

For immediate release.

**CENTER THEATRE GROUP ANNOUNCES
2021-2022 L.A. WRITERS' WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS
Ten Local Playwrights Have Been Chosen For Annual Residency**

Center Theatre Group has selected participants for the **2021-2022 L.A. Writers' Workshop**, where local playwrights are invited to spend a year in residence at the company researching and writing new works with the feedback from artistic staff and their fellow writers. The workshop, administrated by Center Theatre Group's Artistic Department, is designed to foster new voices, inspire playwrights to create their best work, encourage bold writing and build relationships among local playwrights, Center Theatre Group and the Los Angeles theatre community.

"We welcome these ten playwrights, who are creating their art in Los Angeles, to join us this year in not only making new work, but to be a moral compass, guide, and inspiration, reminding us of our search for excellence in expression, and the ways in which we can do our work," said Center Theatre Group Associate Artistic Director Luis Alfaro. "Los Angeles is filled with great possibilities and here, we find first, ten examples of excellent craftspeople. They remind us that the future is female. They also represent the diverse communities of Los Angeles. We are humbled to welcome them into this institution, for this, is a writer's theatre."

Participants in the 2021-2022 L.A. Writers' Workshop include **Jami Brandli, June Carryl, Jessica Ko, Penelope Lowder, Julie Taiwo Oni, Lisa Ramirez, Tisha Marie Reichle-Aguilera, Pia Shah, Judy Soo Hoo** and **DeLanna Studi**. Playwrights were selected by Center Theatre Group's artistic staff. Each year, the goal is to bring together Los Angeles playwrights, all of varying backgrounds and writing styles, with the intent on creating work that challenges audiences and the surrounding theatre community. To be eligible, the writers must currently reside in Los Angeles and must be either starting work on a new play or interested in starting work on a new play.

The workshop continues with monthly meetings wherein the ten playwrights will come together to fuel the creative process and further the evolution of their work. During these meetings, the playwrights have the opportunity to lead cold readings, conduct improvisational exercises for scene development, discuss and deliberate relevant topics and invite additional experts as needed.

The residency will culminate in a festival at the Kirk Douglas Theatre featuring professional actors and directors presenting readings of the artists' final work.

In the 16 years since its founding, the Writers' Workshop community has grown to 113 playwrights, including Jennifer Haley ("The Nether"), Dominique Morisseau ("Shameless," "Ain't Too Proud: The Life and Times of the Temptations," "Pipeline"), Qui Nguyen ("Vietgone"), Kemp Powers ("Soul," "One Night in Miami") and Marco Ramirez ("The Defenders," "The Royale").

Jami Brandli's plays include "M-Theory: a play told in 11 dimensions," "Technicolor Life," "Sisters Three," "Through the Eye of a Needle," "O: A Rhapsody in Divorce," "Visiting Hours," "The

Caregiver's Guide" and "BLISS (or Emily Post is Dead!)" which was named in the inaugural Kilroys List. Works produced/developed at New Dramatists, New York Theatre Workshop, The Lark, Launch Pad, The Women's Voices Theater Festival, The Road, Moving Arts, The Inkwell Theater, Great Plains Theatre Conference, among other venues. "BLISS (or Emily Post is Dead!)" nominated for Best Playwriting for an Original Play; Los Angeles Ovation Awards. 2020 Under Construction Playwright with The Road. 2019 Humanitas Prize PLAY LA playwright. Winner of John Gassner Memorial Playwriting Award, Holland New Voices Award, Ashland New Plays Festival and Aurora Theatre Company's GAP Prize. Finalist for the PEN Literary Award for Drama, Playwrights' Center Core Writer Fellowship, Princess Grace Award, Bay Area Playwrights Festival and the O'Neill National Playwrights Conference; nominated for the Susan Smith Blackburn Award. Her short works are published with TCG, Dramatic Publishing Company, Applause Books, and Smith & Kraus. A proud member of The Playwrights Union and The Dramatist Guild, Jami teaches dramatic writing at Lesley University's low-residency MFA program. She is represented by the Michael Moore Agency and MSW Media Management. Her plays can be found on the New Play Exchange. For more info, please visit www.jamibrandli.com.

June Carryl grew up in Denver, Colorado and studied Political Science as an undergraduate before transitioning to the English Literature Master's program at Brown University. Her new play "N*GGGA B*TCH" was developed for Vagrancy Theatre's Blossoming Project. Other plays include "The Good Minister from Kunyarara" (aka "The Good Minister from Harare," Res Theater, Harare, Zimbabwe; Playwrights Arena Summer Series, Saroyan/Paul Award) "Consortium" (Lower Depths Theatre Ensemble BIPOC Vote Plays), "Tow" (Coourage Theatre's "NOMAD Project"), "The Life And Death Of" (Vagrancy Theatre), "Colossus" (Semi-Finalist, O'Neill National Playwrights Conference) "Boom" (Semi-Finalist O'Neill National Playwrights Conference) and "Stone Angels" (Finalist, the Killroys). She is currently collaborating on an opera with composer Jason Barabba about Aunt Jemima which premiered as part of Overtone Industries inaugural Original Vision Opera Development Series). Her most recent directing credits include Chandra Thomas' "UNTITLED Circus PLAY" and Phanesia Pharel's "Black Girl Joy" (Echo Theatre Young Playwrights), "Road Home" (Sky Pilot Theatre) and "When We Breathe" (Blossoming Festival, Vagrancy Theatre). As an actor June has appeared at American Conservatory Theater, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, San Francisco Shakespeare Festival, Shakespeare Santa Cruz, Magic Theatre, Center Theatre Group (Taper, Too) and A Noise Within. Favorite theatre roles include Fraulein Schneider in "Cabaret" (Nominee, Best Featured Actress, Ovation Awards, Celebration Theatre) and Gerty Fail in "Failure: A Love Story" (Nominee, Best Ensemble, Coourage Theatre and CTG's Block Party). She can currently be seen in Netflix's "Mindhunter" and Hulu's "Helstrom."

Jessica Ko is a Los Angeles-based actor, artist and educator. She spent three seasons at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, in notable roles as the lead Dou Yi in the US premiere of "Snow in Midsummer," Shapeshifter in the world premiere of "Hannah and the Dread Gazebo," as well as Rosalind in "As You Like It" and Princess Katherine/Boy/Montjoy in "Henry V." Other regional credits include Cleveland Playhouse, Chautauqua Theatre Company, Trinity Repertory Company, Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey and Bread Loaf Theatre Ensemble. In New York, she has worked at The Flea Theater, The Hearth, Urban Stages, Gallery Players and co-founded her own company, Random Access Theatre, which partnered with Brooklyn Bridge Park to bring free Shakespeare to its outdoor programming. Television credits include national commercials for Chase, Yoplait and Lowes. She earned her MFA in Acting from Brown University/Trinity Rep, where she also developed her love for playwrighting, created her first one-woman show, as well as co-producing a new play festival. Amongst

other projects, she is currently collaborating with several theatre artists and educators across the country to launch The Blueprint, an all BIPOC-led training program that will be free for BIPOC emerging artists.

Penelope Lowder is a playwright, screenwriter and novelist. Lowder's play, "WEST ADAMS," was selected as an LA Times Critic's Choice for its production at Skylight Theatre 2020. Her work, "Reaching Autonomy," was performed at Company of Angels' Page to the Stage series. Black Women State of The Union produced her plays "15 Minutes" and "The Follicle Prison War" at Skylight Theatre in Los Feliz. Her short work, "Show Me To Shonda" made its West Coast premiere at the Leimert Park Theatre Festival. In 2020, her one act "Water" was produced by Skylight Live and she served as a co-writer on Skylight Live's web series "Benton Way." She was commissioned by Lower Depth Theatre Ensemble to write a ten-minute work for their voting rights series, "Unit Hope Just Wants to Vote." She is a contributing writer to "Pathway To The Ballot Box" at Historic Huguenot Street which will be produced this year in New York. In 2019 Lowder's short film "15 Minutes" premiered in many festivals winning numerous awards. Her debut novel, *Three Seconds of Hell*, a collection of short stories of her father's experiences in a 1950's southern motorcycle gang was published in 2017. She is a current member of Skylight Playwrights Lab, SkyLAB. She was a former recipient of the Marvin Miller/ Guy Hanks Screenwriting Fellowship, Los Angeles Theatre Center Playwrights Residency, Audrey Skirball Kenis Playwrights Lab. Lowder holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Southern California School of Drama.

Julie Taiwo Oni is a Nigerian-American playwright and English professor. Her research and writing are focused on exploring the breadth of African diaspora stories, most prominently the global Black albinism experience, Africa-West misconceptions, and the competition for Black authenticity. Her most recent work has been presented by Son of Semele Ensemble, Playwrights' Arena, The Robey Theatre Company, Company of Angels, and CTG's Community Stories, as well as the inaugural Black Motherhood and Parenting New Play Festival in collaboration with Blackboard Plays, Parent Artist Advocacy League, and Detroit Public Theatre. She teaches composition, dramatic literature, and playwriting at Pepperdine University, and lists her literary heroes as August Wilson, Zadie Smith, and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. www.julietaiwooni.com.

Lisa Ramirez's plays include "Exit Cuckoo (nanny in motherland)," Working Theater, NYC (Colman Domingo - director); "Art of Memory," 3-LD, NYC (Tanya Calamoneri - director); "Pas de Deux (lost my shoe)," Cherry Lane, NYC; "To the Bone," Cherry Lane (Lisa Peterson - director), Pulitzer Prize Nominee, Helen Merrill Playwriting Award, Drama Desk Nominee; "Down Here Below," Oakland Theater Project; "In the Mountains," Workshop Theater; "sAiNt jOaN" (burn/burn/burn), OTP. Currently working on the pilot "FIFTY" and the adaptation of, "To the Bone." As an actor, she has performed extensively at theatres on both the East and West Coast such as the Cherry Lane, Vineyard Theatre, Atlantic Theatre, Berkeley Rep, etc. Was the first Latina Angel in a major U.S. production in "Angels in America" at Berkeley Rep and recently completed a sold out run of TS Eliot's "The Waste Land" in a drive in theater version at Oakland Theater Project

Chicana Feminist and former Rodeo Queen, **Tisha Marie Reichle-Aguilera** (she/her) writes so the desert landscape of her childhood can be heard as loudly as the urban chaos of her adulthood. She is obsessed with food. She received her BA in Sociology, Communication Studies and Chicana/o Studies from UCLA. While engaging high school students with socially conscious literature, she completed her teaching credential at California State University Dominguez Hills and earned an MFA in Creative Writing at Antioch University Los Angeles. She is currently a PhD candidate in Creative Writing and

Literature at the University of Southern California where she is a Wallis Annenberg Fellow. She has been an editor at Ricochet Editions, VIDA Review, and Border Senses. She is a Macondista and works for literary equity through Women Who Submit, an organization that empowers women and nonbinary writers to send out creative work. You can read her stories at <http://tishareichle.com/>

Pia Shah was born in NJ, raised in Mumbai and currently lives in Los Angeles. Her first short film, "The Shower," which she wrote, produced and starred in, won the Jury Award for Best Short Film at the 2021 South Asian Film Festival of America. She has acted at several theatres, most recently starring opposite Alfred Molina in "The Father" at Pasadena Playhouse. She originated the role of Leela, a young woman on the spectrum, in "Orange" at South Coast Repertory. Her TV/Film credits include the Duplass Brothers' "Room 104" (HBO), "Good Trouble" (Freeform), "Grey's Anatomy" (ABC), "Dirty John" (Bravo) and her fully improvised feature film, an arthouse stoner comedy, "Grass," won the Best Narrative Feature award at the Austin Asian American Film Festival, and was acquired by Comedy Dynamics and streamed on Netflix. Pia has workshopped dozens of new plays around the country including at Ojai Playwrights Conference, the Geffen, Kansas City Rep, Seattle Rep, Chalk Rep, Sacred Fools, Play On!, Audible, Boston Court, East West Players, Colorado New Play Festival and Circle X. Pia started out funding underrepresented voices for public television, as the Media Fund Manager (at the Center for Asian America), granting funds from the Corporation for Public (CPB) to independent filmmakers for shows such as POV on PBS and Sundance Film Festival. She received a BA in International Studies at The Johns Hopkins University and attended the Summer Training Congress at American Conservatory Theater. She studied Meisner Technique at the William Esper Studio in NYC before earning her MFA from USC's School of Dramatic Arts.

Judy Soo Hoo's most recent collaboration with Center Theatre Group was "Sandi Koto of the San Gabriel Valley" for Center Theatre Group's Community Stories. Growing up as a Chinese American in New Mexico near the Navajo Nation, her writing is attuned to the struggles, desires, and hopes of characters living on the margins. Credits include "Texas," "Solve for X" and "Taking Flight: The Katherine Cheung Story." In addition, her play "The Future is Janice," a play about two Asian teenagers whose lives are thrown into turmoil when their mother is arrested and slated for deportation, will be read as part of the CoA Playwrights Group Summer reading series.

DeLanna Studi is a proud citizen of the Cherokee Nation. She has over 25 years of experience as a performer, storyteller, educator, facilitator, advocate, and activist. Her theatre credits include the First National Broadway Tour of Tony Award and Pulitzer Prize winning play "August: Osage County," Off-Broadway's "Gloria: A Life" at the Daryl Roth Theatre, "Informed Consent" at The Duke on 42nd Street and regional theatres (Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Portland Center Stage, Cornerstone and Indiana Repertory Theatre). DeLanna originated roles in over twenty world premieres including fourteen Native productions. A pivotal moment in her career was writing and performing "And So We Walked: An Artist's Journey Along the Trail of Tears" based on retracing her family's footsteps along the Trail of Tears with her father. "And So We Walked" has been produced throughout the country and was the first American play chosen for the Journées Théâtrales de Carthage in Tunisia, Africa. As a playwright, she has been commissioned by The Theatre Company, Theatre For One (New York and Chicago) and a new play for Period Piece. In film and television, DeLanna can be seen in the Peabody Award winning "Edge of America," Hallmark's "Dreamkeeper," "Goliath," "Shameless," and "General Hospital." She is a recipient of the Butcher Scholar Award, Mapfund Grant, and Cherokee Preservation Grant. Since 2007, she has served as the chair of the SAG-AFTRA National Native Americans Committee. She is honored to be the new Artistic Director of Native Voices at the Autry.

Center Theatre Group Announces L.A. Writers' Workshop Participants –5

The L.A. Writers' Workshop is made possible with dedicated funding from WarnerMedia and the National Endowment for the Arts. Lead support for Center Theatre Group's Artistic Development Program is generously provided by the Annenberg Foundation and the Harold and Mimi Steinberg Charitable Trust.

Center Theatre Group, one of the nation's preeminent arts and cultural organizations, is Los Angeles' leading nonprofit theatre company, which, under the leadership of Artistic Director Michael Ritchie, Managing Director / CEO Meghan Pressman and Producing Director Douglas C. Baker, programs seasons at the 736-seat Mark Taper Forum and 1600 to 2100-seat Ahmanson Theatre at The Music Center in Downtown Los Angeles, and the 317-seat Kirk Douglas Theatre in Culver City. In addition to presenting and producing the broadest range of theatrical entertainment in the country, Center Theatre Group is one of the nation's leading producers of ambitious new works through commissions and world premiere productions and a leader in interactive community engagement and education programs that reach across generations, demographics and circumstance to serve Los Angeles.

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