

Crowded Fire Theater

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Info: crowdedfire.org/2017-matchbox-reading-series/

Crowded Fire Theater Announces 2017 Matchbox Reading Series Selections

San Francisco - Crowded Fire Theater (CFT) announces the featured playwrights and plays for the 2017 Matchbox Readings Series, an annual program presenting four public staged readings of plays in development. Playwrights include Idris Goodwin, Lisa Marie Rollins, Jonathan Spector, and Nathan Yunkerberg. The readings will be presented November 15-18 at Brava! for Women in the Arts.

Artistic Director Mina Morita explains “Crowded Fire’s guiding vision continues to be centered upon developing exceptional and innovative work towards the creation of a diverse and inclusive canon of new plays that reflect the America of today. We are not simply a theater that presents new work, we invest specifically in development and craft through a number of opportunities. The most public facing component of this is the Matchbox Reading Series.”

The plays featured in Crowded Fire Theater’s 2017 Matchbox Reading Series are: SIESTA KEY by Jonathan Spector (Nov. 15, 7:30pm); TOKEN by Lisa Marie Rollins (Nov. 16, 7:30pm); ESAI’S TABLE by Nathan Yunkerberg (Nov. 17, 7:30pm); and BLUEPRINT by Idris Goodwin (Nov. 18, 2pm). The readings will be presented at Brava! for Women in the Arts, 2781 24th St, San Francisco, CA 94110, and are free to the public. Seating is limited, reservations encouraged via crowdedfire.org/2017-matchbox-reading-series/.

“The hallmark of support through ‘The Matchbox @ Crowded Fire’ is one of individualization within a collaborative environment,” continued Morita. “We believe each play demands its own unique journey – both in terms of process and in terms of the people supporting the playwright on that journey. We are thrilled to have received three years of dedicated support for The Matchbox through the Kenneth Rainin Foundation’s Re(New) Grant. This has allowed us to further expand programming within The Matchbox based on our Strategic Plan.”

In addition to the Reading Series, The Matchbox @ Crowded Fire supports commissions of new works, development workshops in anticipation of mainstage productions, a newly launched R&D Lab, and a Playwright-In-Residence. The recently announced R&D LAB is a unique new program designed to support a cohort of 3-4 writers every two years while they develop artistic pieces that interrogate and shape cultural conversation. The goal of the LAB is the creation of three individual new works in response to a writing provocation defined by the group itself. The

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inaugural cohort includes playwrights Star Finch, Denmo Ibrahim, and Nick Hadikwa Mwaluko. Crowded Fire's first Playwright-In-Residence, Christopher Chen was announced this season in tandem with his upcoming world premiere production of A TALE OF AUTUMN on Crowded Fire's Mainstage.

MATCHBOX READING SERIES 2017 SCHEDULE

Wednesday, November 15th at 7:30 pm.

SIESTA KEY by JONATHAN SPECTOR

It's Florida...sometime in the future. Violent militia rule is followed by violent resistance. Years later, the atrocities of this period are filtered through a cinematic lens and distant memory. In Siesta Key, playwright Jonathan Spector uses shifting time and unreliable narrators to investigate the complexity of moral absolutism, its personal cost, and the elusiveness of truth in acts of hate.

Thursday, November 16th at 7:30 pm.

TOKEN by LISA MARIE ROLLINS

The physical and spiritual past and present dance through Lisa Marie Rollins' new play Token. Hannah, a black woman adopted by a white family tries to reconcile her biological lineage with her adopted family history. When a ghost girl, a conjurer, and buried secrets wend their way into her consciousness, Hannah's need to crack the veneer of familiar perfection and the well meaning intentions of her family grows ever strong.

Friday, November 17th at 7:30 pm.

ESAI'S TABLE by NATHAN YUNGERBERG

Esai's Table follows the journey of three young black men on a mythical night sea journey atop a magical old table. Through artistic expression and personal revelations, we learn why they've been chosen to navigate this journey. Destiny meets eternity in this story of friendship, family, and love.

Saturday, November 18th at 2pm.

BLUEPRINT by IDRIS GOODWIN

Idris Goodwin's Blueprint follows two successful and competitive African American writers as they navigate personal and professional crisis. Framed by the tracks of a contemporary playlist, this rhythmic ensemble piece, examines the heartaches, sacrifices, successes, and the sheer will it takes to pursue the dream.

MATCHBOX READING SERIES 2017 PLAYWRIGHTS

IDRIS GOODWIN is an award-winning playwright, poet/performer and essayist. His play *How We Got On* developed at the O'Neill National Playwrights Conference, premiered in Actors Theater's 2012 Humana Festival, and is being produced at theaters across the country. It is the first in his "break beat play" series which includes *The REALNESS* and *Hype Man*, winner of the 2017 Blue Ink Playwriting Award. His play *And In This Corner Cassius Clay* received the 2017

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Distinguished Play Award from The American Association of Theater and Education. Other widely produced plays include *Blackademics*, *This Is Modern Art* co-written with Kevin Coval, *Bars and Measures*. Goodwin is one of seven playwrights featured in the widely presented *HANDS UP!*, an anthology commissioned by The New Black Fest and published by Samuel French. His one act *Black Flag* was produced Off Broadway. *The Way the Mountain Moved*, commissioned as part of Oregon Shakespeare's groundbreaking American Revolutions Series, will world premiere in 2018. He has work commissioned by or in development with The Public Theatre, Steppenwolf Theater, The Kennedy Center, Seattle Children's Theater, Berkeley Rep's Ground Floor Program, La Jolla Playhouse, The Lark Playwriting Center, The Playwrights' Center and New Harmony Project. He's received support from the NEA and Ford Foundation, and is the recipient of InterAct Theater's 20/20 Prize. *These Are The Breaks* (Write Bloody, 2011), his debut collection of essays and poetry, was nominated for a Pushcart Prize. Goodwin's poetry has featured on HBO, The Discovery Channel, Sesame Street and National Public Radio. Goodwin is an assistant professor in The Department of Theatre and Dance at Colorado College. Find him at www.idrisgoodwin.com. Click here for [photo of Idris Goodwin](#).

LISA MARIE ROLLINS is a writer and director. She is currently developing her new play "TOKEN". Most recently she co-directed Young Jean Lee's *The Shipment* and will be directing the West Coast Premiere of Terrance Chisholm's *HOODED: Being Black for Dummies* in 2018 at Custom Made Theater. She is a 2017 *Directors Lab West* member and a 2017 *Sundance Institute Theatre Lab Fellow*. She has been a writing fellow with *San Francisco Writers Grotto*, *CALLALOO London*, *VONA*, *Just Theater Play Lab* and most recently the *Joshua Tree Highlands Artist Residency*. Regional directing and dramaturg work includes Crowded Fire Theater, Playwright Foundation, TheatreFirst, Playground, San Francisco Playhouse and new plays by Lauren Gunderson, Geetha Reddy, Idris Goodwin, Terrance Arvelle Chisholm, Aimee Suzara and comedic artists W. Kamau Bell and Zahra Noorbakash. She holds graduate degrees from Claremont Graduate University and University of California, Berkeley and is Guest Artist Faculty at St. Mary's College in Performance Studies. She is currently a Resident Artist with Crowded Fire Theater and Artist-in-Residence at BRAVA Theater for Women in San Francisco. Click here for [photo of Lisa Marie Rollins](#).

JONATHAN SPECTOR will have two plays premiering in the Bay Area this season: *Eureka Day* at Aurora Theatre in April and *Good. Better. Best. Bested.* at Custom Made Theatre in June. Other plays including *Seas Between Us Braid*, *In From The Cold*, *Adult Swim*, and *This Is All I Need* (co-created with Liz Lisle and Christopher White), have been produced and developed at Berkeley Rep's Ground Floor, Bay Area Playwrights Festival, San Francisco Playhouse, Mugwumpin, Stanford's National Center for New Plays, the Source Theater Festival and Just Theater, where he is co-Artistic Director. He has received Theatre Bay Area's TITAN award, Aurora Theater's Global Age Prize, an Emerging Playwright Award from Playground, is a Resident Playwright at Playwrights Foundation and holds an MFA from San Francisco State. With the Berkeley-based Just Theater, where he has he directed and/or produced local

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premieres of many adventurous new plays including Anne Washburn's *I Have Loved Strangers*, Jason Grote's *1001*, Jackie Sibbles Drury's *We Are Proud to Present...* and Rob Handel's *A Maze*. Click here for [photo of Jonathan Spector](#).

NATHAN YUNGERBERG is a Brooklyn-based playwright. His plays include *Esai's Table*, *The Son of Dawn*, *Pousada Azul*, *Orchids and Polka Dots*, *Golden Gate*, *Brush Strokes* and *Isosceles*. Nathan's work has been developed or featured by The Cherry Lane Theatre (2017 Mentor Project with Stephen Adly Guirgis), The Playwrights' Center, Crowded Fire Theater, The Brooklyn Museum, The Nuyorican Poets Café, The Lorraine Hansberry Theater, Brava Theater, The Lark, The Fire This Time Festival, 48 Hours in Harlem, The National Black Theatre, The Hansberry Project, The National Black Theatre Festival, The Classical Theatre of Harlem, Blackboard Reading Series, T. Schreiber Studio, The Dramatist Guild, The August Wilson Red Door Project, The Brooklyn Generator, Multistages theater and BBC Radio Afternoon Drama. Nathan is one of seven black playwrights commissioned by The New Black Fest for *HANDS UP: 7 Playwrights, 7 Testaments*. Awards and honors: The 2016 O'Neill National Playwrights Conference (Semifinalist), Ken Davenport 10-Minute Play Festival (Winner), 11th Annual InspiraTO Festival (Finalist), and the Blue Ink Playwriting Award (Semifinalist). Click here for [photo of Nathan Yungergberg](#).

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CALENDAR EDITORS PLEASE NOTE:

Crowded Fire 2017 Matchbox Readings Series Features

New Plays by Idris Goodwin, Lisa Marie Rollins, Jonathan Spector, and Nathan Yungergberg
Reading Dates: SIESTA KEY by Jonathan Spector (Nov. 15, 7:30pm); TOKEN by Lisa Marie Rollins (Nov. 16, 7:30pm); ESAI'S TABLE by Nathan Yungergberg (Nov. 17, 7:30pm); and BLUEPRINT by Idris Goodwin (Nov. 18, 2pm).

At: Brava! for Women in the Arts, 2781 24th St, San Francisco, CA 94110

Tickets and Info: Free to the public RSVP at <http://www.crowdedfire.org/2017-matchbox-reading-series/>

Click here for [photo of Idris Goodwin](#).

Click here for [photo of Lisa Marie Rollins](#).

Click here for [photo of Jonathan Spector](#).

Click here for [photo of Nathan Yungergberg](#).