as gun culture continues to evade solution. As Alley immerses in her past, will she finally find an opportunity for hope and healing in the future?

The Bottle Tree was developed in part through Stage Left's Downstage Left Playwright Residencies 2014-2015, then in LeapFest 2015. The script also received development at the 2015 Ashland New Plays Festival, and received an Honorable Mention on The Kilroys List for the past two years.

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